Did You Know
The terms “abuse” and “abuser” imply someone has willingly done something wrong. Research shows that this belief can lead to an increase in stigma and reduce the quality of care people with a substance use disorder receive.

Knowledge Domain
If you want to connect with your patients and help them along the road to recovery, the way you talk about addiction matters. That means working together, as a staff, to promote a non-stigmatizing environment. Here are a few tips for talking about substance use disorder or other mental health disorders:

- Use medical terminology.
- Use person-first language.
- Avoid stigmatizing terms.
- Humanize the condition.
- Use reliable sources.
- Be respectful.

Recommended Group Activity
Identify and discuss the language commonly used to describe addiction or patients with substance use disorder (below) – then develop alternatives that promote recovery.

Suggested terms for discussion:
- Refused
- Resisted
- Client believes that...
- Paranoid
- Manipulative
- Non-compliant
- Unmotivated
- Suffering from...
- Low functioning
- Clean/dirty (as in urine drug screens)

Delivering an Effective Message
When Communicating with Patients

To Learn More
Revising The Language of Addiction
http://bit.ly/2ZghQ8N
Recovery Oriented Language Guide
Abstinence-Based Treatment Works