

I PLEDGE to stop the stigma associated with addiction.

Words Matter

We can be a model and help to lead the way toward ending the opioid epidemic by using language that de-stigmatizes the disease of substance use disorder.

That means using terminology that recognizes that substance use disorder is a chronic illness, not a moral failing, and people can and do recover.

Why do words matter? Studies show that about one in 12 people with substance use disorder get treatment. Stigma is a key barrier. Using the right language, and putting the person first has a real impact on reducing stigma and helping people with substance use disorder seek and get the treatment they need.

We invite you to sign the **Words Matter Pledge**, originally developed by the *Grayken Center for Addiction at Boston Medical Center*, and help us toward a goal of creating a stigma-free environment at our hospitals, universities, companies, and in our community.

What we say and how we say it makes a difference.

NON-STIGMATIZING LANGUAGE	STIGMATIZING LANGUAGE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person with a substance use disorder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substance abuser or drug abuser Alcoholic Addict User Abuser Drunk Junkie
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Babies with an opioid dependency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addicted Babies/Born addicted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substance use disorder or addiction Use, misuse Risky, unhealthy, or heavy use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drug habit Abuse Problem
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person in recovery Abstinent Not drinking or taking drugs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treatment or medication for addiction Medication for Opioid Use Disorder/Alcohol Use Disorder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substitution or replacement therapy Medication-Assisted Treatment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive, negative (toxicology screen results) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean, dirty

I believe that the words I use in talking about substance use disorder are important in reducing stigma.

I pledge to treat all people with a substance use disorder with dignity and respect.

I pledge to talk about addiction as a chronic illness, not a moral failing.

I pledge to be a leader in reducing stigma and promoting recovery from this disease.

Full Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____