



**Care Massachusetts
The Opioid Abatement
Partnership**

Care Massachusetts Core Training and Technical Assistance Team



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Background: Care Massachusetts

Care Massachusetts is working collaboratively with cities and towns across the state to take action to end the overdose crisis.

We provide resources and technical assistance with:

- ❑ Connecting municipalities with the people most impacted by the overdose crisis
- ❑ Promoting the selection and implementation of proven public health strategies
- ❑ Educating the public on the source and purpose of the funds
- ❑ Facilitating collaboration across municipalities



Comms Resource Hub



Visit: CareMass.org/communications-resource-hub for downloadable materials, talking points and guidance to support your communication about your work.



Words Matter: Stigma & Language

Office Hours
12/5/24



PRESENTER



**Andrea (Andi)
Macone**

*Director of Community Health
and Equity*
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Objectives

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the impact of language in framing what the public thinks about substance use and recovery
2. Give examples of alternatives to stigmatizing language
3. Get answers to questions about how to discuss substance use with your community using an affirming and strengths-based approach



OCHE Purpose Statement

The Office of Community Health and Equity (OCHE) aims to cultivate meaningful, mutually beneficial relationships with residents of Massachusetts and organizations that serve them, and to drive equitable systems change and decision-making in response to needs expressed through those relationships.

With commitment to self-determination, liberation, and belonging and through centering identity-based needs, we strive to make accessible the information, tools, and resources necessary for individuals and communities to develop a healthy relationship with substances.



DPH Words Matter Pledge

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?
- Why?
- How?*



Words Matter

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- BSAS & DPH staff
 - Words Matter Pledge
 - September 2024
 - DPH offices & hospitals



“At BSAS, one of our core values is **compassion and positive regard for others** in all our efforts. It is at the foundation of our mission to support accessible [services]. This core value should be reflected in the language we use to communicate about the people and communities we serve.”

Why do words matter?

- 🗨️ Stigma leads to discrimination and harm
- 🗨️ Evidence that language impacts care and health outcomes (Kelly, 2020)
- 🗨️ Impacts PWUD, families & communities



“Our words have impact. Language frames what the public thinks about substance use and recovery. It can also affect how individuals, groups, and families think about themselves and intentionally or unintentionally propagate stigma”

How to use non-stigmatizing language?

INSTEAD OF...	...CONSIDER USING...	...BECAUSE
Substance abuser Drug abuser Alcoholic Addict User Drunk Junkie High-risk population	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Person with a problematic relationship with substances✓ Person with a substance use disorder (if so diagnosed)✓ Substance use✓ Person using substances✓ Person who uses drugs (PWUD)✓ Person with living experience✓ Person at high risk of overdose	<p>Person-first language humanizes individuals and indicates that someone may “have” a problem as opposed to them “being” a problem, while labels can define a person by their substance use. It’s important to note that not all people who use substances have a substance use disorder, and these phrases should not be used interchangeably. Rather, use language specific to the person being discussed.</p>

Examples of non-stigmatizing language

Instead of

Substance
abuse

Drug problem

Consider using

Unhealthy use

Substance
addiction

Examples of non-stigmatizing language

Instead of

Clean

Dirty

Consider using

Not using
alcohol or
drugs

Abstinent from
substance use

Examples of non-stigmatizing language

Instead of

Drug
replacement
therapy

Medication
assisted
treatment

Consider using

Medication for
opioid use
disorder

Medication for
addiction
treatment



Thank You!

Please reach out to Andrea.Macone@mass.gov
for individual support on implementing
non-stigmatizing language in your municipality!

Questions?



NEXT STEPS

❑ **Upcoming Events:**

- Dec. 12, 2-3 pm - Expenditure Report Corrections Open Session | [Register Here](#)
- Dec. 19, 2-3 pm - Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative (PAARI) Opioid Abatement Fund Usage Overview | [Register Here](#)

❑ [Previous office hours slides and recordings](#)

❑ [Request individualized technical assistance](#)

❑ **Sign up for our [listserv](#)**



Feedback Survey

Please take a couple minutes to respond to the anonymous feedback survey after the call ends



THANK YOU!

