



Reducing Depression Stigma in the Dialysis Facility

Language matters! What is said between co-workers, friends, and family can unintentionally reinforce mental health stigma. Not recognizing the unique needs of patients with mental health conditions may lead them to distrust and avoid treatment.¹

This resource offers alternative language suggestions for discussing patients with mental health conditions.

Common Terms	Preferred Terms
Mentally ill	A person with mental illness.
Schizophrenic	A person living with schizophrenia.
Depressed	A person living with depression.
Anxiety/anxious	A person experiencing high stress or anxiety.
Crazy/insane/disturbed	A person living with a mental health challenge or disorder.
Mental institution/asylum	Mental health hospital.

Common Phrases	Alternatives
That patient is crazy!	That patient is living with a mental illness.
Why is that patient angry all the time?	Maybe that patient is trying to cope with depression?
That patient is paranoid.	That patient is living with paranoia.
The patient was “locked up” in a mental institution.	That patient was able to receive help at a mental health hospital.
The patient skips treatment all the time, they must not care about their health.	Maybe the patient is having trouble adjusting to dialysis or is coping with other stressors.
It’s frustrating that the patient always yells to get off the machine early.	Maybe that patient is feeling anxious and wants to end dialysis early.

Resource

- [Use Person-First Language to Reduce Stigma](#)

¹ People Matter, Words Matter, American Hospital Association, www.aha.org/people-matter-words-matter