

# Removing Stigma

## In The Pharmacy Setting



### Removing Stigma from the Patient-Pharmacist Relationship

- Be mindful of words.** Avoid slang terms such as “crazy,” “nuts,” or “addict.” Avoid “ics,” like “schizophrenic.” Instead, use terms like “patients with schizophrenia.”
- Consider tone.** A condescending or abrupt tone can destroy rapport.
- Be aware of body language.** Crossed arms, stepping back, or turning away conveys defensiveness and hostility. Be open and warm.
- Focus on behavior.** If a patient is displaying symptoms of an illness, describe the behavior, not the person, when speaking with other providers.

Pharmacists and pharmacy workers have to overcome their own internal biases and misperceptions of others. When you feel frustrated by a patient’s behavior—perhaps when they continue to engage in risky drug use or refuse to take medication—remind yourself that each individual has the right to make decisions, and you can’t force change upon someone. You do, however, have the power to instill hope and help guide someone to more positive life changes.

*Developed in partnership with the Alabama Department of Mental Health and the Alabama Department of Public Health.*

*Funding for activities performed under this Grant was provided by the ADPH, Bureau of Prevention, Promotion, and Support through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Grant number 6 NU17CE924964-01-01, Overdose Data to Action, Injury prevention and Control Research and State and Community Based Programs Funding (93.136) for budget period September 1, 2019 through August 31, 2020.*

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