

BREAKING THE BARRIERS OF STIGMA



A Special Presentation Brought to You by:



Objectives

Goal: Cover key points about the disease of substance use disorder (SUD), and address stigma as a barrier to recovery including internal stigma, external stigma and recovery resources.

- ❖ Objective 1 – Understand signs and symptoms of substance use disorder
- ❖ Objective 2 – Learn about the impacts of stigma in SUD
- ❖ Objective 3 – Know how language choice can reduce stigma
- ❖ Objective 4 – Know what to do if someone has SUD
- ❖ Learn about recovery resources

High Cost of Substance Misuse

Illicit drug users are likely to miss two or more days of work in the past month and to have worked for three or more employers in the past year. Drugs in the workplace are not issues that organizations can ignore. More than 75% of individuals with substance use disorders continue to maintain their employment but the workplace impact often goes undetected, with the ill-effects attributed to other factors.

Approximately 50% to 80% of all child abuse and neglect cases substantiated by child protective services involve some degree of substance abuse by the child's parents.

EVERY 25 minutes an American baby is born addicted to opioids. Prenatal exposure to alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs has the potential to cause a wide spectrum of physical and developmental challenges for these babies.

Studies show one in five people experiencing homelessness had a chronic substance use disorder.

Crime: As many as 60% of adults in Federal prisons are there for drug-related crimes.

Consequences of Substance Misuse

Fatal overdoses hit a record high last year. Over 81,000 drug overdose deaths occurred in the United States in the 12 months ending in May 2020. This is the highest number of overdose deaths ever recorded in a 12-month period, according to the CDC. Volusia County is similarly impacted with 49 overdose deaths this year from January 1st through March 30th. Overdoses are now the leading cause of injury death.

Other consequences include:

- ❖ Incarceration
- ❖ Potential child abuse and neglect
- ❖ Loss of employment
- ❖ Increased treatment admissions
- ❖ Increased emergency room visits



What is Substance Use Disorder (SUD)?

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) released a new definition of Substance Use Disorder (SUD). “At its core, SUD isn’t just a social problem or moral problem or a criminal problem. It’s a brain problem whose behaviors manifest in these other areas”, said Dr. Michael Miller, past President of ASAM.

Research shows that SUD affects the brain’s reward circuitry, such that memories of previous experiences with food, sex, alcohol, and other drugs trigger cravings and more addictive behaviors. Brain circuitry governing impulse control and judgment is also altered in the brains of those with SUD, resulting in the nonsensical pursuit of "rewards," such as alcohol and other drugs.

What is SUD?

SUD is a chronic, relapsing brain disease characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences. It is a brain disease because drugs change the brain. They change its structure and how it works. These brain changes can be long lasting and can lead to many harmful, self-destructive behaviors. Nearly all addictive drugs directly or indirectly target the brain's reward system by flooding it with dopamine. Dopamine is a neurotransmitter present in regions of the brain that regulate movement, emotion, cognition, motivation, and feelings of pleasure. The overstimulation of this system, which rewards our natural behaviors, produces euphoric effects sought by people who use drugs and teaches them to repeat the behavior.

Source: NIDA

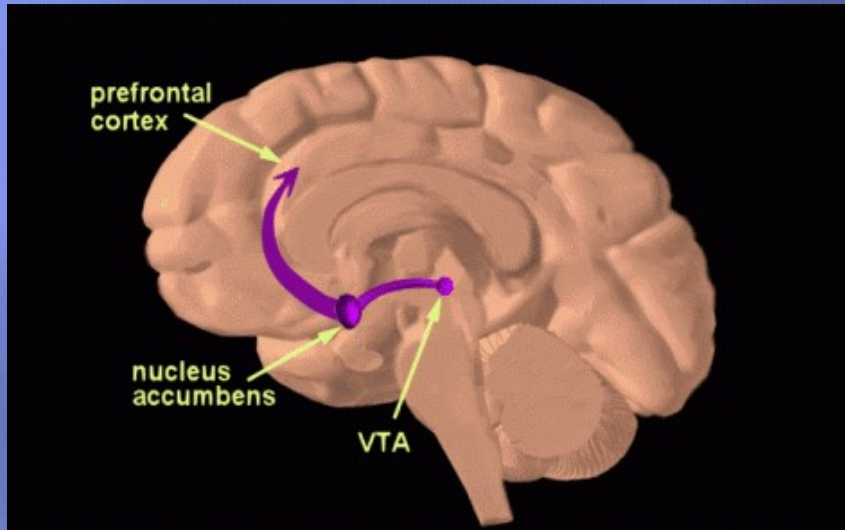
What is SUD?

SUD is characterized in five ways

- ❖ Compulsive use
- ❖ Loss of control
- ❖ Continued use despite consequences
- ❖ Tolerance
- ❖ Withdrawal



SUD and the Brain

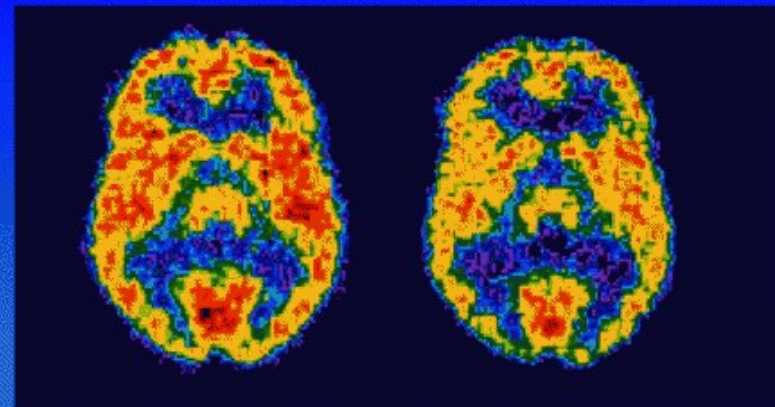


NIDA

www.drugabuse.gov

control

on cocaine

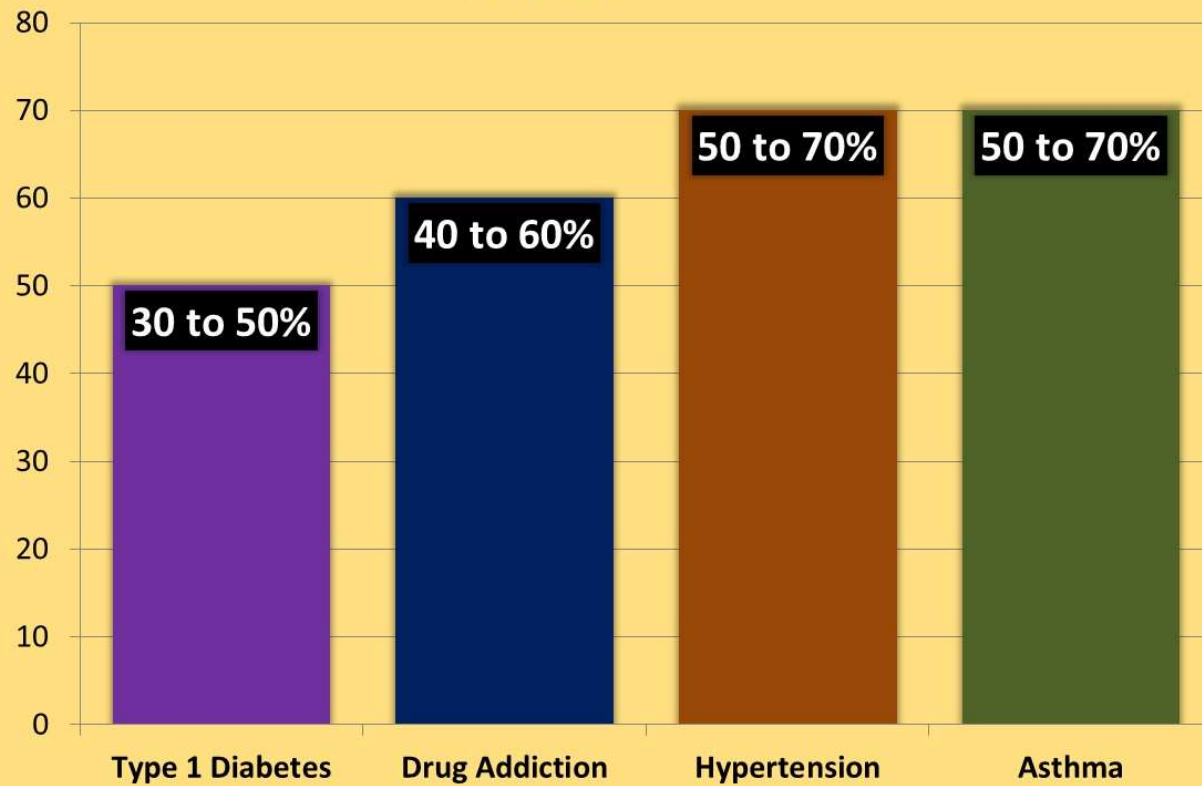


NIDA

www.drugabuse.gov

Chronic Disease and Relapse

COMPARISON OF RELAPSE RATES AMONG CHRONIC ILLNESSES



The Likelihood of Sustaining Recovery Another Year Grows Over Time

Only a third of people with
1 to 12 months of recovery will sustain it
another year

After 1 to 2 years of
recovery, 2/3rds will make it
another year

After 4 years of recovery, about
86% will make it another year

But even after 7 years of recovery, about
14% relapse each year

Source: Dennis, Foss & Scott (2007)

What does recovery look like on average?

Duration of Recovery

1-12 Months

1-3 Years

4-7 Years

- * More recovering friends
- * Less illegal activity & incarceration
- * Less homelessness, violence &
- * Less use by others at home, work & by social peers

- * Virtual elimination of illegal activity and illegal income
- * Better housing & living situations
- * Increasing employment & income

- * More social & spiritual support
- * Better mental health
- * Housing & living situations continue to improve
- * Dramatic rise in employment & income
- * Dramatic drop in people living below the poverty line

Source: Dennis, M.I., Foss, M.A., & Scott, C.K (2007)

Stigma



noun. a mark of disgrace or infamy; a stain or reproach, as on one's reputation.

Stigma

Stigma is a set of negative beliefs that a group or society holds about a topic or group of people. According to the World Health Organization, stigma is a major cause of discrimination and exclusion, contributing to the abuse of human rights. When a person experiences stigma they are seen as less than because of real or perceived health status. Stigma is rarely based on facts but rather on assumptions, preconceptions, and generalizations. Its negative impact can be prevented or lessened through education. Stigma results in prejudice, avoidance, rejection, and discrimination against people who have a socially undesirable trait or engage in culturally marginalized behaviors, such as drug use.

Family, friends and the general public can carry negative feelings about drug use or behavior. They may even use derogatory terms such as “junkie,” “alcoholic,” or “crackhead.” These thoughts, feelings, and labels can create and perpetuate stigma.

Stigma

Stigma has the potential to negatively affect a person's self-esteem, damage relationships with loved ones, and prevent those suffering from substance use disorder from accessing treatment. Stigma is a public health issue — it leads to high rates of death, incarceration, and mental health concerns among dependent populations.

Stigma can be divided into two distinct types:

Social stigma is characterized by prejudice and discriminating behavior directed towards individuals with mental health/SUD problems.



Stigma

In contrast, *perceived stigma* or *self-stigma* is the internalizing by the sufferer of their perceptions of discrimination. Perceived stigma can lead to feelings of shame and poorer treatment outcomes.



Prevalence of SUD Stigma

We live in a society where millions of Americans are dependent on drugs or alcohol and only a small percentage receive treatment at a facility. A National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that **19.7 million Americans age 12 and older battled a substance use disorder.**

Stigma affects all of us – and nearly everyone has felt stigmatized or has stigmatized others at some point in their lives. In a study done by Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, the general public was more likely to have negative attitudes towards those dealing with drug misuse than those who were dealing with mental illness. Additionally, researchers found that people don't generally support insurance, housing, and employment policies that benefited people who were dependent on drugs.

How Stigma Hurts

Stigma negatively impacts a number of areas, including:

- ❖ Willingness to attend treatment and access to healthcare.
- ❖ Harm reduction.
- ❖ Self-esteem and mental health.

Impact on Treatment

Unfortunately, stigmatized people's unwillingness to seek treatment results in higher economic, social, and medical costs. In the United States, costs associated with untreated substance use disorder including those related to healthcare, criminal justice, and lost productivity, amounted to a whopping \$740 billion.



How Stigma Hurts

The stigmatization of people with substance use disorders may be even more problematic in the current [COVID-19 crisis](#). In addition to their greater risk through homelessness and drug use itself, the legitimate fear around contagion may mean that bystanders or even first responders will be reluctant to administer naloxone to people who have overdosed. And there is a danger that overtaxed hospitals will preferentially pass over those with obvious drug problems when making difficult decisions about where to direct lifesaving personnel and resources. ~NIDA



A Picture of Stigma

Becoming dependent on drugs can happen to anyone. It's important to keep in mind that we can all do a better job of decreasing stigma around drug use.

A Recovery Brands survey had respondents provide written reflections about what they wished people or society at large understood about SUD. Their responses help illustrate the importance of remaining kind, compassionate, and human. This image includes quotes from some of the respondents.



"Just because I am/was an addict, doesn't make me a bad person. Deep down inside we are wonderful, loving people."

"It's not a matter of willpower or a lack of a moral compass."

"Addiction is not the entirety of me. I am me; I am not just my addiction. There is a lot of other stuff to love."

"I wish people saw the time that addicts spent alone. Thinking about everything they've done every time they've lied and stole."

Stigma

Effective ways to help reduce stigma include:

- ❖ Offering compassionate support.
- ❖ Display kindness to people in vulnerable situations.
- ❖ Listen while withholding judgment.
- ❖ See a person for who they are, not what drugs they use.
- ❖ Do your research and get educated.
- ❖ Treat people with drug dependency with dignity and respect.
- ❖ Avoid hurtful labels.
- ❖ Replace negative attitudes with evidence-based facts.
- ❖ Speak up when you see someone mistreated because of their drug use.
- ❖ Share your own stories of stigma and recovery.

Our Stories Have Power!

Let's Start a Recovery Epidemic – My Story



Say This Not That

Language Matters

Language is powerful – especially when talking about addictions.
Stigmatizing language perpetuates negative perceptions.

“Person first” language focuses on the person, not the disorder.

When Discussing Addictions...

SAY THIS NOT THAT

SAY THIS	NOT THAT
Person with a substance use disorder	Addict, junkie, druggie
Person living in recovery	Ex-addict
Person living with an addiction	Battling/suffering from an addiction
Person arrested for drug violation	Drug offender
Chooses not to at this point	Non-compliant/bombed out
Medication is a treatment tool	Medication is a crutch
Had a setback	Relapsed
Maintained recovery	Stayed clean
Positive drug screen	Dirty drug screen

KC1

From: justicespeakersinstitute.com

Karen Chrapek, 12/4/2017

Say This Not That

Don't

- ❖ You're so selfish – why don't you just stop?
- ❖ I give up! You'll never beat this addiction.
- ❖ You're doing all wrong. Recovery has to be done this way.

Do

- ❖ You've changed
- ❖ I love you/I care about you
- ❖ You're not alone
- ❖ Everyone needs help
- ❖ It's not your fault
- ❖ Things will get better
- ❖ How can I help?



What Can You Do?

- ❖ **Having a dialogue and asking questions can help the person determine that they have substance use disorder.** Here are some questions to ask:
- ❖ Do you think about drugs/alcohol a lot?
- ❖ Did you ever try to stop or cut down on your drug/alcohol usage but couldn't?
- ❖ Have you ever thought you couldn't fit in or have a good time without the use of drugs/alcohol?
- ❖ Do you ever use drugs/alcohol because you are upset or angry at other people?
- ❖ Have you ever used a drug/alcohol without knowing what it was or what it would do to you?
- ❖ Have you ever taken one drug to get over the effects of another?
- ❖ Have you ever made mistakes at a job or at school because you were using drugs/alcohol.?
- ❖ Does the thought of running out of drugs really scare you?
- ❖ Have you ever stolen drugs/alcohol or stolen to pay for these substances?
- ❖ Have you ever been arrested or in the hospital because of your drug/alcohol use?
- ❖ Have you ever overdosed on drugs/alcohol?
- ❖ Has using drugs/alcohol hurt your relationships with other people?

What Can You Do?

- ❖ Strong Drug Free Workplace Policy
- ❖ Pre-Employment Drug Screens
- ❖ Random Drug Screens
- ❖ Drug Screen Post Accidents
- ❖ Encourage Company-wide Open, Honest Communication
- ❖ Employee Assistance Program
- ❖ Marchman Act
- ❖ Learn about Treatment Options

What Can You Do?

Regardless of the level of care, holistic treatment ensures all needs contributing to a person's substance use is addressed. For example, a well-developed treatment plan addresses the person's biological, psychological, spiritual, and social needs in one comprehensive approach.

Engaging in the 12-Step self-help community is encouraged as well. These days multiple pathways are more readily available, embraced and promoted by local Recovery Community Organizations.

“When the “I” is replaced with “We”, even illness becomes wellness.” ~Malcolm X

What Can You Do?

The Recovery Movement in Florida is growing. Our statewide Recovery Community Organization, Floridians for Recovery is bringing together the voices of recovery so that people know that a life of wellness from substance use disorder is possible.

What is a Recovery Community Organization? A recovery community organization is an independent, non-profit organization led and governed by representatives of local communities of recovery. These organizations:

- ❖ Organize recovery-focused policy advocacy activities.
- ❖ Carry out recovery-focused community education and outreach programs, and/or
- ❖ Provide peer-based recovery support services

Go to www.floridiansforrecovery.org for more information

What Can You Do? – Support your Local RCO

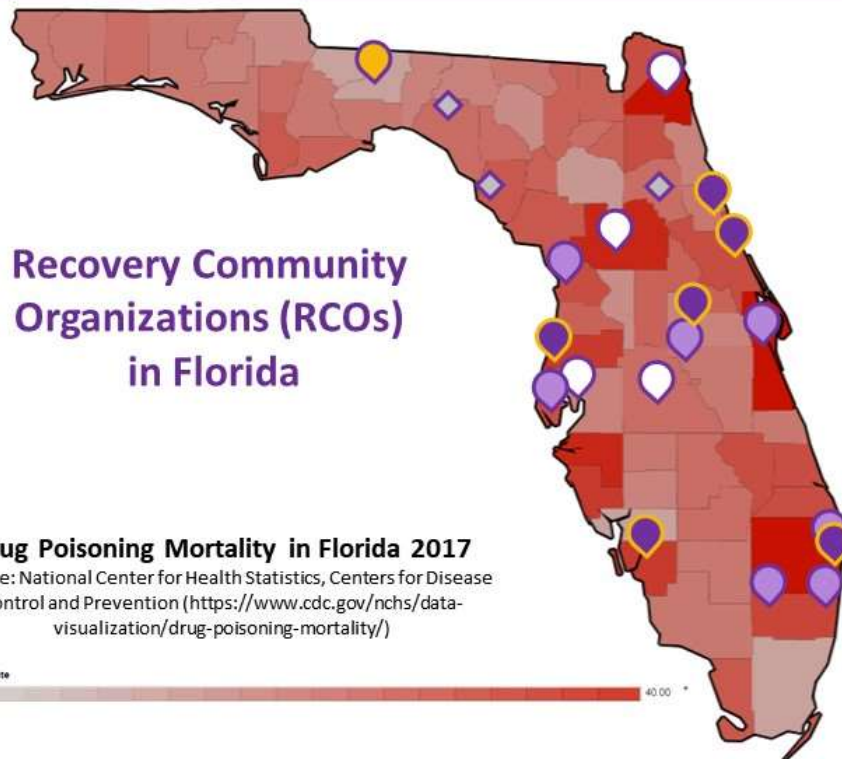


Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association
The Florida Behavioral Health Association

All In for Florida: A Recovery Project



Floridians for Recovery



Recovery Community Organizations (RCOs) in Florida

Drug Poisoning Mortality in Florida 2017

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data-visualization/drug-poisoning-mortality/>)

Model-based Death Rate
0.00 40.00

Statewide RCO

- Floridians for Recovery, Inc.

Current RCOs:

- Fellowship Recovery Community Organization in Margate, FL
- RASE Project, Kissimmee, FL
- RASE Project, Rockledge, FL
- Rebel Recovery, West Palm Beach, FL
- Recovery Epicenter Foundation, Clearwater, FL
- South Florida Wellness Network, Ft. Lauderdale, FL
- Zero Hour Life Center, Lecanto, FL

Developed as a result of this project:

- Volusia Recovery Alliance – Daytona Beach, FL
- Recovery Connections of Central Florida – Orlando, FL
- Kimmie's Recovery Zone – Ft. Myers, FL
- Community Recovery Hub of Palm Beach County – Delray Beach, FL
- Recovery Epicenter Foundation at Pasco – Port Richey, FL
- Flagler OARS – Bunnell & Palm Coast, FL

RCOs under Development

- First Coast Recovery Advocates – Jacksonville, FL
- Hillsborough Recovery Coalition - Tampa, FL
- Marion County, FL (Ocala)
- Polk County (Lakeland & Winter Haven)

Other RCOs under Development

- Dixie County
- Madison & Taylor Counties
- Putnam County

Funded through a generous grant
from the Aetna Foundation

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FOUNDATION

What is VRA?



The Volusia Recovery Alliance, Inc. (VRA) is a grassroots not-for-profit education and advocacy Recovery Community Organization (RCO) committed to furthering the message that recovery is possible for anyone who desires a life of wellness.

Purpose: Coordinate peer driven services that provide substance use recovery resources.

Mission: We exist to serve all those seeking recovery from the impact of addiction including families, friends and allies.

Vision: We work to mobilize resources, reduce barriers, increase awareness and support in an effort to eliminate stigma and enhance recovery through multiple pathways.

We link those persons with substance use disorder, their loved ones, and allies to the resources that help sustain recovery.

What is VRA?



VRA is a strong, committed and diverse network of allies and individuals in recovery who are actively engaged in efforts to:

- ❖ Eliminate the stigma of substance use disorder
- ❖ Build a vibrant recovery-ready community
- ❖ Represent the voice of recovery, and those individuals impacted by addiction
- ❖ Promote harm reduction via our New Chance NarCAN outreach committee
- ❖ Serve as a local FL Department of Children and Families approved Narcan distributor

Let's make Volusia County a recovery friendly place to live. Please help us eliminate stigma, promote an understanding of Substance Use Disorder as a chronic brain disease, and provide more recovery supports.



What is VRA?



What Can You Do?

You can share that:

There is **HOPE**...

There is **FREEDOM**...

There is **RECOVERY**...

There is **A NEW WAY OF LIFE**...

One Day at Time.

“The best medicine of all is love and compassion.”

~ Vivek H. Murthy, M.D., M.B.A. Vice Admiral, U.S. Public Health Service
Surgeon General

Questions?



Thank You

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www.volusiarecoveryalliance.org

