

Managing Addiction-Related Stigma

Disclaimer: This health information is being provided for general educational purposes only. Your health care provider is the single best source of information regarding your health. Please consult your health care provider if you have any questions about your health or treatment.

Understanding Addiction and Stigma

Addiction can affect many parts of a person's life. Stigma is one of the challenges of addiction. It is a false belief that addiction is a choice based on lack of willpower. Stigma can damage the health and well-being of those with opioid use disorder.^{1,2}

About 50%
of a person's addiction risk
is related to genetics.¹

How Stigma Could Affect You³



Treatment Options

Some health care providers may be uncomfortable working with people with opioid use disorder.

Find a health care provider you feel comfortable with. Look for someone who talks to you about your treatment plan and options. Speak up and ask questions at any time.



Harm Reduction (Ways to Reduce Risks of Drug Use)

Needle exchanges, addiction medication, and safe drug-use rooms help to decrease drug-use risks. These options aren't always available due to stigma.

When appropriate, look for harm reduction options to use substances more safely. Ask your health care provider about what's available in your area.



Self-Esteem and Mental Health

Discrimination may impact your self-worth. You may feel less likely to reach out for treatment.

You are not alone. Reach out to your health care provider if you are feeling depressed or ashamed of drug use.

It is important to find the right health care professional for you. Find someone who will support and guide you through recovery.³

References

1. Substance use, abuse, and addiction. American Psychological Association. Published June 2008. Updated July 2022. Accessed September 2023. <https://www.apa.org/topics/substance-use-abuse-addiction>
2. Reducing the Stigma of Addiction. Johns Hopkins Medicine. Accessed September 2023. <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/stigma-of-addiction/>
3. Villa L. Addiction and Stigma. American Addiction Centers. Updated June 2022. Accessed September 2023. <https://drugabuse.com/addiction/stigma/>