

Safer Language

Combating stigma related to mental health illness, suicide, and substance use starts with how we use language – something that continuously evolves. That's why we must all be aware of any outdated language being used in the media and around us every day. Everyone can be a champion against stigma when advocating the use of accurate and respectful language. So, as you communicate with others, be mindful of the impact of your language.

Language Matters

Stigmatizing	Respectful
It drives me crazy	It bothers/annoys/frustrates me
This is nuts	This is interesting/strange/peculiar/funny
This individual suffers from depression	They live with/are experiencing depression
Mentally ill or insane person	Person living with a mental health problem or illness
Committed suicide Successful suicide	Died by suicide
Failed or unsuccessful suicide attempt	Attempted suicide
Substance abuse	Substance use or substance use disorder
Everyone who is a junkie...	Everyone who uses substances...
They used to be an addict	They are in recovery

If you are in distress, you can call or text **988 (1-866-APPELLE in Quebec)** at any time.
If it is an emergency, call 9-1-1 or go to your local emergency department.

Please visit **OpeningMinds.org** to learn more about training options.



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