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News and Updates from the Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program Collaborative at NYU

Punxsutawney Phil did not see his shadow on February 2, suggesting that we are going to enjoy an early spring. But the little guy's accuracy rate is only about 40 percent. As with our work—nothing is certain, so we must be open to change. Researchers and practitioners continue efforts to improve prevention and treatment of substance use disorders (SUDs). The field is constantly changing as we learn more about SUDs, and best practices evolve. How we talk about SUDs is also changing: stigmatizing language, such as “addict” or “junkie,” reinforces harmful stereotypes and can exacerbate the self-loathing that often accompanies SUDs. (See [“Stigma: How it affects the substance use disorder patient,”](#) [“How language makes a difference in treating substance-use disorder,”](#) and [“50 years after founding, NIDA urges following science to move beyond stigma.”](#)) Supporting people with SUDs to seek and access care requires empathy and understanding—an important first step is being mindful of the language we use. Here's a [fact sheet](#) on using non-stigmatizing language.

We hope that this information is helpful.

As we write this, snow is falling heavily in New York. Fingers crossed that Phil is right this year!

—The NYU COSSUP Collaborative Team

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