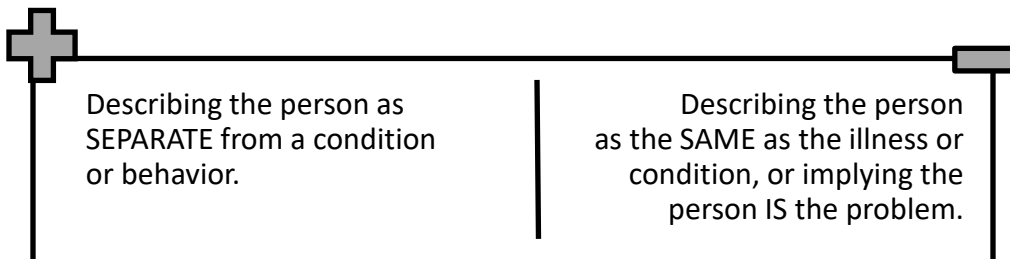


Stigma Training Video #4 (Part 1 of 2): HOW CAN I MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

LABELING THEORY

Labeling theory suggests that a person’s self-identity and behavior may be determined or influenced by the terms used to describe or classify them. ¹

LANGUAGE AND LABELS



WORDS ARE POWERFUL!

- Use non-stigmatizing, person-first language. ²
- Avoid describing people as the problem or the condition. ²

ACTIVITY

Consider these common words or phrases, and think about better words or phrases to describe the situation in a way that more uses “person-first language.”

ADDICT	
SCHIZOPHRENIC	
DIRTY UA	
AUTISTIC	

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What language choices – personal or professional – could be more inclusive and less stigmatizing?
- How do you believe stigma can be changed or impacted simply by language choices?
- How do you believe that change will occur?

¹ Link, B. G., Cullen, F. T., Struening, E., Shrout, P. E., & Dohrenwend, B. P. (1989). A modified labeling theory approach to mental disorders: An empirical assessment. *American Sociological Review*, 54(3), 400–423. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2095613>

² Merrill, J. E., & Monti, P. M. (2015). Influencers of the stigma complex toward substance use and substance use disorders. USA: Center for Alcohol and Addiction Studies, Brown University.