

The **STIGMA** of addiction: Reducing stigma through education

Medication-assisted treatment

MAT is the use of FDA-approved medications, in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies, to provide a “whole-patient” approach to the treatment of substance use disorders.

I aMA... son



I was homeless and living in the woods when I realized I wanted something different for myself. That's when I started receiving MAT. It gave me structure and a foundation to make change. I started to get out of the fog of my addiction just by having a reason to get up and be somewhere in the morning. I remember when people first started telling me I looked healthier and how it motivated me to stay focused on my health. MAT needs to be recognized and accepted as treatment. It saved my life.

I aMA... mother



I started on Buprenorphine (Suboxone) after going to a harm reduction clinic. It wasn't strong enough for me, so I switched to methadone. I began counseling, got my own apartment and my life started to change. MAT helped me put both feet on the ground. I can think, focus and even have the energy to help others. Being on MAT also helped improve my relationship with my two sons. They see that I am maintaining my recovery and have told me how proud they are for making the changes I've made. Because of MAT, I'm in control of my life again and I have my family back.

I aMA... physician



I practiced anesthesia for 23 years and, because I was curious, tried fentanyl in 1987. Unfortunately, I liked it and continued to abuse it. In 2005, while in treatment, I was told that if I didn't leave anesthesia I might eventually die from my disease. This turned out to be a blessing. After establishing a strong recovery program, I began my addiction medicine practice with board certification in 2010. I am a firm believer in the use of medication to assist people on the road to recovery. I have worked with multiple patients who are not only recovering from drug use, but have discovered wonderful lives that once seemed out of reach.

I aMA... peer support advocate



My journey from using drugs to being in recovery led me to become a peer support advocate for harm reduction programming. I am able to help others because I have walked in their shoes. I work daily with people who are still using drugs and rely on MAT to manage their opiate addiction. I first meet them when I'm doing outreach in the community and they are getting syringes or naloxone (Narcan). I use this opportunity to talk to them about getting tested for Hep C or HIV, or even getting on MAT. Helping others move in a healthier direction is a big part of my own recovery.

The **STIGMA** of addiction: Reducing stigma through language

Stigmatizing language perpetuates negative perceptions. “Person-first” language focuses on the person, not the disorder, and is proven to reduce stigma and improve treatment.

Tips for avoiding stigmatizing language

Say this...

Instead of this...

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 arrested for drug violation

Drug offender

Chooses not to go at this point

Non-compliant/bombed-out

Medication is a treatment tool

Medication is a crutch

Had a setback

Relapsed

Maintained recovery

Stayed clean

Positive drug screen

Dirty drug screen

Substance exposed newborn

Addicted newborn