## PROMOTING THE USE OF

**RECOVERY-ORIENTED** 

LANGUAGE:

WHY WORDS MATTER

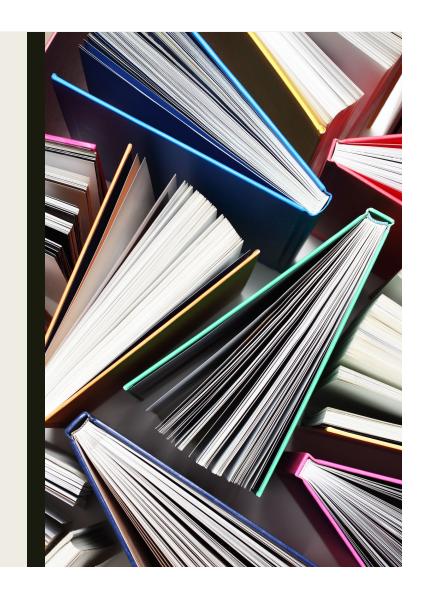
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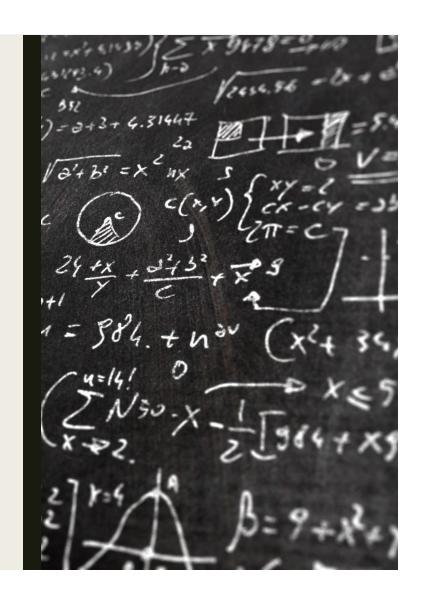
# Objectives

- 1. Increase knowledge re: the role language plays within the treatment court context & larger criminal legal system.
- 2. Increase knowledge regarding why language is important from a theoretical perspective.
- 3. Learn what words to use/avoid in practice.



# What is Language?

- "...a collection of standardized and universally accepted sounds and symbols intended to convey specific meanings" (Kelly et al. 2016).
- Language = Culture
- Reflect inequality and reinforce stereotypes
- "...the words we use to describe what we see...actually determine what we see"
- Use of images as another form of language





# Structure of the CJS & Treatment Courts

- Goals of the criminal justice system
  - Deterrence
  - Incapacitation
  - Retribution
  - Restoration
  - Rehabilitation

#### Goals of treatment courts

- Address needs of individuals with SUD, MH, COD, trauma, etc.
- Reduce use of drugs/alcohol
- Increase recovery capital
- Reduce recidivism
- Seeking to influenceknowledge → attitudes → behaviors
- Therapeutic Jurisprudence → foundation of treatment court model
  - Law as helping hand

Structure of the CJS & Treatment Courts

Distal Goals	Proximal Goals	Outcomes	Activities	
"Big picture" Long-term	<ul> <li>Shorter in proximity</li> <li>Taken together will allow you to achieve distal goals</li> </ul>	Change statements     Will allow you to achieve goals	- What is being done to achieve outcomes?	Must understand individuals' lived
Maintain oublic safety	Retribution	Increase compliance w/ court orders (pre- trial, judgement, probation, etc.)	- Written documents - Oral discussions - Activities	experiences
- Reduce recidivism - Eliminate	Restoration	Increase attendance at court hearings, appointments, etc.	-Reminders -Regular scheduling -Planner -Acknowledging attendance	Must convey expectations in a way
revolving door of CJS	Rehabilitation	Decrease criminogenic risk factors	-EBPs - SUD - MH	folks will understand & hear
acilitate administration	istration	Enhance/bolster protective factors	- COD - Trauma - Criminal thinking	
of justice  - Maintain due process	Deterrence	Increase ties to community	- Parenting - Recovery support services - housing	/
	Incapacitation	Increase stake in conformity	- employment - education - volunteerism -Recovery capital	Role of language
			- personal - family/social - community	

### Labeling theory

- Stigma process of stereotyping & devaluing a group;
   often conscious & explicit
- "Othering"

#### Implicit bias

- Association of stereotypes w/ groups; often unconscious
- What contributes to the development?
- Ashford et al. → multiple studies; found implicit bias associations for derogatory terms

## Person first language

- Kelly & Westeroff (2010) > "substance abuser" more personal culpability & punitive action vs. "having a substance use disorder"
- Denver et al. (2017) → crime vs. person first language significant increase in estimates of re-offending among individuals w/ violent convictions

Role of Language in Achieving Goals

# Changes in Language Over Time

#### 2013

- DSM-5
- "substance abuse & dependence" → "substance use disorder"

## 2017

- Associated Press
- stylebook updates removing terms like abuse, addict, & abuser









#### 2015

- International Society of Addiction Journal Editors
- recommended against the use of stigmatizing language

## 2021

- American Medical Association
- released guidance on stigmatizing language

## The belief that addiction is a....



...varies across sub-groups within the general population

- lived experience
- occupation
- race/class/gender

Addiction Policy Forum, Recovery Reinvented, & University of Delaware. (2021). 2021 North Dakota Stigma Survey: Findings on Attitudes, Levels of Stigma, and Key Policies to Address Addiction.

Phrases/Words to avoid	Phrases/Words to use instead	
Substance abuser/addict/druggie/junkie	A person with a substance use disorder	
Alcoholic/drunk	Person with an alcohol use disorder	
Dirty	Actively using Urine screen indicates use of [insert drug name] and/or alcohol	
Clean	Abstinent; not actively using; in recovery	
Relapse/lapse/"slip up"	Resumes use or Recurrence of symptoms Return to use	
Medication-Assisted Treatment Opioid replacement therapy	Medication; Medication for addiction treatment (MAT)	
Offender/felon/ex-con/ probationer/thug/criminal/delinquent	Person who is/was justice involved Participant, individual, client, [insert individual's name]	
"Crazy"	Mental health diagnosis/condition or mental illness	
Mentally ill	Living with mental illness	

Using images...what messages do they convey?

■ Images are another form of language

- Where applicable:
  - Brochures
  - Wall hangings
  - Publications
  - Participant/client materials
- Why important?



Hulsey, J., Zawislak, K., Sawyer-Morris, G., & Earnshaw, V. (2023). Stigmatizing imagery for substance use disorders: a qualitative exploration. *Health & Justice*, 11(1), 28.

## Don't Use







**Treatment/Patient Imagery** 

## Don't Use





## Use



**SUD** imagery

Law Enf. Don't Use Use





## Courtroom







Jail/Prison

Don't Use



Use



Re-entry





# Changing our language/terminology

- First and foremost, the individuals with whom you interact are human beings!
  - Refrain from relegating individuals to the 'other' category.
  - No one should be reduced to their worst act.
- Change process may be long & involve setbacks.
  - We can remove some barriers through changing language.
  - What are the goals you're working to achieve?
- Empathy, compassion, & accountability

## Call to Action



Based on what you learned today, what <u>two</u> changes can you make to the language you use?



Identify <u>two</u> individuals with whom you can share this information.



## THANK YOU!

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