Checklist of Things You Can Do to Help Reduce Stigma in Your Community

Educate yourself:

Learn more about stigma, addiction, mental health, harm reduction, addiction treatment, and recovery:

- ☐ Read about reliable literature
- ☐ Watch the educational videos in this stigma toolkit
- ☐ Follow the links to additional trainings and reliable articles contained in this toolkit
- ☐ Learn ways to prevent addiction, the early warning signs of addiction, and when and how to seek help for yourself or others

Learn more about your own biases:

Become aware of your own biases, including the ways that you may stereotype, hold prejudices, and discriminate:

- ☐ Complete the self-rating worksheet in this toolkit to identify personal biases and other ways that you may stigmatize others
- ☐ Use the additional links provided in this toolkit to help you develop a greater awareness of your own biases

Learn and practice better ways to talk about addiction:

Determine whether you speak stigma and practice changing the words you use to reduce judgments and stigma:

- ☐ Learn person-first language (link to image of example)
- ☐ Don't sensationalize addiction or recovery ("suffers from," "victim of," etc.)
- ☐ Don't generalize – people with an addiction or mental health disorder are not all the same
- ☐ Discontinue using substance-related terms as metaphors ("addicted to power, in recovery fr

Seek contact-based experiences:

Look for opportunities to interact with and support people with an addiction or mental health disorder. When you meet people with lived experience, remember to treat them with dignity and respect while helping them to keep hope alive.

- **Stop normalizing substance use and begin normalizing seeking help as a result of substance use by involving people with lived experience in community solution planning**
- **Practice empathy and compassion towards people with lived experience**
- **Regularly interact with people with lived experience and look for what you have in common rather than differences**
- **Listen more and assume less**
- **Support events like Recovery Month**
- **Support the friends and family members of people with substance use disorders**
- **Host or facilitate recovery meetings, offer both faith-based and non-faith-based options**

Educate and advocate:

Speak up in personal conversations and actively advocate for policy changes that support community inclusion of those with an addiction:

- **Join or start a local prevention or recovery coalition**
- **Educate friends, peers, and family members in everyday conversation**
- **Communicate in chat rooms and other social settings**
- **Use social media as a platform for change**
- **Educate local media on how to report on addiction and substance use**
- **Call people "in" for a conversation rather than calling them "out" in a confrontation**
- **Learn strategies for talking with people about use patterns to meet them where they are**
- **Vote and participate in campaigns of candidates who support treatment and recovery legislation**
- **Join and support organizations that work to reduce stigma**
- **Support local issues and helpful policies**
- **Advocate for NARCAN®, Medicated Assisted Recovery (MAR), and recovery housing options in your community**

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