

The "A" WORD

Language Matters

When words are used inappropriately to describe individuals with a substance use disorder, it not only negatively impacts the cultural perception of their disease, but creates stigma that can stop people from seeking help. Language matters. Let's replace terms like "addict" and "junkie" with smarter language that aligns with the science. Replace the "A" word with "individuals with a substance use disorder."

| Dos | Don'ts |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Substance Use Disorder | Substance abuse/dependence |
| Individual with a Substance Use Disorder | Addict; Drug abuser; Junkie; Druggie |
| In recovery; In remission | Clean; Staying clean |
| Has a Substance Use Disorder | Drug habit |
| Negative drug test; Not currently using substances | Clean drug test |
| Positive drug test; Currently using substances | Dirty drug test |



Sources: