

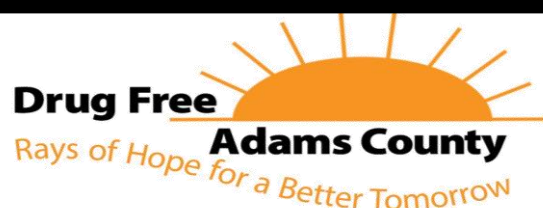
Drug Free Adams County

313 W. Jefferson St., Rm 328

Decatur, IN 46733

Email: kellys@co.adams.in.us

Phone: 260-724-5368



Reducing Stigma May Lead to Increased Recovery

Addiction is a chronic disease because it causes long-lasting changes to the brain. Even so, addiction can be treated and managed. Unfortunately, substance abuse disorders come with stigmas attached, and people seeking treatment are negatively stereotyped. Sometimes, fear of these stigmas keeps people from getting the help they need.

Addiction and Teens

Teens who struggle with drugs or alcohol face stigmas associated with addiction every day, causing them to feel at odds with themselves and the world around them. Additionally, the threat of societal judgment prevents many parents from getting their teens the help they need, because they worry about what their friends, coworkers, extended family and even doctors will think of their situation. The end result is an unaddressed teenage addiction that can ultimately worsen without treatment.

Reducing the Stigma of Addiction

If the stigmas of addiction and rehabilitation can be reduced, people suffering from the disease may feel more confident to step forward and seek help. One way to reduce the stigma of addiction is to communicate using “person-first” language. By changing how we speak about affected persons and their situations, we can minimize the dehumanizing stigma effect. Here are some examples:

SAY THIS:	NOT THIS:
Person with substance use disorder	Addict, user, druggie, junkie, abuser
Disease	Drug habit
Person living in recovery	Ex-addict
Person arrested for a drug violation	Drug offender
Substance dependent	Hooked
Had a setback	Relapsed
Maintained recovery; substance-free	Stayed clean
Negative drug screen	Clean drug screen
Positive drug screen	Dirty drug screen

Reducing the stigma surrounding addiction will lead to the removal of barriers in acknowledging the problem, seeking and accessing treatment and, ultimately, to recovery.

For more information, please visit our website: www.DrugFreeAdamsCounty.org