

I PLEDGE to stop the stigma associated with addiction.

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.

Words Matter

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

- Person with a substance use disorder
- Babies with an opioid dependency
- Substance use disorder or addiction
- Use, misuse
- Risky, unhealthy, or heavy use
- Person in recovery
- Abstinent
- Not drinking or taking drugs
- Treatment or medication for addiction
- Medication for Opioid Use Disorder/Alcohol Use Disorder
- Positive, negative (toxicology screen results)

STIGMATIZING LANGUAGE

- Substance abuser or drug abuser
- Alcoholic
- Addict
- User
- Abuser
- Drunk
- Junkie
- Addicted Babies/Born addicted
- Drug habit
- Abuse
- Problem
- Clean
- Substitution or replacement therapy
- Medication-Assisted Treatment
- 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: _____