

# Beyond Stigma Webinar 2022

## Summary Page

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### Overview of Webinar

In 2022, the Subject Matter Health Research Lab published the animated Beyond Stigma video to explore the impact of stigma on all aspects of treatment for people living with opioid use disorder.

It was created in collaboration with academics, clinicians, and people with lived experience.

This webinar involves a discussion of 4 of the videos creators to learn more about opioid related stigma and how we can reduce it.



“As a person who has lived experience, I have really benefited from a lot of doctors who did not act in that [stigmatizing] fashion. And I’ve been very much hurt by some who have.”

– Sean LeBlanc

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**Panelists** Kirsten Dixon | Kristan Ellis-MacDonald | Sean LeBlanc | Abhimanyu Sud

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### Questions & Key Points Discussed

#### Why was the video created?

- The overall goal of the video is to encourage discussion about stigma in the healthcare system and get this message out to a more general audience.

#### What is important to know about stigma?

- It can be really innocuous – panelist Sean LeBlanc shared that it is the small things, whether it be a look or the language someone uses, that have stuck with him.
- There are very obvious examples of stigma, but we also need to look at the larger systemic instances of stigma. Panelist Kirsten Dixon points out that there is less visible stigma that is always happening – it is part of the way programs are developed, the way clinics are set up, and how patients move throughout the healthcare system.

#### Who was the intended audience for this video?

- The video was created to reach a wide audience of healthcare providers, people working within the substance use field, as well as people who are seeking care or have lived experience of opioid use.

#### How does stigma from a clinician impact the treatment a patient receives?

- There is a lack of knowledge and attitudes that are informed by societal beliefs about substance use. Generally, we are comfortable with some alcohol use, but we’re not comfortable with people who choose to use opioids to do the same thing that alcohol does – provides relief and pleasure.



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### What you can do to reduce stigma

- 1 Talk to the people around you.**  
Whether it's your family, people on the street, or people you work with: keep the dialogue open.
- 2 Seek out education!**  
“We wouldn't ever think as a primary care provider that diabetes is not within my scope of practice, or hypertension is not within my scope of practice, and if we see there are gaps in our knowledge on those areas, we seek out education to make sure we fill those gaps.” – Abhimanyu Sud
- 3 If you are a healthcare provider, normalize opioid use care in your care setting.**
- 4 Pharmacists, stock buprenorphine and methadone in your pharmacy.**  
Have a supply and good practices in place to provide opioid agonist therapy.
- 5 Think more carefully about how these experiences of stigma relate to you personally.**  
Self reflect and identify personal stigmas you carry.
- 6 Be equitably inclusive!**  
Any initiative that serves people who use drugs needs to include them in an equitable way.
- 7 Small actions can have very big impacts.**  
This goes both ways – actions that reinforce stigma can have long lasting consequences, while conscious, person-centered care can have huge positive impacts.

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“Primary care providers – you have people who use substances in your practice. You may or may not know it, but you do. Ask people about their substance use, ask them how you can support them.”

– Abhimanyu Sud

“I've never been offended by someone who is willing to learn or is still learning. Someone who purposefully uses language that is stigmatizing - that's what I really carry to this day.”

– Sean LeBlanc

“There are often a series of things that happen in people's lives that contribute to a substance use disorder... we need systems that are able to engage with the entirety of that experience.”

– Kirsten Dixon

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### Where to Find Us

- Watch the Beyond Stigma video: <https://substanceuse.ca/beyond-stigma>
- Visit the Canadian Substance Use Resource and Knowledge Exchange Centre (SURE): [substanceuse.ca](https://substanceuse.ca)
- Visit the Subject Matter Health Research Lab: [subjectmatter.ca](https://subjectmatter.ca) for future resources, including a discussion guide to accompany this video!