



Addiction isn't a choice. But we can all choose how we talk about the disease — changing minds, opening innovative pathways to care and saving lives.

START A CONVERSATION

How we talk about addiction matters

Leading the community conversation about the public health crisis of addiction starts with the words we use. The stigma of the disease keeps many of our neighbors from seeking the treatment they need. Addict, user, junkie and other negative terms for those living with addiction are not only inaccurate, they're harmful and a barrier to treatment.



CHANGING MINDS

Learn more about addiction at:
ChangingMindsLarimer.org

Read true stories of addiction at:
ChangingMindsLarimer.org/stories

Learn more about the language of addiction at:
RecoveryAnswers.org/Addiction-ary

✓ **USE** Person-first, non-stigmatizing language

✗ **AVOID** Negative, bias-building language

PERSON				PERSON
	Having a substance use disorder, engaged in risky use of substances	●	●	Abuser, substance abuser
	Person living with/experiencing addiction	●	●	Addict, user
	Patient, client, consumer	●	●	Problem
	Having an alcohol use disorder, experiencing alcohol addiction	●	●	Alcoholic, drunk, wino
	Having an opioid/drug use disorder, experiencing opioid/drug addiction, under the influence of a substance	●	●	Junkie, druggie, burnout, stoner, meth head, drug offender
	Person without an addiction	●	●	Normal, healthy
DISEASE				DISEASE
	Chronic disease of addiction	●	●	Personal/lifestyle choice, moral failing
	Substance use or misuse, risky/harmful use	●	●	Abuse, substance/alcohol/drug abuse
	Active addiction, substance use disorder	●	●	Habit, drug habit
	Alcohol/drug disorder	●	●	Alcohol/drug dependence
TESTING				TESTING
	Negative drug screen, substance-free	●	●	Clean drug screen
	Positive drug screen	●	●	Dirty drug screen, hot UA, failed UA
TREATMENT				TREATMENT
	Medication-assisted treatment, pharmacotherapy, group and individual counseling, medications for opioid use disorder	●	●	Replacement/substitution therapy, medication is a crutch
	Evidence-based treatment, outcomes-based treatment	●	●	Rehab, drunk tank
	Individualized treatment, Integrated treatment plan, person-centered treatment and recovery, continuing care	●	●	Abstinence (or any single path to recovery) worked for me (my cousin, etc.), you have to go cold turkey, need to hit rock bottom
RECOVERY				RECOVERY
	Had a setback in recovery, recurrence of use	●	●	Repeat offender, non-compliant, failed treatment, relapse
	Addiction survivor, person living in recovery, addiction-free	●	●	Clean, sober, ex-addict
	In remission, maintained recovery	●	●	Cured, stayed clean