



# LANGUAGE MATTERS

Language is powerful, especially when talking about addictions, because stigmatizing language perpetuates negative perceptions.

Use "Person first" language that focuses on the person, not the disorder.

## When Discussing Addictions...

SAY THIS	NOT THAT
person with a substance use disorder	addict, junkie, druggie
person living in recovery	ex-addict
person living with an addiction	battling/suffering from an addiction
person experiencing drug dependence	addicted, has a drug habit
recurrence of use	relapse
person who has stopped using drugs	clean, sober, drug-free
No longer using drugs	stayed clean
positive/negative drug screen	dirty/clean drug screen

Adapted from Language Matters from the National Council for Behavioral Health, United States (2015), Matua Raki (2016) Language Matters, NADA Network of Alcohol and Other Drugs Agencies, and NUAA.

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