

"Words Matter" Language Choice Guide

Language matters, but it can change depending on the setting we are in. Choosing when and where to use certain language and labels can help reduce stigma and discrimination towards mental health, substance use and recovery.



Somerset County
Department of
Human Services

	Self Identifiers	Family / Friends	Public / Media	Professionals
Insane / Crazy / Nuts / Unstable / Whackjob	STOP	STOP	STOP	STOP
Schizo(phrenic) / Bipolar	STOP	STOP	STOP	STOP
Alcoholic / Drunk / Junkie / Drug Addict	STOP	STOP	STOP	STOP
Slip / Lapse / Relapse	STOP	STOP	STOP	STOP
Committed Suicide / Killed Themselves	STOP	STOP	STOP	STOP
Medication Assisted Treatment	STOP	STOP	STOP	STOP
Substance Abuser / Drug User	OK	STOP	STOP	STOP
Dopehead / Crackhead / Pothead	OK	STOP	STOP	STOP
Substance Abuse / Misuse Dependence	OK	STOP	STOP	STOP
Clean / Dirty	OK	STOP	STOP	STOP
Staying Clean / Abstinence	OK	STOP	STOP	STOP
Mental Illness	OK	STOP	STOP	STOP
Person In Recovery / Maintaining Recovery	✓	✓	✓	✓
Long Term Recovery	✓	✓	✓	✓
Medication Assisted Recovery	✓	✓	✓	✓
Co-Occurring (Mental Health & Substance Use)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Died by Suicide	✓	✓	✓	✓
Person with a Substance Use Disorder	✓	✓	✓	✓
Person with a Mental Health Disorder	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reoccurrence of Substance Use	✓	✓	✓	✓

Use these
Words
or
Phrases
Instead...

Somerset County
PROUD TO BE
stigma free