

Instead of saying:**Maybe say:**

Addict

Person with a substance use disorder.

Addicted to “X”

Has an “X” use disorder; has a substance use disorder involving “X”.

Addiction

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 (e.g. “the field of addiction medicine” and “the science of addiction”)

It is appropriate to refer to scheduled drugs as “addictive”

Alcoholic

Person with an alcohol use disorder.

Clean

Abstinent.

Clean Screen

Substance-free; testing negative for substance use.

Dirty

Actively using; positive for substance use.

Dirty Screen

Testing positive for substance use.

Drug habit

Substance use disorder; compulsive/ regular substance use

Drug abuser

Person with a substance use disorder; person who uses drugs (if not qualified as a disorder).

Former addict/alcoholic

Person in recovery; person in long-term recovery.

Opioid Replacement/
Methadone Maintenance

Medication-assisted treatment; Medication-assisted recovery

Recreational, causal or
Experimental users

People who use drugs for non-medical reasons; people starting to use drugs; people who are new to drugs.