

words DO hurt: taking the “dis” out of functional language




bart andrews, phd

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BHR
Behavioral Health Responses

Who am I, why am I here?
– Admiral Stockdale, 1992

- Father
- Husband
- Psychologist
- PhD
- Vice President Clinical Operations-BHR
- Long Term Recovery-substance use
- Suicide Attempt Survivor



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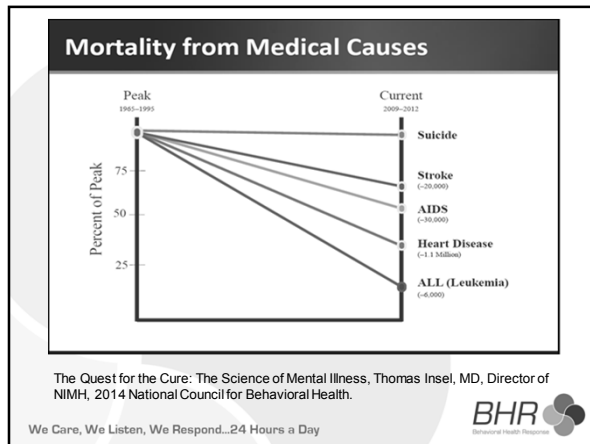
Have you heard this joke?

Psychiatrist says to the nurse and behavioral health intake staff, “Don’t send me any borderlines, med seekers or multiple suicide attempters”

The punch line: there is no punch line, this is not a joke, it was said by a real doctor at a real hospital- probably even today.

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Why haven't we made more progress?

Culture and Language-Part of Problem

- Blame, shame and prejudice
- Client motivation vs. treatment efficacy
- Emphasis on individual instead of the environment surrounding individual
- NOT Mental Wellness as "Social" Health
- Misunderstanding of professional boundaries

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Customer-Clinician Relationship

The quality of the relationship between customer and the clinician impacts EVERYTHING. Better relationship =

- 1) Better outcome
- 2) Better customer satisfaction
- 3) Better clinician rating of job satisfaction
- 4) Lower the rate of complaints and lawsuits

HAPPIER CUSTOMERS = HAPPIER CLINICIANS

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Understanding Change



- 40% from EXTRA therapeutic factors
- 30% Therapeutic Alliance
- 15% is derived from hope/expectancy
- 15% specific to therapeutic technique

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What do you make of this?

- What's different about the word customer?
- What are EXTRA therapeutic variables?
- Would you have guessed how little of change is connected to EBP?
- Who's hope and expectancy?????

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Lets talk angels and HARPS

- Recovery potential test developed
- Psychologists screened, ID'd and dist. HARPS (High Alcoholism Recovery Potential)
- 1 year later, HARP groups significantly better than non HARP
- What was the secret?

Leake and King (1977)

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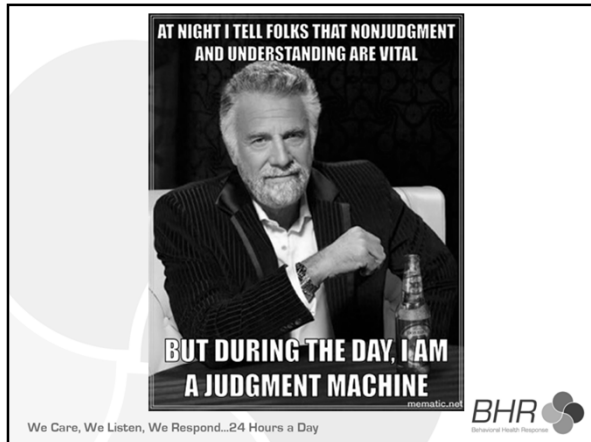
Clinicians, attitudes and words

- Given vignettes and only difference was
 - Is a substance abuser or
 - Has a substance use disorder
- “Is substance abuser” was rated higher on punishment-perpetrator factor but
- On 6 point scale, both groups rated close to three, meaning they believed person in tx bore significant responsibility for situation AND THESE WERE ALL MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

• Kelly, J. F. & Westerhoff, C.M. Does it matter how we refer to individuals with substance-related conditions? A randomized study of two commonly used terms. International Journal of Drug Policy (2009).

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Glossary of Selected Language

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/03/03/drug-addiction-language_n_6773246.html?utm_hp_ref=tw

Language of	Try:
addict	Person with a substance use disorder
addicted to X	Person with a serious substance use disorder
addiction	Has an X use disorder
	Has a serious X use disorder
	Has a substance use disorder involving X (if more than one substance is involved)
	Substance use disorder
	Serious substance use disorder

Note:
 • "Addiction" is appropriate when quoting findings or research that used the term or if it appears in a proper name of an organization.
 • "Addiction" is appropriate when speaking of the disease process that leads to someone developing a substance use disorder that includes compulsive use (for example, "the field of addiction medicine," and "the science of addiction").

BHR logo and tagline 'We Care, We Listen, We Respond...24 Hours a Day' are at the bottom.



So what do we do?

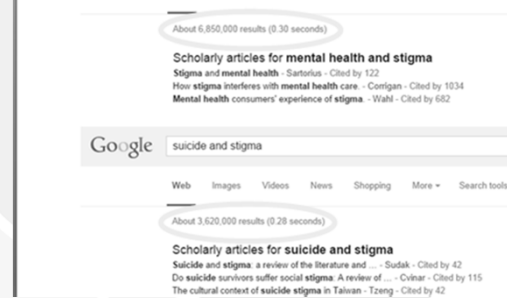
Suicide/Emotional Wellness is a SOCIAL Health Problem

- Language, Messaging and Suicide Prevention
- Evidence Informed and Care Focused Intervention
- The Way Forward- The Role of Lived Experience
- Staying in non judgment with our attitudes and words

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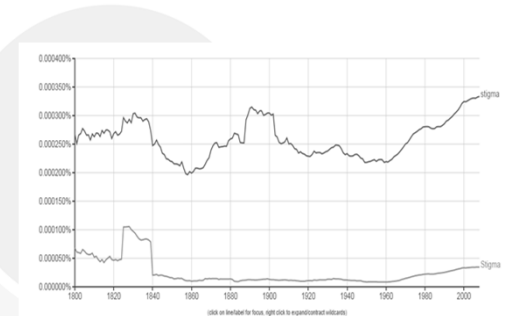


SO MUCH STIGMA



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Fun with Definitions (or not)

stig·ma
'stigmə/

noun

noun: **stigma**; plural noun: **stigmata**; plural noun: **stigmas**

1. a mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality, or person.

"the stigma of **mental disorder**"

synonyms:

shame, disgrace, dishonor, ignominy, opprobrium, humiliation, (bad) reputation

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Our Language is SLOPPY

What do we mean by "stigma?"

- Prejudice and discrimination?
- Barriers to seeking help?
- Negative emotions connected with MI?
- Self acceptance?
- Acceptance by others?
- SAMHSA no longer uses or endorses this term, why do we still use it

WE NEED INTENTIONAL LANGUAGE

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YOU CANNOT STIGMATIZE ME BECAUSE

I
DECLINE

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What this all Means

"Stigma" means brand or sore. It is now used almost exclusively with mental health. It automatically, unfairly and erroneously victimizes a person diagnosed with a psychiatric condition. A person DOES NOT have stigma. Society does. Society has been branded by fear and ignorance.

The word "stigma" is no longer used as a medical term, but it brings dishonor and is a cause of shame, reproach or discredit to people with psychiatric conditions. It should no longer be used in either educational institutions, by governments or the media because it promotes discrimination. Instead, use the word "prejudice" (negative thinking) which can be concretely addressed because it causes discrimination (unjust treatment of certain groups of people), creates negative bias and promotes negative stereotyping.

Language: A Mental Health Primer by Harold A. Maio and Sandy Naiman
"Coming Out Crazy" for The Toronto Star at <http://thestar.blogs.com/mentalhealth>

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The Functional Dichotomy

Why We Must Strike the Terms
 "High Functioning" and "Low
 Functioning" from Our Vocabulary

By LEAH HARRIS

Featured Blogs March 3, 2015



<http://www.madinamerica.com/2015/03/must-strike-terms-high-functioning-low-functioning-vocabulary>

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**Customers cannot fail, but providers
 and systems fail all the time**



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MORE HURTFUL LANGUAGE

- Commit Suicide
- Compliant vs Non Compliant
- Axis II – this is out of date and coded
- Resistant
- Manipulative or my favorite “gamey”
- Personality Disorder (not only are you ill, your whole personhood is jacked up)

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Say Instead

- Suicided or died by suicide
- Treatment is adherent or not (not client)
- Drop it, its old and coded language
- Needful, help seeking, persistent, engaged
- Experiencing emotional deregulation or the primary symptoms
- Always use person centered language

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I AM NOT DEFINED BY MY DIAGNOSIS, THAT
IS JUST A LABEL A STRANGER GAVE ME



DESE'RAE L. STAGE

WWW.LIVETHROUGHTHIS.ORG

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3 Final Thoughts

- If you would not say it in front of your customer, don't say it. PERIOD
- Alter your language to emphasize understanding and compassion versus judgment, blame or stereotyping-be mindful
- If you hear others being hurtful, speak up!

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