MENTAL-HEALTH STIGMA

Words matter. Compassion changes everything.

Stigma can make people feel ashamed or afraid to seek support. Small language changes can make help feel safer.

INSTEAD OF	TRY
What's wrong with you?	How can I support you?
They're an addict.	They're a person experiencing a substance-use disorder.

Five ways to reduce stigma

1. **Use person-first language**
   Put the person before a condition or experience.
2. **Listen without judgment**
   Make room for the person's own words and needs.
3. **Avoid labels and stereotypes**
   Do not reduce a person to a diagnosis, substance, or crisis.
4. **Share reliable information**
   Use official health sources and correct myths calmly.
5. **Encourage support without shame**
   Offer choices and help make the connection when invited.

Seeking support is a constructive step. Substance-use disorders and mental-health conditions are treatable health conditions.

Need emotional or suicide crisis support? Call or text 988. For immediate danger, call 911.

Sources: samhsa.gov/mental-health and 988lifeline.org