

WHAT CAN I DO? HOW CAN I HELP REDUCE THE STIGMA?

1. Change the language used around addiction:

By using person-first language we can make great progress toward reducing the deadly stigma associated with addiction.

“When you change how you talk about opioid use disorder and see it as a medical condition, you help others heal. “Words can hurt. Words can heal.”

<u>Words to avoid</u>	<u>Words to use</u>
Addict	Person with substance use disorder
Alcoholic	Person with alcohol use disorder
Drug problem, drug habit	Substance use disorder
Drug abuse	Drug misuse, harmful use
Drug abuser	Person with substance use disorder
Clean	Abstinent, not actively using
Dirty	Actively using
A clean drug screen	Testing negative for substance use
A dirty drug screen	Testing positive for substance use
Former/reformed addict/alcoholic	Person in recovery, person in long-term recovery
Opioid replacement, methadone maintenance	Medications for addiction treatment

2. **Look for signs and support colleagues you suspect might be struggling:**

Signs of Addiction in Lawyers:

- Work performance issues. (lack of productivity, missed deadlines, complaints, attendance and extended breaks are just a few.)
- Multiple problems with Co-Workers
- Changes in Behavior
- Lack of Personal Hygiene

3. **If you work in the courts and are involved in cases with a Substance Abuse Disorder component, speak to your adversary and the court about diversion programs and treatment options.**

4. **Talk to your employer about creating an HR policy around substance abuse disorder.**

Ask for firm wide education about Substance Abuse Disorder.

Work with your firm to reduce or remove drinking centered events.

Have resources available to LAP programs or other resources for getting help.

5. **Ask your local LAP to speak to members of your firm about substance abuse.**

6. **Donate to your local LAP to keep the services in place that so many lawyers rely on.**

Every state offers [Lawyer Assistance Programs](#) (LAPs), which provide help to legal professionals who are struggling with addiction, substance abuse, as well as mental disorders like anxiety and depression.³ It is geared specifically toward working professionals who need specialized care. They can learn how to manage stress, get emotional support, and even go through treatment for problems with alcohol, cocaine, painkillers, and other substances.