

# Mental Health *Language Guide*

## Issue

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

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

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**Labeling** a person by their mental illness.

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

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

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

## Incorrect

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

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

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

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

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

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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.

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

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

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

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

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