



RECOVER ALASKA

The AP Stylebook changes

AP Stylebook 2017 - avoid words like abuse, problem, addict and abuser in most uses

Avoid words like alcoholic, addict, user, and abuser unless they are in quotations or names of organizations, such as Alcoholics Anonymous. ... Instead, choose phrasing like 'he was addicted, people with heroin addiction, or he used drugs.'

Addiction to alcohol and other drugs is considered a disease that affects a person's brain and behavior. 'Addiction' is the preferred term for the disease, although 'substance-use disorder' is preferred by some clinicians.

Also supported by:

American Medical Association

American Society of Addiction Medicine

International Society of Addiction Journal Editors

Why does it really matter?

"Substance use disorder (the most severe form of which is referred to as "addiction") is a chronic brain disorder from which people can and do recover. Nonetheless, sometimes the terminology used in the discussion of substance use can suggest that problematic use of substances and substance use disorders are the result of a personal failing; that people choose the disorder, or they lack the willpower or character to control their substance use.

Research also has shown that people with substance use disorders are viewed more negatively than people with physical or psychiatric disabilities. Researchers found that even highly trained substance use disorder and mental health clinicians were significantly more likely to assign blame and believe that an individual should be subjected to more punitive (e.g., jail sentence) rather than therapeutic measures, when the subject of a case vignette was referred to as a "substance abuser" rather than as a "person with a substance use disorder." In a public perception study the term "abuse" was found to have a high association with negative judgments and punishment.⁶ Negative attitudes among health professionals have been found to adversely affect quality of care and subsequent treatment outcomes.^{7,8} Shame and concerns about social, economic, and legal consequences of disclosing a substance use disorder may deter help seeking among those with substance use disorders and their families."

Excerpts from "Office of National Drug Control Policy – Changing the Language of Addiction"

<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2017/01/13/changing-language-addiction>



RECOVER ALASKA

What should you say instead?

Person-first language

- Person with substance use disorder
- Person with a disability
- Person experiencing homelessness
- Person with a mental health condition

The AP recommends "person with addiction." However, addiction is the square of the rectangle of substance use disorders – a person may have a substance use disorder without being considered to have an addiction or dependence.

Relapse → return to use

Addictionary

<https://www.recoveryanswers.org/addiction-ary/>

ALCOHOLIC

(stigma alert) A person who exhibits impaired control over engaging in alcohol use despite suffering often severe harms caused by such activity.

While commonly used, to help decrease stigma associated with these conditions it has been [recommended to use "person first" language](#); instead of describing someone as an "addict" to describe them as "a person with, or suffering from, addiction or substance use disorder."

Another succinct resource - <https://journalistsresource.org/tip-sheets/8-tips-reporting-alcohol-drinking/>

Also, www.RecoverAlaska.org has the Addictionary listed, as well as other resources, facts, and data about alcohol.