



News

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Connecticut Alcohol and Drug Policy Council to Host Virtual Forum on Impact of Stigmatizing Language for Media and Communications Professionals

(Hartford, CT) – The Connecticut Alcohol and Drug Policy Council’s (ADPC) Prevention Subcommittee announced today a virtual forum for media and communications professionals, entitled *The Power of Media: Changing the Narrative on Substance Use*. The virtual forum will be held at 10:00 a.m. on December 10, 2020. The forum is being held to identify negative consequences of stigmatizing language regarding substance use in media stories. It will provide tools for the use of more positive, medically accurate, strength-based, and recovery-oriented terminology.

The forum will include a welcome by Kevin Nathan from NBC Connecticut; a presentation on substance use and media by Dr. David Fiellin from the Yale School of Medicine; a moderated panel discussion with individuals in recovery, family members and German Lopez from Vox; and a checklist of strategies for supporting recovery and reducing stigma when reporting on substance use presented by Alyssa Taglia from WTNH News 8.

“The words and language we use to talk about addiction can be more powerful than we realize. We can reduce stigma just by using person-first language, which is non-judgmental and emphasizes the person before the disorder,” said Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) Commissioner Miriam Delphin-Rittmon. “Doing so restores and empowers the humanity of individuals, rather than defining them by their illness. By using this language we can all play a role in reducing harmful stereotypes, which can improve access to care and support people in their recovery.”

“This is a very informative and timely forum,” stated Judith Stonger, Vice President of Prevention Wellness and Recovery at Wheeler Clinic and chair of the forum planning committee. “All of us are becoming much more aware of the power of the media and the impact of the language that we use. This is an excellent opportunity to learn about substance use and recovery, and to discuss how the media’s use of stigmatizing language can negatively impact an individual’s willingness to seek help. The forum will also highlight the positive consequences of including a hopeful recovery message and resources such as how to obtain naloxone and the state’s treatment access line at 1-800-563-4086 when reporting on substance use,” she added.

The forum is free and registration is required. Media and communications professionals interested in attending can register at <https://bit.ly/3mBCzfi> or by calling the Connecticut Clearinghouse at 1-800-232-4424.

About the ADPC

The ADPC is a legislatively mandated body comprised of representatives from all three branches of state government, consumer and advocacy groups, private service providers, individuals in recovery from addictions, and other stakeholders in a coordinated statewide response to alcohol, tobacco and other drug use and abuse in Connecticut. The Council, co-chaired by DMHAS and the Department of Children and Families (DCF), is charged with developing recommendations to address substance-use related priorities from all state agencies on behalf of Connecticut's citizens -- across the lifespan and from all regions of the state.

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