

STOP STIGMA

The mission of the Department of Human Services and the State Drug Directors Office is to Stop Stigma and change attitudes in Arkansas by securing the commitment of changing our words. By signing onto our campaign, you will increase awareness in your community and utilize the information and resources we have available.

The stigma of drug use keeps people from seeking treatment. Words like “junkie,” “addict,” and “druggie” can hurt, damaging self-image and standing in the way of recovery. Addiction is not a choice. It’s a chronic disease similar to diabetes, heart disease and arthritis. Get the facts and embrace a community that needs our support.

Some examples of STIGMA:

- Hurtful words and labels, including junkie, loser, thief, druggie, abuser and addict
- Comments, such as “Once a junkie, always a junkie” or “You’re not fit to be a parent”
- Perceptions, including:
 - Addiction is a personal choice (when in fact it’s a disease)
 - Addiction is a sign of human weakness, or a lack of morals or willpower
 - Addiction is the result of poor parenting.
- People in recovery with children have experienced other parents unwilling to let their children play at their schoolmate’s homes
- Some communities view addiction as a crime, an act that must be penalized, versus a disease that needs treatment

What can we do?

It’s important to understand that opioid addiction is a treatable disease. On a personal level, we can look honestly at ourselves for signs of our own stigmas – negative, biased feelings, words or behaviors. We can make the effort to look at addiction from a different and hopefully more positive perspective.



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We are all affected by the current epidemic of opioid addiction. Many people know someone who struggles with addiction, or who is in treatment or recovery.

- We can all be part of the solution
- We can take a stand against stigma
- We can support treatment opportunities
- We can encourage people in recovery
- Most importantly, we can talk about addiction amongst our friends and family members to hopefully address the misperceptions about addiction, treatment options and long-term recovery
- Each of us can commit to not using hurtful or damaging words about those who face addiction

This is what we will provide your organization:

- A poster with the Stop Stigma pledge
- Buttons for taking the pledge
- Stop Stigma mirror cards
- Copy of this language to change your words

All that we ask is:

- Your organization sign the Stop Stigma poster
- Place the poster in your business
- Send us a photo of the poster being signed at StopStigma@dhs.arkansas.gov

Contact us to receive more information and learn how you can get involved at StopStigma@dhs.arkansas.gov OR 501-683-5908

Need Help? Call

1-844-763-0198

Help us Help you **STOP STIGMA** in Arkansas it's time to change our words.

Words to avoid	Words to use
Addict	Person with substance use disorder
Alcoholic	Person with alcohol use disorder
Drug problem, drug habit	Substance use disorder
Drug abuse	Drug misuse, harmful use
Drug abuser	Person with substance use disorder
Clean	Abstinent, not actively using
Dirty	Actively using
A clean drug screen	Testing negative for substance use
A dirty drug screen	Testing positive for substance use
Former/reformed addict/alcoholic	Person in recovery, person in long-term recovery
Opioid replacement, methadone maintenance	Medication assisted treatment