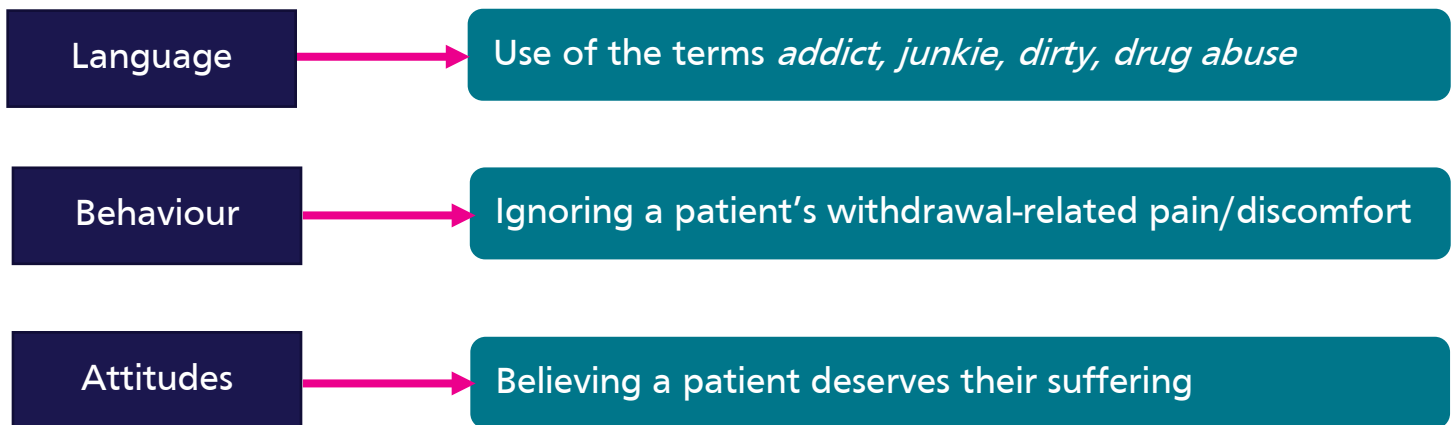


Addressing Stigma

HOW DOES STIGMA AFFECT HEALTH CARE?

Studies tell us that patients with substance use disorders often have had negative experiences in health care settings that lead to them to delay or avoid seeking care, or even leave the hospital before completing treatment.

As clinicians, we may not be conscious that we are conveying **stigma** through our **language**, our **behaviour**, or our **attitudes**:



Treating people in stigmatizing ways leads to shame and decreases the likelihood that they seek help. Other consequences associated with stigma include missed diagnoses and missed opportunities for intervention.

CHANGE THE CULTURE

Changing culture starts with changing language:

- Use **neutral medical terminology** when talking about substance use (e.g., say *injecting heroin* instead of *shooting dope*).
- Use **people-first language** (e.g., say *person with a substance use disorder* instead of *addict*).

But it doesn't stop there.

To learn about reducing stigma, please visit
<http://stigmaendswithme.ca/>