

Addressing Stigma of SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

Substance use disorder is a treatable chronic health condition from which people can and do recover. However, many people with substance use disorders do not seek the treatment they need because of the stigma they face. People with substance use disorders may be viewed more negatively than people with other disorders and disabilities - even by their health care providers. **ALL West Virginians can play a role in reducing stigma and encouraging treatment for those who need it.**

Ways to Reduce Stigma



CHANGE OUR LANGUAGE AND LABELS.

Replace words like “addict” and “junkie” with “person with substance use disorder.”



LEARN ABOUT THE ISSUE. Education reduces stigma. Learn about the science of addiction; mental health and substance use disorders; the science of trauma; and treatment with medication.



PERSONAL EXPERIENCES. Positive interactions with people with stigmatized conditions can change attitudes. Invite people to share their story.



REVIEW PRACTICES AND POLICIES. Review workplace and other policies and practices. Support policies that increase access to services, compliance with treatment, and overall health and well-being.

HELP4WV offers a 24/7 call, chat, and text line that provides immediate help for any West Virginian struggling with an addiction or mental health issue.

844
HELP4WV

1-844-435-7498
www.help4wv.com

TYPES OF STIGMA

PUBLIC OR SOCIETAL STIGMA

Public or Societal Stigma is the public's reaction to individuals with a stigmatizing condition such as substance use disorders or other behavioral health issues.

PERSONAL OR SELF STIGMA

Personal or Self Stigma is the internalization of publicly stigmatized beliefs. Self stigma can result in shame, guilt, reduced sense of hope, social withdrawal and isolation, and a decrease in compliance with treatment.

COURTESY STIGMA

Courtesy Stigma is stigma directed toward family and friends of those with a stigmatized condition. Courtesy stigma can isolate family members, lead family members to feel guilty, create a sense of shame, and can make the family members less likely to encourage treatment.

STRUCTURAL STIGMA

Structural Stigma includes laws, policies, and procedures that limit the opportunities of people with substance use disorder or other behavioral health issues. Structural stigma can be found in businesses, organizations, the courts, government, school systems, and social services.

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SOURCES:

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