



LANGUAGE MATTERS

A Guide for Pharmacy Staff
Superhero Pharmacy Initiative



The Bottom Line: Opioid use disorder is a health issue, not a moral failing. Our role is to provide support, not judgment. The way we speak to patients affects whether they feel safe continuing their treatment.

At the Counter	
<u>If you're tempted to say...</u>	<u>Consider saying instead...</u>
"Are you here for your addiction meds?"	"Are you picking up a prescription today?"
"You're early for this medication."	"Let me check when your prescription can be filled."
"This is basically a replacement drug."	"This medication is used to treat opioid use disorder."
"Why are you still on this?"	"Would you like to speak with the pharmacist about your treatment plan?"
"We only have a few of these left."	Step aside and speak privately with the patient.

A Few Things Worth Remembering

- Medications like buprenorphine and Suboxone are evidence-based treatments that reduce overdose risk. Treat them like any other chronic condition medication.
- Conversations about sensitive prescriptions should always happen out of earshot of other customers.
- A patient who feels judged at the pharmacy may disengage from treatment altogether. Your tone matters.