

Code of ethics for guest speakers presenting to the Waukesha County Heroin Task Force (HTF)

Purpose of this Code of Ethics Document

This code of ethics document is intended to provide guidance for guest speakers who present to the Waukesha County Heroin Task Force. We know there is stigma associated with drug and alcohol use and addiction. This is an opportunity for us to build understanding and awareness to reduce stigmatizing language in our work together.

We ask that you review the information below and examine your presentation through a lens that promotes compassion and understanding for people suffering from substance use disorder. This document is not intended to be a comprehensive or definitive statement on the topic, and it should not be interpreted as such.

Prior to presenting to the Heroin Task Force Community Partners, we ask you to submit your presentation and engage in a brief meeting with members from the HTF Design Team and Stigma Reduction Action Team. Please email the HTF administrative specialist, Nicole Breu at nbreu@waukeshacounty.gov and she will coordinate this meeting and/or forward any questions you might have to the appropriate person.

Stigma Reduction Information & Action to Consider

The stigma associated with substance use can have several negative consequences. It can make it difficult for people to get the help they need, it can lead to social isolation, and it can increase the risk of relapse. It is important to challenge the stigma associated with substance use and to promote a more compassionate and understanding approach to this issue.

The information contained in this code of ethics is based on the best available evidence, but it is important to note that the field of addiction science is constantly evolving. As new research is conducted, it is possible that some of the information in this code of ethics will need to be updated.

- Be respectful of all participants, regardless of their personal experiences with drug use disorder. This includes avoiding language that is stigmatizing or judgmental and using respectful pronouns and terms.
 - Use person-first language. This means referring to people who have a substance use disorder as "people with substance use disorder" rather than "addicts" or "junkies."
 - Avoid using stigmatizing language. This includes words and phrases like "junkie," "crackhead," "loser," and "worthless." These labels can be harmful because they

reinforce negative stereotypes about people with addictions and make it difficult for them to get the help they need.

- Focus on the facts about substance use disorder and avoid making generalizations or stereotypes. This means providing accurate information about the causes, symptoms, and treatment of substance use disorder, and avoiding making assumptions about people who have a substance use disorder.
- Be aware of your own biases, and work to present information in a way that is fair and balanced. This means being aware of your own personal beliefs and experiences about drug use disorder, and working to present information in a way that is objective and unbiased.
- Be open to feedback from participants and be willing to learn from your mistakes. This means being willing to listen to the experiences of people who have a substance use disorder, and being willing to change your presentation if you are providing inaccurate or harmful information.

In addition to these general principles, here are some specific ways to reduce stigma in your presentation:

- Share stories of recovery. This can help to humanize people who have a substance use disorder and show that recovery is possible.
- Emphasize the role of treatment. This can help to dispel the myth that people with a substance use disorder are beyond help.

Substance use disorder is often seen as a moral failing, rather than a medical condition. This can lead to people with addiction being judged and condemned, rather than being treated with compassion and understanding. By following these guidelines, you can help to reduce the stigma associated with substance use disorder and promote a more compassionate and understanding approach to this issue.