

# Language MATTERS



Let's talk in a way that reflects science and demonstrates respect!

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United Way of Broward County's Commission on Behavioral Health & Drug Prevention  
Ansin Building - 1300 S. Andrews Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316

# When discussing mental health ...



## Let's Say ...



## Instead of ...

✓ She/he/they has/have _____ (e.g. bipolar disorder, dementia, anorexia nervosa)	✗ She/he/they is/are _____ (e.g. bipolar, demented, anorexic)
✓ Person living with a mental illness or mental health condition	✗ Crazy, insane, nuts, lunatic, mentally ill/handicapped/disabled, has a loose screw, lost his/her/their marbles
✓ Experiencing mental illness	✗ Suffering from/victim of mental illness
✓ Died by suicide	✗ Committed suicide
✓ Attempted suicide	✗ Unsuccessful suicide
✓ Usual/typical behavior	✗ Normal behavior
✓ Person receiving mental health services	✗ Mental health patient/case
✓ Psychiatric hospital	✗ Mental institution, looney bin
✓ Has a substance use disorder/an addiction	✗ Is an addict, junkie, druggie, drunk, alcoholic
✓ Experiences symptoms of psychosis	✗ Is psychotic
✓ Has an intellectual or developmental disability	✗ Is retarded/mentally retarded, slow
✓ Student receiving special education services	✗ Special education student
✓ Has a brain injury	✗ Is brain-damaged
✓ It annoys/irritates me	✗ It drives me crazy
✓ I like order and organization	✗ I'm so OCD
✓ I'm feeling really sad/down about this situation	✗ I'm so depressed
✓ I'm having trouble focusing	✗ I'm so ADHD
✓ I've noticed you are exhibiting a frequent change of moods lately	✗ You're so bipolar

### Sources:

- Hogg Foundation for Mental Health
- "Ten Commandments for How to Talk About Mental Health." David Susman, Ph.D. *Psychology Today*.
- "It's Time To Stop Using These Phrases When It Comes To Mental Illness." Erin Schumaker. *American Psychiatric Association, The Huffington Post*.
- "What is mental health stigma?" Rachel Papke. *Jordan Porco Foundation*.