

Language Matters



This resource is by the Network of Alcohol and Other Drugs Agencies (NADA) and New South Wales Users and AIDS Association (NUAA).

This resource provides guidance on how health workers can use person-centred language to help empower clients using alcohol and other drugs.

Language matters

Language is powerful—especially when discussing alcohol and other drugs and the people who use them. Stigmatising language reinforces negative stereotypes. “Person-centred” language focuses on the person, not their substance use.

When working with people who use alcohol and other drugs...

👍 try this	👎 instead of this
substance use, non-prescribed use	abuse misuse problem use non-compliant use
person who uses/injects drugs	drug user/abuser
person with a dependence on...	addict junkie druggie alcoholic

Summary: Language Matters is a quick guide for how AOD (alcohol and other drug) workers can use language when discussing alcohol and other drugs to empower clients. It promotes the use of person-centred language and aims to decrease stigma associated with AOD use. It is intended for use by the non government AOD sector.

Developers: This resource was developed by the [Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies \(NADA\)](#) and the [NSW Users and AIDS Association \(NUAA\)](#), in consultation with non government AOD workers and people who use drugs.

Year: 2018

Costs: Free

Evidence base: This resource has undergone expert review. Refer to the resource for full reference list.

[Access the Language Matters guide](#)