

Annotated Resource List for Addressing Substance Use Disorder Stigma/Bias

TOOL PURPOSE

Individuals with mental health and substance use challenges are over-represented in the criminal justice system and are often treated as a moral or criminal issue rather than a health condition, which contributes to increased stigma and bias (Mitchell et al., 2016). Previous experiences with individuals who use drugs and a lack of understanding about the nature of recovery from a substance use disorder (SUD) can lead community supervision officers to hold stigma and biases against individuals under supervision who have a SUD.

Community supervision leadership can address stigma and bias within their agencies by increasing awareness of bias or stereotypes and providing training to increase understanding of SUD and the nature of harm reduction. Trainings and education for community supervision officers that build awareness of stigma, negative attitudes and prejudice toward people who use drugs can improve the culture and reduce the stigma surrounding SUD. Consider the following annotated resource list for helpful tools and resources for addressing and stigma and bias.

Title	Source	Description
Words Matter: How Language Choice Can Reduce Stigma	Education Development Center	Guidance and resources on language and stigma related to SUD.
Person First Guidelines	Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities Services	Guidance on adopting person-first language related to mental health and substance use, trauma, resilience and LGBTQIA+.
Bias-free Policing	The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)	These documents emphasize an agency's commitment to unbiased, equitable treatment for all persons.
Preventing and Reducing Stigma: Criminal Justice	Great Lakes Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network	Information on how structural stigma plays a specialized role in the criminal justice system and how stigma can be addressed in the criminal justice system.
Addressing Stigma and Substance Use Disorders: A HealtheKnowledge Course	Mountain Plains Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network	A four-hour online course provides content on topics relating to stigma in the SUD field. This course is designed for a variety of professionals who serve individuals with substance use disorders.
Deflection and Pre-arrest Diversion: Applying a Harm Reduction Approach	The National Council for Mental Wellbeing	Tool that discusses strategies to integrate harm reduction principles and practices in deflection and pre-arrest diversion programs to better support people at risk of overdose.
Community Supervision And Treatment Of Individuals With Substance Use Disorder	National Governor's Association	Policy brief that highlights the common challenges and opportunities for governors and state officials to inform state and local policy development and improve outcomes for individuals with SUD who are under community supervision.

Title	Source	Description
The Effect of Stigma on Criminal Offenders' Functioning: A Longitudinal Mediation Model*	National Library of Medicine	Research study that explores criminal offenders' psychological responses to stigma after release from jail/prison. Results from the study showed that perceived stigma predicted worse community adjustment through anticipated stigma, and this varied by race.
How to Confront Bias in the Criminal Justice System	American Bar Association	Resource that discusses implicit racial bias in the criminal justice system based on studies conducted by the American Bar Association and the Pew Research Center.
Language Matters when Discussing Substance Use	The National Council for Mental Wellbeing	Fact sheet that discusses the impact of language and why it is important to use non-stigmatizing, person-first language to reduce stigma and negative bias when discussing substance use.
Stigma, Discrimination and Addiction Webinar	The National Council for Mental Wellbeing	Webinar on the correlation between trauma, substance use and social determinants of health. This webinar discusses the use of language as it relates to addiction and addresses attitudes and beliefs on SUD interventions and treatments.



REFERENCES

- Mitchell, S. G., Willet, J., Monico, L. B., James, A., Rudes, D. S., Viglione, J., Schwartz, R. P., Gordon, M. S., & Friedmann, P. D. (2016). Community correctional agents' views of medication-assisted treatment: Examining their influence on treatment referrals and community supervision practices. *Substance Abuse*, 37(1), 127–133. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08897077.2015.1129389>