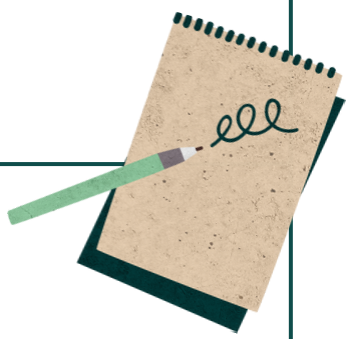
Language guide: hepatitis C in prisons

Language is powerful – especially when discussing people in prison, people who use drugs or people with lived or living experience of hepatitis C. The words we choose can have a significant impact on how people are perceived and treated. Using stigmatizing or judgemental language creates barriers; labels which are used further stigmatises these already stigmatised populations. The below language guide has been developed to support users to consider and reflect on their language choices, and whether these are appropriate and respectful.

Use this	Instead of this
Person in prison Person living in prison Person in custody	Inmate Client Offender Criminal Felon Thug Convict Con Prisoner*
Formerly incarcerated Person with lived experience of incarceration Person with previous convictions	Ex-prisoner Former inmate Ex-crim Ex-con Parolee Ex-offender Re-offender
Custodial Officer Correctional Officer Prison Officer Prison Guard	Screw Warder Turnkey
Person who uses/injects drugs	PWID IDU Injector/injecting drug user User
Person experiencing drug dependence Person experiencing a substance use disorder	Drug addict Drug abuser User Substance misuser PWUD Suffering from addiction Has a drug habit Junkie



Use this	Instead of this
Jail Prison Carceral setting Penitentiary	Corrections Reformatory Detention
Substance use Non-prescribed use	Substance disorder Substance abuse Misuse Problem use Non-compliant use
Used/sterile needle or syringe	Dirty/clean needle or syringe Dirties

**In the interests of promoting person-centered language, the term 'prisoner' has been placed in the 'Instead of this' column, however the project team and reviewers acknowledge that use of this term may be acceptable in certain instances, and its use is context, country and setting specific.*

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