

Words Matter: Terminology that Inhibits Successful Outcomes: Guidance for Team Members

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Three Aspects of the Therapeutic Alliance

(Miller, William R; Rollnick, Stephen (2013): "Motivational Interviewing - Helping People Change" Third Edition, New York, NY. Guilford Press.p. 39):

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

Engagement and Attracting People into Recovery

- "Resistant"
- "Unmotivated" or "Not ready"
- "Treatment compliance" versus "treatment adherence"

Webster's Dictionary defines "comply" as follows: to act in accordance with another's wishes, or with rules and regulations. It defines "adhere": to cling, cleave (to be steadfast, hold fast), stick fast.

- "Clean/dirty urines" versus "negative/positive urines"

When people are not skilled at getting their needs met, don't call them names.

- "Manipulative"
- "Attention seeking"

Person-first Language

(a) John F. Kelly conducted an experiment that “randomized more than 500 doctoral-level clinicians to receive a vignette describing an individual involved in a drug court situation, who was supposed to maintain abstinence but had used alcohol/drugs, was caught and was about to face the judge again. The vignette was identical except in half of the vignettes, the individual in violation of the court mandate was described as a “substance abuser” and, in the other half, he was described as “having a substance use disorder”; otherwise no difference. These well educated clinicians, many of whom were addiction specialists, viewed the person described as a “substance abuser” significantly more punitively, as having greater personal responsibility and being more to blame for his problems, and as less deserving of treatment.” (White, 2013; Kelly, Dow & Westerhoff, 2010).

(b) Granello and Gibbs studied undergraduate students, adults in a community sample, and professional counselors and counselors-in-training. They used an instrument that measured people’s attitudes towards individuals with diagnosable mental illness. What they found was that when individuals were described as “mentally ill,” this evoked attitudes of authoritarianism (treating people as if needing more control and discipline); social restrictiveness (needing to be more isolated from the rest of the community); and less benevolence (less sympathetic, kind feelings and less willing to be personally involved with the individual). In contrast, when the instrument described individuals as “people with mental illness,” there was increased tolerance, benevolence and acceptance of people as being part of the community needing help and assistance rather than control and isolation from others. (Granello & Gibbs, 2016).

What to Say to Engage People

- “Thank you for choosing to come to treatment.” ◆ *“I didn’t choose you. They made me come.”*
- “What would happen if you hadn’t come today?” ◆ *“I’d do more time, or won’t get off probation.”*
- “Would that be OK with you if that happened?” ◆ *“Hell no, that’s why I’m here.”*
- “Well then thank you for choosing to work with me so I can help you do less time or get off probation.”

What to Say to Check on Progress

“Tell me about your treatment plan.” (Pause to see what the participant says and monitor if they are working on anything in particular to improve functioning for public safety; or whether they are just “doing time,” e.g., “I just have to be here and have another three months.”)

“What you are working on to change your attitudes, thinking or behavior that has gotten you into trouble with crime, restricted your freedom and threatened public safety?”

What to Say to Orient Participants

“Thank you for choosing to enter drug court. The reason you have been given the opportunity to get treatment rather than be incarcerated is that you have addiction that is related to your charges. We believe that if you get addiction treatment and establish recovery, this will not only be good for your life, but society will benefit from increased public safety, decreased crime and spending resources on treatment rather than incarceration, which is much more expensive. But you are accountable for doing treatment, not time; for working on changing your attitudes, thinking and behavior; not just complying with a program and graduating.”

What to Say to Track Treatment Engagement

"What would you like to do in this session or in group today to advance your treatment plan?" (Pause to see what the participant says and monitor if they are working on anything in particular to improve functioning for public safety; or whether they are just "doing time," e.g., "I just have to be here" or "What do you want me to say?") What you would hope they would say is, "I don't have an anger problem, but I am trying to get off probation so I'm going to ask someone to role play with me an angry situation. Others would get into a fist fight, but not me. I have good anger management skills and am going to demonstrate to the group how to handle that in an assertive but nonviolent way. You will note that down and let my PO know that I am doing well."

What to Say to about Positive Drug Screens

"In addiction treatment, it's not OK to use any unauthorized substance. But if this didn't happen and everyone had perfect control over using, they wouldn't have addiction and wouldn't need treatment. You can learn skills and use supports to never have to use again, so it is not inevitable that you will have a flare-up and use. But if it happens to you or anyone else in treatment with you, it is your responsibility for your safety and your fellow participants to immediately address any attitudes, thinking or behavior building up to any substance use; or any actual use. Reach out to a team member just like you would if experiencing a heart attack. They will then work with you to find out what went wrong and how to improve your treatment plan to prevent another flare-up."

If substance use happens in a residential setting, there will be a community meeting ASAP to help anyone who used with you. If you or anyone else is not interested in finding what went wrong and how to fix it, then anyone has the right to choose no further treatment and take the legal consequences of their criminal offense."

What Not to Say...

"In addiction treatment, it's not OK to use any unauthorized substance. You are mandated to be abstinent and if you use and it is found on a drug screen, you will be sanctioned and could be set back a phase in your treatment program. If it happens more than once, you could be incarcerated for a brief period and it may even be grounds for discharge from the drug court program. In order to advance through the phases of the drug court program and eventually graduate, you must demonstrate full abstinence. If you do not, there are escalating sanctions, but there are also incentives for those who do stay abstinent."

"Now be honest, did you use or not?!"

What to Say in Individual, Group, or an Emergency Community Meeting

"Please share what happened that led up to and triggered the substance use so we can figure out what went wrong and help you get back on track. If others used with you, please identify them so we can do the same process with them ASAP."

If you are willing to change your treatment plan and work on fixing the mistakes with commitment and effort in good faith, then treatment continues. If you are not interested in doing that, you have a right to choose no further treatment and be discharged from the program."

What to Say to a Person who says they don't want to go to Alcoholics Anonymous

It is not unusual for a client to object to having to attend AA or other such groups. Here is how to address such clients:

"There are AA meetings and groups that appeal to different members in different ways. If you haven't tried a number of different groups, it may be that just haven't yet found the meeting that works for you."

Now if you are saying you just don't want to go to AA for whatever reason, I don't want to push that on you. Maybe you have another self/mutual help group that works better for you. But before you give up on AA, let's discuss where else can you find a support group where:

1. You can have access to regular meetings every day and even more than once a day if you really need them – and all for free?
2. You can have a coach like an AA sponsor, who is ready to have you call them at all hours of the day and week if you really need them?
3. You can be with a whole group of people and have sober fun while there are temptations and triggers all around you on New Year's Eve, Mardi Gras, or St. Patrick's Day?
4. You can have many friends who have been exactly where you have been with addiction; understand what you are going through from deep personal experience; and will be there for you if you reach out?

Maybe you have a group like that at your church, synagogue, community of faith, or some other group. If you get support from that group with all the same effective features of what AA has to offer, then by all means embrace that group. This is about getting you the ongoing support and guidance you need to establish and maintain recovery and well being, not pushing AA on you."

References and Resources

"A Technical Assistance Guide For Drug Court Judges on Drug Court Treatment Services" - Bureau of Justice Assistance Drug Court Technical Assistance Project. American University, School of Public Affairs, Justice Programs Office. Lead Authors: Jeffrey N. Kushner, MHRA, State Drug Court Coordinator, Montana Supreme Court; Roger H. Peters, Ph.D., University of South Florida; Caroline S. Cooper BJA Drug Court Technical Assistance Project. School of Public Affairs, American University. May 1, 2014.

Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) training video on The ASAM Criteria that can be viewed by creating an account and going to the Adult Drug Court Lessons. The system can be found at www.treatmentcourts.org and this video was initiated by Dennis Reilly at the Center for Court innovation.

Critical Treatment Issues Webinar Series, Bureau of Justice (BJA) Drug Court Technical Assistance Project at American University Feb. 10, 2016 – May 3, 2016 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AuUEP52z1Xkj>

Kelly, John F., Dow, Sarah J. and Westerhoff, Cara (2010): Does Our Choice of Substance-Related Terms Influence Perceptions of Treatment Need? An Empirical Investigation with Two Commonly Used Terms. *Journal of Drug Issues* 2010 40: 805.

Granello, Darcy Haag and Gibbs, Todd A (2016): The Power of Language and Labels: "The Mentally Ill" Versus "People With Mental Illnesses" *Journal of Counseling & Development* Volume 94 pp.31-40.

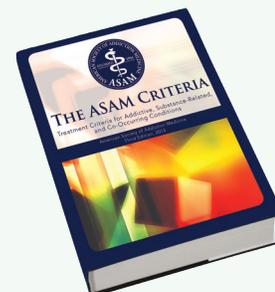
Mee-Lee D (2007). Engaging resistant and difficult-to-treat patients in collaborative treatment. *Current Psychiatry* January, 2007 6(1):47-61.

Mee-Lee, David (2016): "Watch What You Say: How Language Shapes Attitudes" *Paradigm* Vol. 20, No. 3.pp.7-9.

White, W. (2013): The science of addiction recovery mutual aid: An interview with John F. Kelly, PhD. Posted at www.williamwhitepapers.com.

The ASAM Criteria

The ASAM Criteria is in its third edition and is the most comprehensive set of guidelines for assessment, service planning, placement, continued stay and transfer/discharge of individuals with addiction and co-occurring conditions. www.changecompanies.net



ASAM eLearning Modules



ASAM eLearning introduces *The ASAM Criteria*, and provides opportunities to learn about and practice multidimensional assessment, service planning and level of care placement.

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Module 2: From Assessment to Service Planning and Level of Care

Module 3: Introduction of *The ASAM Criteria*

www.changecompanies.net/etraining/

ASAM Interactive Journaling® Series

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