

Reducing Stigma: Recovery Healthcare Rights for Persons with SUD(s)

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May 17, 2023
9:45am – 11:00am



Agenda

- Myth or Fact?
- Recovery Healthcare Rights for Persons with SUD(s)
- Know your Healthcare Rights
- Communication Strategies
- Group Breakout Questions

Myth or Fact?

More than anything else, drug addiction is a character flaw.

Myth or Fact?

Addiction is a voluntary behavior.

Myth or Fact?

Shaming a person with substance use disorder (SUD) is an effective way to get them to stop misusing substances.

Reducing Stigma: Recovery Healthcare Rights for Persons with SUD(s)



Background

PRCC was awarded funding through a Community Health Options (CHO) Foundation grant in Fall 2021 to work on a healthcare project with the central objectives below:

- To improve the quality of healthcare experiences for people with substance use disorder(s),
- To reduce stigma and barriers in medical settings, and
- To increase dignified and respectful care.



Listening Sessions

We conducted a series of statewide listening sessions and one-on-one interviews with persons in recovery from SUD(s).

Some of the questions we asked...

- Can you think of any experiences, positive or negative, where having SUD(s) has impacted the medical care you have received?
- What feelings do you have today towards seeking medical care as a person with SUD(s)?
- What would you want your medical provider(s) to know in order to offer better healthcare experiences?



Listening session participants represented diverse backgrounds and perspectives across:

- Gender
- Sexual Orientation
- Race/Ethnicity
- Age
- Type of Substance Use Disorder
- Stage of Recovery

What did we hear from our community?

- Dehumanizing care is traumatic and may prevent individuals from seeking future medical treatment.
- Pain management is challenging and confusing for many in recovery from SUD(s).
- Many individuals with SUD expressed a desire to obtain care from providers that have had an ongoing education on the behavioral science of addiction.

What did we hear from our community?

- SUD(s) should be treated like other chronic medical conditions.
- Bias exists for certain pathways of recovery.
- Some barriers to seeking medical treatment include:
 - Fear of bias, judgement, and stigma
 - Limited or no access to health insurance, transportation, or resources
 - Long waitlists

Community Member Experiences

- “As a (recovery) coach, bringing recoverees to the ER, nursing stations seem to be a place where derogatory, non-sympathetic/non-empathic comments are made about people with SUD. There was one experience where a recoveree was strapped to a gurney and was yelling out and the nurse thought this was disruptive and violently yanked his IV out.”
- Many participants reported not wanting to disclose their recovery status due to the fear of being judged, undertreated for pain management, and wondering if they would just be assumed to be “drug-seeking”.
- A mother in early recovery encountered a lab technician that made derogatory and stigmatizing comments during a urine analysis screening in front of her child. She reported feeling very hurt and ashamed.



Know your healthcare rights.



Front

IN RECOVERY? KNOW YOUR HEALTHCARE RIGHTS.



As a person on a pathway of recovery from substance use disorder, I have the right:

1. To be treated with dignity and respect every time I seek medical care.
2. To be trusted as a capable expert and resource for my own recovery rather than as a person having a moral failing.
3. To request care from medical providers who have an understanding of the science of addiction.
4. To obtain healthcare that is without judgement or stigmatizing language.
5. To receive trauma-informed care that requires my consent before each step of the treatment process.
6. To have my concerns be taken seriously and not be assumed to be "drug seeking."
7. To be given factual information about multiple pathways of recovery in order to make well-informed and autonomous decisions.
8. To be treated by medical providers who understand the barriers to obtaining care.
9. To receive information on resources available for treating substance use disorder.
10. To understand all of the benefits, risks or expectations of any treatment, especially those involving medications with known addictive qualities.

Back

YOU ARE NOT ALONE. KNOW YOU HAVE RIGHTS.*

For more information and recovery-related resources, check out the following organizations:



FACES & VOICES
OF RECOVERY

facesandvoicesofrecovery.org



recoveryvoices.org



recoveryanswers.org

OPTIONS

SAVE LIVES

knowyouroptions.me



211maine.org

SAMHSA

Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

SAMHSA.gov



*The information provided on this card does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice. Please be aware that all patients have a right to ask their medical institutions for a copy of their Patient's Rights and Responsibilities, as well as receive information on how to file a grievance if they feel a violation of their rights has occurred.

From June '22 – May '23, PRCC has distributed 2,000+ palm cards across Maine to individuals and organizations:

- Virtual & In-Person Palm Card Trainings
- Maine Recovery Community Centers (RCC)s
- Medical Offices
- Community Outreach Events
- Substance Use Treatment Programs
- Individuals in Recovery from SUD(s)



What to Do If I Think My rights Have Been Violated

All patients are legally entitled to ask their medical institutions for a copy of their **Patient's Rights and Responsibilities**, as well as receive information on how to file a grievance if a violation has potentially occurred.

Communication Strategies

First Thing's First...

- You have the right to decide what you choose to disclose to your medical providers.
- It is OKAY to NOT disclose your SUD/Recovery status with your providers!

Utilizing the Palm Card

1. To Practice Self-Care: Use for personal support.
2. To Inform: Leave palm card with provider.
3. To Discuss: Have a general conversation with provider.
4. To Advocate: Engage in personal advocacy.

Brainstorming Talking Points

- To inform...
- To Discuss...
- To Advocate...

Group Breakout Questions

Have you had any experiences that you have felt dehumanized or stigmatized while seeking medical care?

What communication strategies do you think would be helpful when barriers or challenges arise when talking to providers?

Group Discussion

Selfcare Toolkit

- Reminder: You are the EXPERT of your own health
- Reaching out to trusted and supportive people
- Advocating for a new healthcare provider
- Recovery Community Center Supports
 - Recovery Coaches and Telephone Recovery Support Services (TRS)

What other ways do you practice self-care?



Questions?

Please feel free to reach out with any other questions
or for more information to: tess@portlandrecovery.org

