

“Overdose Stigma”

Study Overview

In this episode, we review studies that have highlighted the profound impact stigma has on overdose risk among individuals with substance use disorders. Compassion, person-first language, and education can effectively reduce stigma and improve overdose prevention and response.



Research shows that the language we use to describe this disease can either perpetuate or overcome the stereotypes, prejudice and lack of empathy that keep people from getting treatment they need.

—Michael Botticelli

TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ Stigma, whether enacted by others or internalized, significantly increases the risk of overdoses among individuals with substance use disorders.
- ✓ Moving from faulting and blaming to fostering understanding, compassion, awareness, and empathetic support ensures that those struggling with substance use feel valued and supported.
- ✓ Effective education on overdose prevention should include diverse settings and consider the impact of stigma on learning. Addressing stigma can improve knowledge and attitudes, leading to better overdose response and prevention.
- ✓ Using person-first language reduces stigma and fosters an understanding perspective towards individuals struggling with substance use disorders.