

Addressing Addiction Stigma: Resources

WHAT IS STIGMA



02

Negative judgments & biases are similar. Sometimes these phrases are used interchangeably.



04

Everyone has **negative biases, judgements, & stigma** around particular groups of people, no one is free from it.



01

Stigma is a cluster of **negative attitudes and beliefs** people with certain characteristics. These get expressed in words, actions, policies & laws.



03

Stigma, judgment and bias can be **implicit**, meaning we didn't really choose to feel that way, & we aren't aware that we do.



05

Some groups of people who are historically stigmatized are people of color, immigrants, the LGBTQ community, those with **addictive disorders** & serious mental health conditions.

We can compassionately **reflect on our own biases and judgments**, to be increasingly aware of what might be unconscious. Although many of us have one or more characteristic that are often stigmatized in our society, we often have our own biases as well.

We can work **to weed out stigmatizing language** out our vocabulary. We can gently give others feedback when they unknowingly are using it.



When we become aware, we can work to **mitigate our own stigmatizing beliefs** and biases. We can share with trusted people using countering thoughts and actions to mitigate bias.

Empathy is the opposite of stigma. We can work toward empathy for ourselves as we address our own biases, and work toward truly seeing, listening, and understanding others without judgement.

The background is a solid purple color. In the center, there are three stylized human figures. The largest one is in the middle, colored in a medium blue. To its left and right are two smaller figures, colored in a lighter purple. These figures are surrounded by several concentric, semi-transparent circular lines. In the top right and bottom left corners, there are small clusters of three squares each, arranged in a diagonal pattern. The top right cluster is in a medium blue color, and the bottom left cluster is in a lighter purple color.

**Stigma, judgements and biases
have enormous impacts on us.**

Health:

Stigma causes **chronic stress**. It has been shown to lead to higher rates of **chronic diseases**. Those of us that have historically been stigmatized suffer less access to healthcare, worse healthcare when we do get access, and as a result **worse health outcomes**.





We have less access to education, good jobs and upward mobility in careers, causing **deep economic disparity**. There is less access to **affordable housing**. Often are **arrests and incarceration** rates are much higher.

RESEARCH

A good systemic review of the literature:
The effectiveness of interventions for reducing stigma related to substance use disorders: a systematic review

To see some scary research on how judging those with addictive disorders leads to increases in use, see Bill Miller's research [here](#).

For another great B. Miller piece of research, see his article on brief interventions, and his finding about [unconditional love](#), and its impact on problematic drinking.

RESOURCES and TOOLS



Stigmatizing Language:

1. For a practical, specific list of words that are known to cause stigma, and words we can use instead, see this [info-graph](#) from the National Alliance for Advocates for Buprenorphine Treatment.
2. Here is a great dictionary, of stigmatizing words and replacements: <https://www.recoveryanswers.org/addiction-ary/>
3. For a deeper look at the language issue, including how to help your organization move to non-stigmatizing language. see [SAMHSA's](#) very useful and easy to read 5-ish page paper.

For a beautiful, impactful slide deck on addiction stigma, see the one that [Recovery Brands](#) put together.

To increase awareness of your own biases, by taking implicit bias tests, visit Harvard University's [Project Implicit](#).

To see a tool to measure empathy (re: how well stigma is mitigated), see the [CARE Patient Feedback Measure](#), widely used in the U.K.

TRAININGS

The Institute for HealthCare Communication has many empathy based workshops, including: [The Empathy Effect: Countering Bias to improve Healthcare Outcomes](#)

Dr. Helen Reiss has an online empathy training course for healthcare professionals called [Empathetics](#). The website also has information, on that program as well as Dr. Reiss' book on empathy.





**Motivational
Interviewing** is
empathy-based; high
quality MI training is
anti-bias and de-
stigmatizing training
as well.

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