





Language Matters

WORDS HAVE POWER. PEOPLE FIRST.

Using Affirmative Language to Reduce Stigma, Inspire Hope, and Advance Recovery

 Stigmatized Language (Not this)	Preferred Language (Use this) 
Addict	Person with a substance use disorder
Addicted infant	Infant with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)
Addicted to <i>[alcohol/drug]</i>	Has an <i>[alcohol/drug]</i> use disorder
Alcoholic	Person with an alcohol use disorder
Clean	Abstinent
Clean screen	Substance-free
Crack babies	Substance-exposed infant or substance-affected infant
Dirty	Actively using
Dirty Screen	Testing positive for substance use
Drug abuser <i>[crack head/meth head]</i>	Person who uses drugs
Drug habit	Regular substance use
Experimental user	Person who is new to drug use
Lapse / Relapse / Slip	Resumed/experienced a recurrence
Drug replacement	Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)
Opiate addict	Person with opioid use disorder
Opioid Replacement Therapy (ORT)	Medications for Addiction Treatment (MAT)
Pregnant opiate addict	Pregnant woman with opioid use disorder
Prescription drug abuse	Non-medical use of a psychoactive substance
Recreational or casual user	Person who uses drugs for nonmedical reasons
Reformed addict or alcoholic	Person in recovery
Substance abuse	Substance use disorder
Substance abuse/abuser	Person with a substance use disorder
Substance abusing mother	Mother with a substance use disorder
Substance misuse	Substance use / non-medical use
Victims <i>[tiny victims]</i>	Prenatally exposed to <i>[drug name]</i>
Other:	

Adapted from: [The White House Office Of National Drug Control Policy](#)