

The Power of Language; the Power of Allies

Andrew Kiezulas
UNE Portland, ME
April 11, 2018

Disclosure

No commercial relationships to disclose

Today's Concepts

Social Cognition

Old & New Ideology

The Message

Implicit Bias

*Subtle cognitive process that influences decision making
below the conscious level*

Stigma in Action

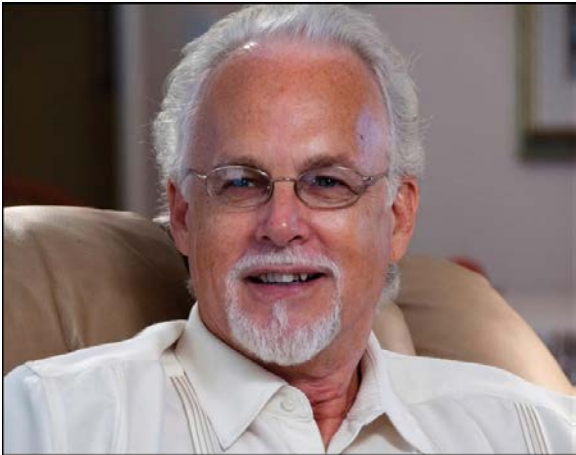
'stigmə/noun:

a mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality, or person.

- Reduces a person to nothing more than their difficulties [**stigma**]
- Leads systems to withhold appropriate services [**discrimination**]
- Robs people of possible life opportunities
- Exposes people to preventable traumatic experiences

How have you or someone you know been stigmatized?

Words Have Power



“Words have immense power to wound or heal...The right words catalyze personal transformation and offer invitations to citizenship and community service. The wrong words stigmatize and dis-empower.”

-William White

Author and Recovery Advocate

Visit williamwhitepapers.com

Connotation

An emotional and imaginative association surrounding a word; a meaning given to a word through its use in a society or culture

Connotation = Meaning!

What is Our Message?

'Addict/Alcoholic'

'Substance Abuse'

'Relapse'

'Drug Replacement Therapy'

What do you hear when these words are used?

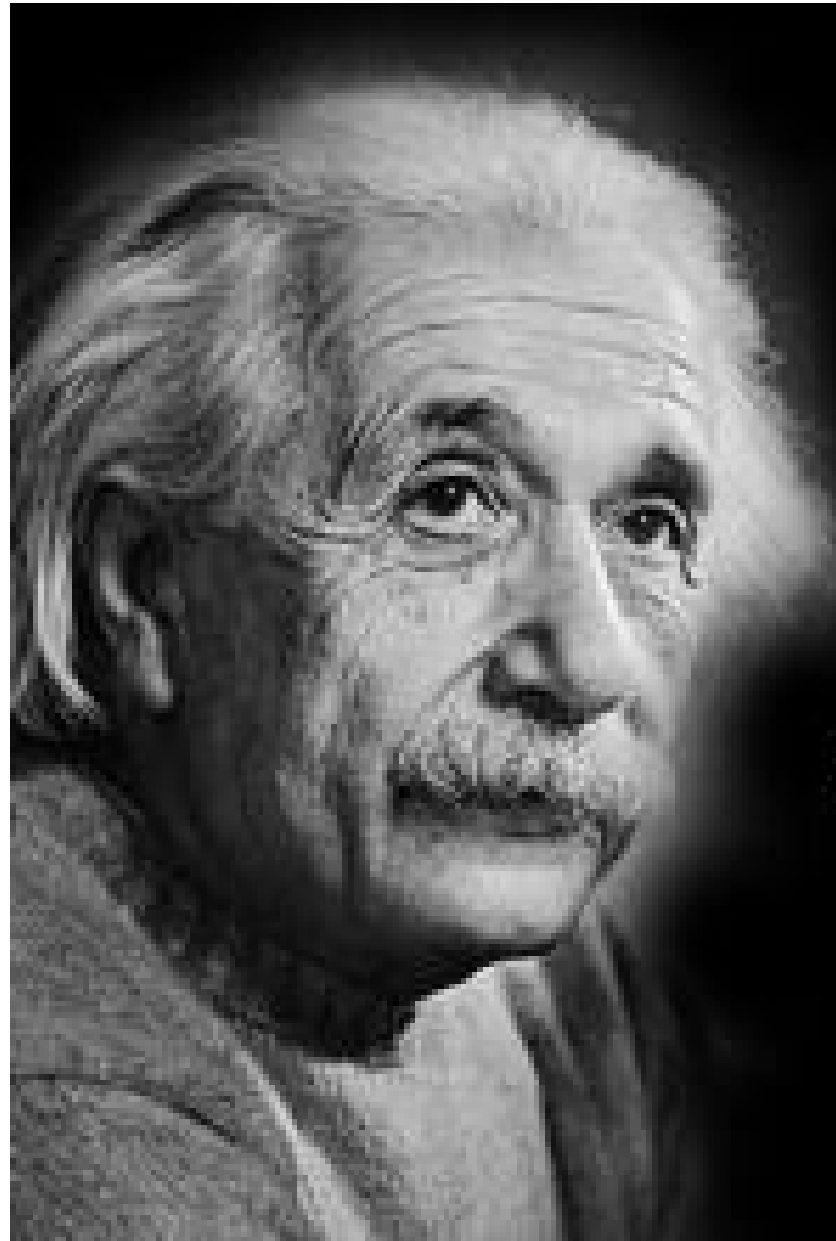


What ideas and connotations do they carry?

Language in a Clinical Setting

- 500 doctoral-level clinicians exposed to a vignette:
 - man used drugs/alcohol for past few years
 - Court-mandated to treatment
 - program required abstinence
 - had complied with treatment program requirements
 - After 30 days was found with 2 positive urinalyses
 - now awaits his “appointment” with the judge
- “Substance abuser”
 - clinicians more likely to deny treatment
 - clinicians significantly more likely to judge person as deserving of blame and punishment
 - this effect is even stronger in the general public
- “Person with substance use disorder”
 - receive better treatment and more compassionate care

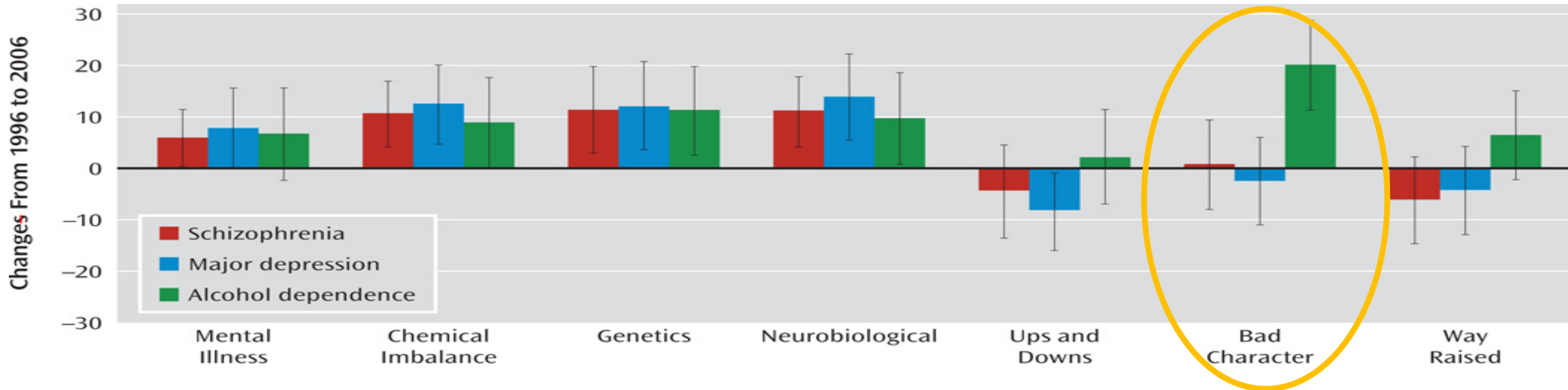


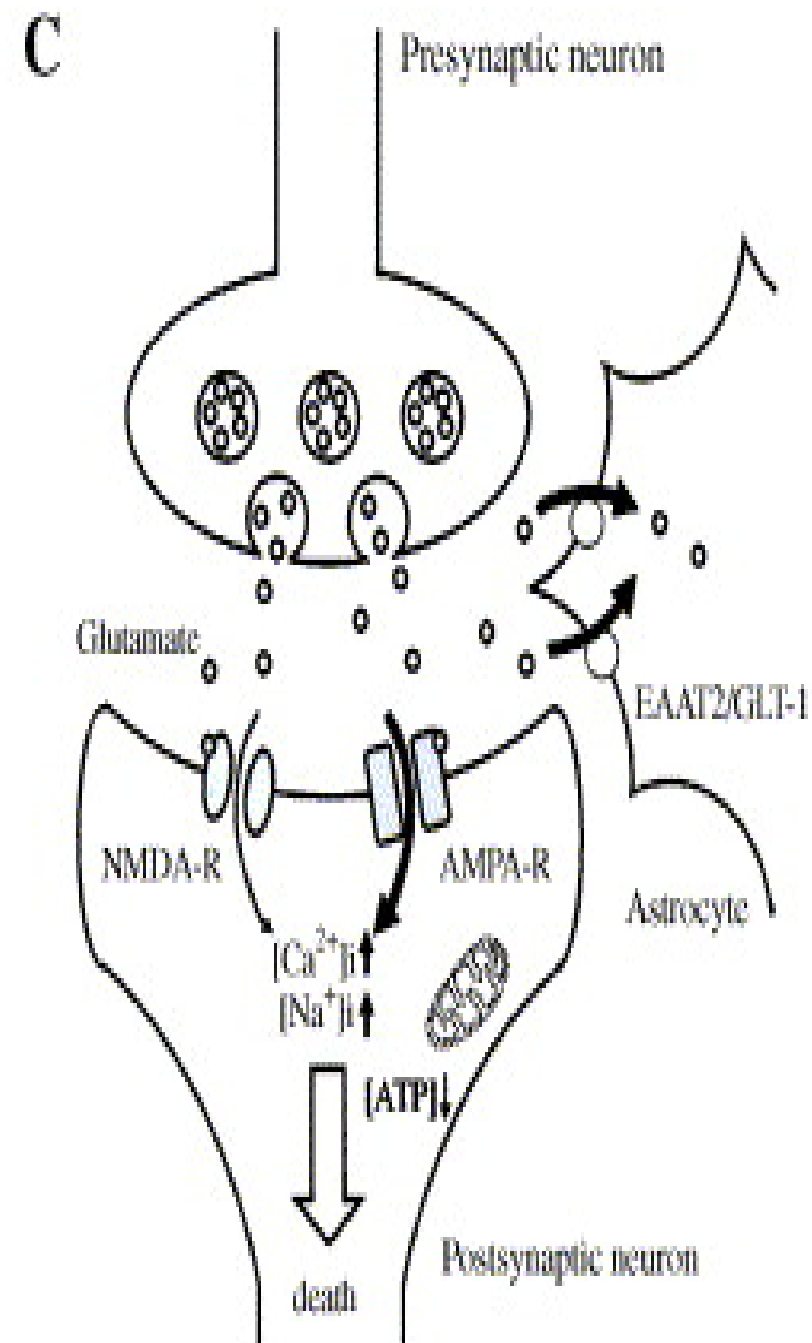
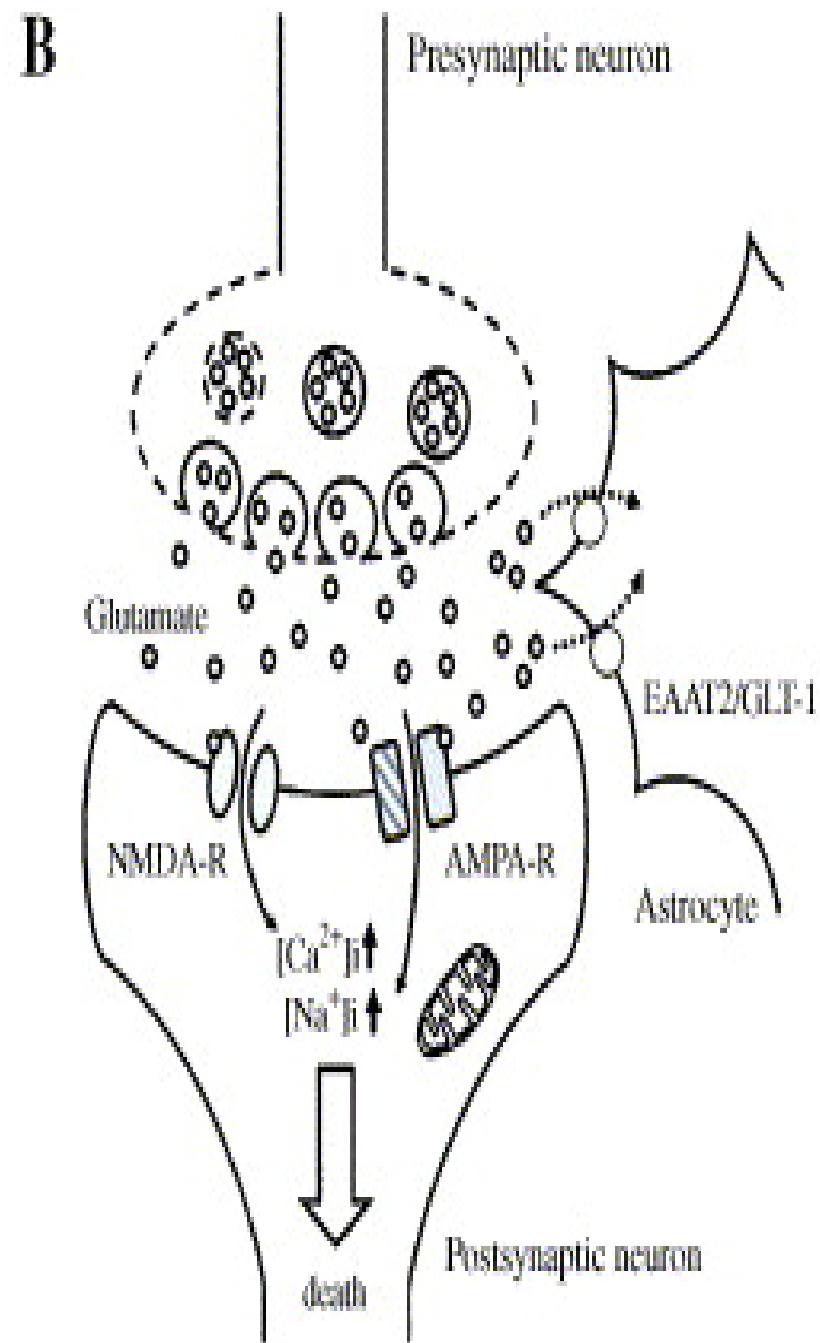
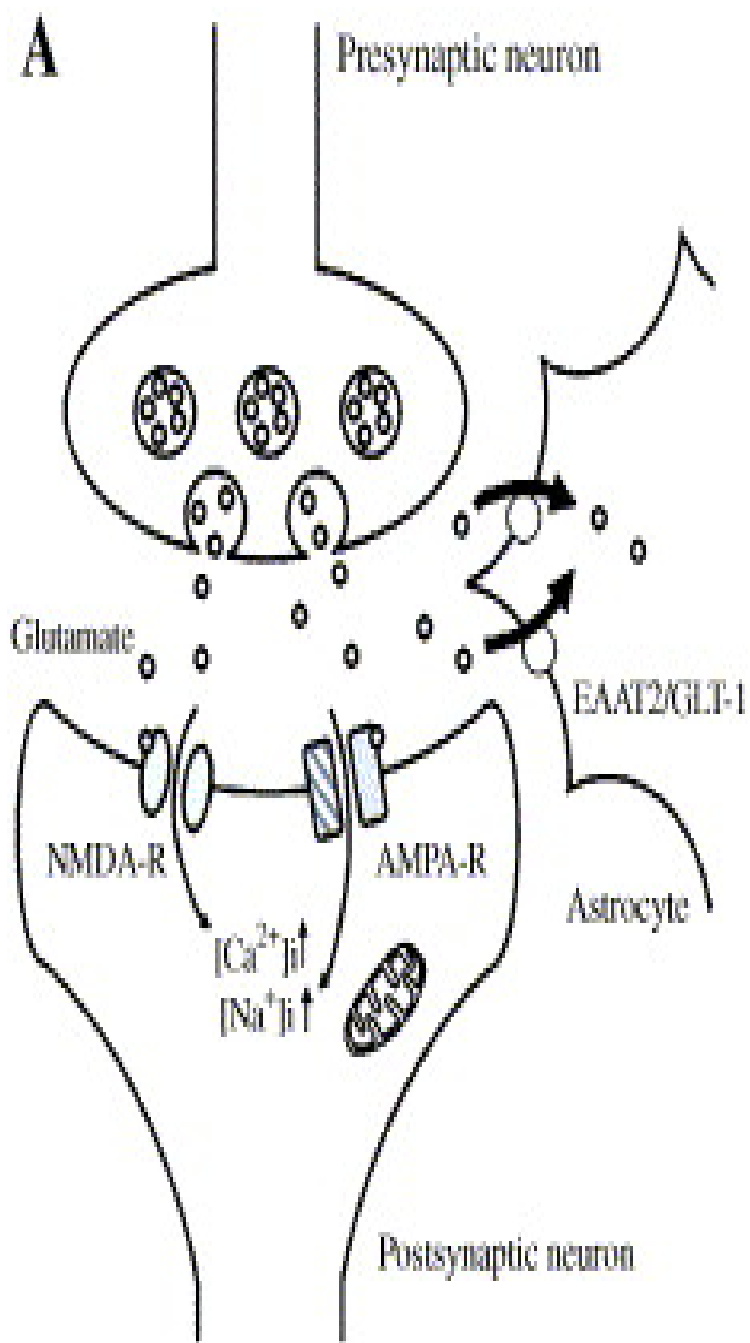


**"Insanity is doing the same
thing over & over again &
expecting different results."**

Albert Einstein

- Despite increased agreement that alcohol addiction is biomedical, more viewed it also as due to “bad character”
- Thus, while emphasizing biomedical, need to talk about addiction as treatable disorder, recovery is likely...





Know Your Message

You have called a friend
and their answering
machine picks up...



**YOU HAVE 30 SECONDS:
WHAT DO YOU WANT
PEOPLE TO KNOW AND
REMEMBER?!**

Ideas can redefine, reconnect and revitalize

Exploration of Concepts

- Substance Use Disorder

- DSM-5, 2013

- Occur when the recurrent use of alcohol and/or drugs causes clinically and functionally significant impairment, such as health problems, disability, and failure to meet major responsibilities at work, school, or home
- The diagnosis is based on evidence of impaired control, social impairment, risky use, and pharmacological criteria
- Spectrum of symptoms from mild, moderate to severe

www.samhsa.gov/disorders/substance-use



Exploration of Concepts

- Recovery

- A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential: SAMHSA, 2012
 - **Health:** overcoming or managing one's disease(s) or symptoms...and making informed, healthy choices that support physical and emotional wellbeing.
 - **Home:** a stable and safe place to live.
 - **Purpose:** meaningful daily activities (e.g job, school, volunteerism, etc.) and the independence, income and resources to participate in society.
 - **Community:** relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love, and hope.

Words to Avoid	Why	Preferred Terminology
Addict, Abuser, Junkie, User	These terms are demeaning because they label a person solely by his/her illness or behavior and imply a permanency to the condition	Person in active addiction, or with a substance use disorder, or experiencing an alcohol or drug problem
Abuse	This negates the fact that addictive disorders are a medical condition; it blames the illness solely on the individual, ignoring the environmental and genetic factors, as well as the ability of substances to alter brain chemistry; it absolves those selling and promoting addictive substances of wrong doing; and it feeds into the stigma experienced by the individual, the family, and treatment providers	Misuse harmful use hazardous use problem use risky use
Clean or Dirty (for drug test results)	These words associate illness symptoms (i.e. positive drug tests) with filth	Negative, positive, substance-free
Habit or Drug Habit	These terms deny the medical nature of the condition and imply that resolution of the problem is simply a matter of willpower in being able to stop the habitual behavior	Substance use disorder alcohol or drug disorder active addiction
Replacement or substitution therapy	These words imply that treatment medications are equal to street drugs like heroin and suggests a lateral move from illegal addiction to legal addiction; this does not accurately characterize treatment	Treatment, medication-assisted treatment, medication



Core Message

RECOVERY ORIENTED SYSTEMS OF CARE WORK

I AM A PERSON IN LONG-TERM RECOVERY

I AM A RECOVERY ALLY

- We can offer and ***are providing our communities*** a new hope and stability
- Working towards our goals, ***we've been able to connect*** with ourselves, our families, our peers and our community
- I'm speaking out so ***others may have the opportunities*** I and/or my loved ones had, and to break down misperceptions that shape public opinion (stigma)
- Being in recovery, a recovery ally, active in our community has ***helped me find my voice***, and I can use it to help change public policy (discrimination)

Core Message for an Ally

- I work and interact with this group and young people, who is a part of **our** community, living in long term recovery
- Recovery has brought **stability** to our lives
- They are part of a community that helps empower and enhance **our** community experience
- Long-term recovery has given them and **our** community new purpose, creating a culture of support and assistance
- **Our collaboration** makes it possible for all to find an enhance overall quality of life, while pursuing personal goals and successes

Contact information:

andrew.kiezulas@youngpeopleinrecovery.org

References

- Kelly, J.F., Saitz, R., Wakeman, S. **Language, Substance Use Disorders, and Policy: The Need to Reach Consensus on an “Addiction-ary.”** *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*. 2016;34(1):116-123.
- White, W.L., Kelly, J.F. **Alcohol/Drug/Substance “Abuse”: The History and (Hopeful) Demise of a Pernicious Label.** *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*. 2011;29(3):317-321.
- Kelly, J.F., Westerhoff, C.M. **Does it matter how we refer to individuals with substance-related conditions? A randomized study of two commonly used terms.** *Int J Drug Policy*. 2010;21(3):202-7
- Ahern, J., Stuber, J., Sandro Galea, S. **Stigma, discrimination and the health of illicit drug users.** *Drug Alcohol Depend*. 2007 May;88(2-3):188-96
- Kelly, J.F., Wakeman, S., Saitz, R. **Stop Talking ‘Dirty’: Clinicians, Language, and Quality of Care for the Leading Cause of Preventable Death in the United States.** *Am J Med*. 2015;128(1):8-9
- van Boekel L.C., Brouwers E.P., van Weeghel, J., Garretsen, H.F. **Stigma among health professionals towards patients with substance use disorders and its consequences for healthcare delivery: Systematic review.** *Drug Alcohol Depend*. 2013;131(1-2):23-35
- Mathesona, C., Jaffray, M., Ryan, M., Bond, C.M., Fraser, K., Kirke, M., Liddell, D. **Public opinion of drug treatment policy: Exploring the public’s attitudes, knowledge, experience and willingness to pay for drug treatment strategies.** *Int J Drug Policy*. 2014;25(3):407-15
- “Research Data.” *ARHE Collegiate Recovery*, <http://www.collegiaterecovery.org/research-data/>
- “Recovery and Recovery Support.” *SAMHSA*, www.samhsa.gov/recovery
- Pescosolido, B. A., Martin, J. K., Long, J. S., Medina, T. R., Phelan, J. C., & Link, B. G. (2010). **“A Disease Like Any Other”? A Decade of Change in Public Reactions to Schizophrenia, Depression, and Alcohol Dependence.** *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 167(11), 1321-1330. doi:doi:10.1176/appi.ajp.2010.09121743