

Mental Health *Language Guide*

Issue

Certain language **sensationalizes** mental illness and **reinforces stigma**.

Terminology that suggests a **lack of quality of life** for people with mental illness.

Labeling a person by their mental illness.

Descriptions of **behavior that imply existence** of mental illness or that are **inaccurate**.

Colloquialisms about treatment can **undermine** a person's willingness to seek help.

Terminology used out of context adds to **misunderstanding** and **trivializes** mental illness.

Incorrect

Terms such as '**Mental Patient**,' '**Lunatic**,' '**Psycho**,' '**Schizo**,' or '**Deranged**'

Referring to someone with a mental illness as a '**Victim**', '**Suffering from**' or '**Afflicted with**' a mental illness.

Saying a person is '**A schizophrenic**' or '**An anorexic**'

Using words such as '**Crazed**,' '**Deranged**,' '**Mad**,' '**Psychotic**'

Using words such as '**Happy pills**,' '**Shrinks**,' '**Mental institution**'

Terms like '**Mad dog**', or using '**Schizophrenic**' or '**Bipolar**' to denote duality.

Correct

A person is '**Living with**' or "**Has a diagnosis of** a mental illness.

A person is '**Being treated for**' or is '**Someone with**' a mental illness.

A person '**Has a diagnosis of**', or '**Is being treated for**' schizophrenia.

A person's behavior was '**Unusual**' or '**Erratic**'

Using **accurate terminology** for treatments, medications, hospitals, or providers.

Reword any sentence that uses **psychiatric or medical terminology** incorrectly or **out of context**.