

GLOSSARY OF TERMS



TERM	DEFINITION
Addiction	As defined by the American Society of Addiction Medicine, “a primary, chronic disease of brain reward, motivation, memory, and related circuitry.” It is characterized by inability to consistently abstain, impairment in behavioral control, craving, diminished recognition of significant problems with one’s behaviors and interpersonal relationships, and a dysfunctional emotional response. Like other chronic diseases, addiction often involves cycles of relapse and remission. “Addiction” is different than “dependency” with the key difference being that addiction is defined by the compulsive use in spite of the negative consequences associated with the use.
Maintenance Treatment	MAT uses medication in conjunction with behavioral therapy to treat substance use disorders and support the individual process of recovery without a specific endpoint (as is the typical standard of care in medical and psychiatric treatment of other chronic illnesses).
Medically Supervised Withdrawal	(Formerly called detoxification): Using medications to help a patient discontinue a medication that they are dependent on.
Medication-Assisted Treatment	MAT is the treatment of a substance use disorder (SUD) with the use of psycho-social therapy assisted by a medication that staves off cravings and withdrawals. There are currently 3 FDA approved medications used to treat opioid use disorder: methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone.
Opioids	All natural (opiates), synthetic, and semisynthetic substances that have effects similar to morphine. They can be used as medications having such effects (e.g., methadone, buprenorphine, oxycodone).
Opioid Agonist	A substance that has an affinity for and stimulates the mu-opioid receptors in the central nervous system. Opioid receptor full agonists (e.g., methadone) bind to the mu-opioid receptor and produce actions similar to those produced by endorphins. Increasing the dose increases the effect. Opioid receptor partial agonists (e.g., buprenorphine) bind to the mu-opioid receptor. Unlike with full agonists, increasing their dose may not produce additional effects once they have reached their maximal effect. At low doses, partial agonists may produce effects similar to those of full agonists.

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Opioid Antagonist	A substance that has affinity for opioid receptors in the central nervous system without producing the physiological effects of opioid agonists. Opioid receptor antagonists (e.g., naltrexone) can block the effects of exogenously administered opioids as well as the brain's natural endorphins.
Opioid Misuse	The use of prescription opioids in any way other than as directed by a prescriber; the use of any opioid in a manner, situation, amount, or frequency that can cause harm to self or others.
Opioid Treatment Program (OTP)	An accredited treatment program with SAMHSA certification and Drug Enforcement Administration registration to administer and dispense opioid agonist medications that are approved by FDA to treat opioid dependency. Currently, these medications include methadone and buprenorphine. OTPs are the only settings that are allowed to use methadone for the treatment of opioid addiction. OTPs must provide adequate medical, counseling, vocational, educational, and other assessment and treatment services either onsite or by referral to an outside agency or practitioner through a formal agreement.
Opioid Use Disorder (OUD)	Per DSM-5, a disorder characterized by loss of control of opioid use, risky opioid use, impaired social functioning, tolerance, and withdrawal. Tolerance and withdrawal do not count toward the diagnosis in people experiencing these symptoms when using opioids under appropriate medical supervision. OUD covers a range of severity and replaces what DSM-IV termed "opioid abuse" and "opioid dependence." An OUD diagnosis is applicable to a person who uses opioids and experiences at least 2 of the 11 symptoms in a 12-month period.
Recovery	A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live self-directed lives, and strive to reach their full potential. Even individuals with severe and chronic substance use disorders (SUDs) can, with help, overcome their SUDs and regain health and social function. Although abstinence from all substances have previously been considered a key aspect of recovery culture, patients prescribed FDA medication by a licensed medical professional to treat their OUD are in recovery.
Relapse	A process in which a person with OUD who has been in remission experiences a return of symptoms or loss of remission. A relapse is different from a return to opioid use in that it involves more than a single incident of use. Relapses occur over a period of time and can be interrupted. Relapse need not be long lasting.
Remission	A medical term meaning a disappearance of signs and symptoms of the disease. DSM-5 defines remission as present in people who previously met OUD criteria but no longer meet any OUD criteria (with the possible exception of craving). Remission is an essential element of recovery.
Return to Opioid Use	One or more instances of opioid misuse without a return of symptoms of OUD. A return to opioid use may lead to relapse.



TERMS TO AVOID



TERM	SUMMARY	PREFERRED TERM
Addict	A person is not defined by their behavioral health status, yet this term implies that their behavioral health status is their key defining feature.	Someone struggling with substance use
Addicted Babies	Addiction is defined as “using in spite of negative consequences”. A baby can’t be born “addicted” to an opioid. To avoid reporting scientifically inaccurate information and stigmatizing language about NAS, journalists can use phrases such as, “newborns exposed to opioids in the womb/during pregnancy,” “born dependent,” “experienced withdrawal symptoms,” or “diagnosed with neonatal abstinence syndrome”.	Infants born to mothers with a substance use disorder
Addiction to Methadone/ Buprenorphine	Addiction is defined as “using in spite of negative consequences”. Someone “dependent” on their medication (ie insulin, methadone) is not addicted.	Opioid Use Disorder
Clean	A reference to a state of a person being abstinent from drugs of misuse. It may also be used in describing urine test results that are not positive for substance use. The term has been viewed as potentially stigmatizing because of its pejorative connotation, with the opposite being “dirty.” Instead, many in the field advocate for use of proper medical terminology such as describing someone as an individual in remission or recovery and describing urine toxicology test results as either negative or positive.	In Recovery

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Clean Needle/ Dirty	The news media aims to represent the reality of drug use in a neutral, realistic way. However, using exploitative photos of people with substance use disorder, unrealistic depictions of injection drug use, and other images that create an element of illicitness and fear undermine the fundamental objectives and principles of journalism. Rather than showcase the humanity of people who use drugs, images of injection drug use— needles and blood—create distance between the subject and the reader, resulting in dehumanizing, alienating, and othering people suffering from a medical condition.	Unused Syringe/ Used Syringe
Clean Urine/ Dirty Urine	Reference to urine drug screens that have tested positive or negative for chemical substances. It may also be used in describing urine test results that are not positive for substance use. The term has been viewed as potentially stigmatizing because of its pejorative connotation, with the opposite being “dirty.” Instead, many in the field advocate for use of proper medical terminology such as describing someone as an individual in remission or recovery and describing urine toxicology test results as either negative or positive.	Normal/Abnormal Urine Drug Screen
Detox	Short for “detoxification,” it is the medical process focused on treating the physical effects of withdrawal from substance use and comfortably achieving metabolic stabilization; a prelude to longer-term treatment and recovery.	Withdrawal/ Withdrawal Management
Dirty	A reference to a urine test that is positive for substance use. A person still using substances. This term is viewed as stigmatizing because of its pejorative connotation. Instead, it is recommended to use proper medical terminology such as an individual having positive test results or currently to exhibit symptoms of substance use disorder.	Still struggling with drug use
Drug Abuse	A term sometimes used to describe an array of problems resulting from intensive use of psychoactive substances. It has also been used as a diagnostic label.	Substance Use Disorder — the word “abuse” should be avoided entirely
Homeless	A person is not defined by their living status, yet this term implies that their living status is their key defining feature and that it’s permanent.	Someone experiencing homelessness

TERM	SUMMARY	PREFERRED TERM
Junkie/ Crackhead	Negative term to describe an individual who engages in drug use and has a substance use disorder.	People who use drugs, people living with/struggling with a substance use disorder
Methadone Clinic	Our clinics provide multiple medications, not just methadone. And the largest component of what we do is the psycho-social counseling piece.	Opioid Treatment Program
Relapse	Relapse often indicates a recurrence of substance use. More technically, it would indicate the recurrence and reinstatement of a substance use disorder and would require an individual to be in remission prior to the occurrence of a relapse.	Return to using drugs

References:

<https://www.recoveryanswers.org/addiction-ary/>

<https://www.changingthenarrative.news/>

