



## Child Welfare Training Toolkit Glossary

The following is a supplemental resource to the 10-module training toolkit. The glossary contains definitions of commonly referenced terms or acronyms, including the recommended use of non-stigmatizing language.

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Term	Definition
<b>A</b>	
<b>Addiction</b>	A treatable, chronic medical disease involving complex interactions among brain circuits, genetics, the environment, and an individual's life experiences. People with addiction use substances or engage in behaviors that become compulsive and often continue despite harmful consequences. <b>See <i>Opioid Use Disorder (OUD)</i>; See <i>Substance Use Disorder (SUD)</i></b>
<b>Administration for Children and Families (<a href="#">ACF</a>)</b>	A federal agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that funds state, territory, local, and Tribal organizations to provide family assistance (welfare), child support, childcare, Head Start, child welfare, and other programs relating to children and families. Actual services are provided by state, county, city, and Tribal governments and by public and private local agencies. ACF assists these organizations through funding, policy direction, and information services.
<b>Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (<a href="#">AFCARS</a>)</b>	Collects case-level information on all children served by the foster care system and those who have been adopted with title IV-E agency involvement. This information is then compiled for The AFCARS Report (TAR) summarizing national foster care and adoption data during a given fiscal year.
<b>Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) <a href="#">P.L. 105-89</a></b>	A federal law enacted in 1997 aimed at improving the lives of children and youth in foster care by establishing key goals (safety, permanency, and well-being) and provisions (permanency timelines, permanency hearings, and reunification guidelines) for child welfare agencies and dependency courts.
<b>Adverse Childhood Experiences (<a href="#">ACEs</a>)</b>	Stressful or traumatic events that occur during childhood that are associated with long-term negative health and well-being outcomes. ACEs can include exposure to things like physical and emotional abuse, neglect, parental substance use and co-occurring disorders, and family violence. <b>See <i>Toxic Stress</i></b>

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**Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD)**

A common alternative term used among substance use and mental health treatment providers in reference to the full continuum of prevention and treatment services available to support individuals affected by alcohol or other drugs.

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**American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists ([ACOG](#))**

A professional membership organization representing more than 60,000 OB-GYNs, medical students, and other health care professionals. ACOG aims to maintain the highest standards of clinical practice for women's health care, increase awareness of women's health care issues, and provide education to the public.

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**American Society of Addiction Medicine ([ASAM](#))**

A professional medical society representing over 5,500 physicians, clinicians, and associated professionals in the field of addiction medicine. ASAM is dedicated to increasing access to and improving the quality of addiction treatment, educating physicians and the public, supporting research and prevention, and promoting the appropriate role of physicians in the care of patients with addiction.

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**Anxiety Disorders**

A group of related mental health diagnoses defined by persistent, excessive fear or worry that manifests both physically and emotionally. Anxiety disorders are the most common of all mental health conditions.

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**ASAM Criteria**

One of the most widely used and comprehensive set of guidelines for placement, continued stay, and transfer and discharge of patients with substance use and co-occurring disorders.  
**See *American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM)***

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**B**

**Bias**

Refers to attitudes, beliefs, and associations about a person or group, especially ones that interfere with an individual's or group's ability to evaluate a situation objectively or accurately. Bias can be both implicit (unconscious) and explicit (conscious). **See *Stigma***

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**C**

**Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) [P.L. 93-247](#)**

Federal legislation originally signed into law in 1974 that authorized funding for the prevention, assessment, investigation, prosecution, and treatment of child abuse and neglect. CAPTA has been reauthorized numerous times over the years to expand and clarify definitions of child abuse and neglect and establish new programs and requirements.  
**See *Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA)***

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**Code of Federal Regulation, Title 42 Part 2—Confidentiality of Substance Use Disorder Patient Records** ([42 CFR Part 2](#))

A federal confidentiality regulation that is specific to substance use disorder treatment providers or programs. Under Part 2, substance use treatment providers are required to observe privacy and confidentiality restrictions related to the release or disclosure of client treatment records. Providers are only allowed to disclose information with prior written consent or within a specific exception to the rule as stated under the law.

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**Collective Trauma**

The cumulative effects of cultural, historical, social, political, and structural inequities that have disproportionately affected children and families from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.

**See *Structural Trauma***

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**Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA)** ([P.L. 114-198](#))

Extensive legislation signed into law in 2016 in response to the opioid epidemic. More specifically, section 503 of CARA added various requirements to CAPTA aimed at helping states address the effects of substance use disorders on infants, children, and families. **See *Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)***

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**Contingency Management**

An intervention strategy rooted in behavioral theory whereby individuals are rewarded for demonstrated progress or behavioral change. When applied to substance use disorder treatment settings, this often looks like providers reinforcing abstinence, as evidenced by negative drug tests, through monetary-based incentives such as vouchers or cash prize drawings.

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**Controlled Substance Act (CSA)** ([P.L. 91-513](#))

Legislation passed by the federal government in 1970 established five drug schedules. These five schedules are organized with consideration to legitimacy and value in medical use along with the potential for misuse and abuse.

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**Co-Occurring Disorder**

A diagnostic term used to describe when a person meets criterion for a concurrent substance use and mental disorder (of any type and/or severity). In other contexts, a co-occurring disorder may also represent meeting criterion for two substance use disorders or two mental disorders, respectively.

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**Cross-Training**

Training on systems-level structure and processes—how partner agencies operate and the mission, values, goals, and mandates that guide their work—is crucial for developing, implementing, and sustaining cross-system initiatives. Cross-training at all levels (administrative, management, and frontline staff) is also critical.

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## D

**Data Inventory**

A collaborative practice tool that increases understanding about data key partner agencies already collect and helps identify other available data sources, their limitations, or access challenges.

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**Depressants** A category of substances that slow the function of the central nervous system causing reduced arousal or stimulation in various parts of the brain. More informally referred to as “downers,” examples of depressants include alcohol, benzodiazepines, and barbiturates.

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**Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, Text Revision (DSM-5-TR)** The most comprehensive, definitive manual for the diagnosis and classification of mental disorders for mental health clinicians and researchers. It is also a valuable tool for other health professionals, social workers, and forensic and legal specialists. The DSM-5-TR features text updates based on scientific literature with contributions from more than 200 subject matter experts.

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**Disparity** Refers to a state of being unequal. In the substance use and mental health disorder treatment systems, disparity is used to describe inequitable outcomes of one racial or ethnic group at various access and utilization points compared to another racial or ethnic group (e.g., people of color experience lower rates of referral and engagement in substance use and mental health services).

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**Disproportionality** Refers to the state of being out of proportion. In the child welfare system, disproportionality occurs when the proportion of one target population (e.g., Black children in out-of-home care) is proportionately overrepresented than in the general population.

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**Domestic Violence (DV)** Any act of violence that occurs within a household between any two individuals residing together—this could mean violence between a couple, a parent and child, two roommates, etc.—again, the emphasis on any two individuals residing in the same home together. **See *Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)***

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**Dopamine** A neurotransmitter that is released during a pleasurable experience. Dopamine acts by activating the brain’s natural reward circuit, associating the experience and related cues as pleasurable, thereby reinforcing that the experience will be repeated. Over time, the release of dopamine produces changes to neural circuitry responsible for the formation of habits, as in substance use disorders.

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## E

**Early Childhood Intervention** Services and supports that are available to infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities and their families. Examples include speech and language services, occupational and physical therapy, parenting, and home visiting programs. **See *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)***

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**Evidence-Based Interventions** Practices or programs that have been rigorously tested with evidence to show that they are effective at producing results and improving outcomes when implemented with fidelity.

## F

**Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)** [P.L. 115-123](#) Authorized new optional title IV-E funding for time-limited prevention services for mental health, substance abuse, in-home parenting skill-based, and kinship navigator programs.

**Family-Centered Approach** Provides a comprehensive array of clinical treatment and related support services that meet the needs of each family member, not just the individual requesting care.

**Fentanyl** A highly potent synthetic opioid. It is a schedule II-controlled substance with legitimate use in the medical field—used primarily to treat severe pain in post-operative hospital settings. While similar to morphine, fentanyl is known to be 100 times more potent.

**Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)** An overarching term used to refer to the various physical, behavioral, and cognitive impairments that may result from prenatal alcohol exposure. Impairments can range from mild to severe with lifelong implications. ***See Infants with Prenatal Substance Exposure (IPSE)***

## G

**Gender-Specific Treatment Services** Are designed to meet the unique needs of men and women, respectively. While both genders are affected by substance use disorders, how each gender is affected is different. Gender-specific treatment allows practitioners to tailor programming to these very specific differences, which often include information on preferred substances, rates of dependence, neurobiological responses, and careful attention to psychosocial stressors that may increase the risk of return to use.

## H

**Harm Reduction** An evidence-based strategy that promotes critical awareness and resource accessibility for individuals in active substance use and can be a set of services, a type of organization, or an approach.

**Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)** [P.L. 104-191](#) A federal law passed in 1996 set the standard for the safe handling of patient or client-protected health information. These standards are commonly referred to as HIPAA regulations and include the privacy rule, security rule, breach of notification rule, and omnibus rule.

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## I

### **Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)** [P.L. 95-608](#)

A federal law passed in 1978 with the intent of restoring and maintaining connections between Indian children, their families, and Tribal communities. ICWA governs state child custody proceedings by 1) recognizing Tribal jurisdiction over decisions for Indian children; 2) establishing minimum federal standards for the removal of Indian children from their families; 3) establishing preferences for placement of Indian children with extended family or other Tribal families; and 4) instituting protections to ensure birth parents' voluntary relinquishments of their children are truly voluntary. ICWA applies to Indian children who are a member of, or eligible for membership in, a federally recognized Tribe.

### **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)**

A written legal document for students with disabilities that outlines specialized instructional goals and objectives along with program or services to be provided to promote their academic success.

### **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** [P.L. 108-446](#)

Legislation that governs the provision of early intervention, special education, and related services to infants, toddlers, children, and adolescents with known disabilities with the goal of ensuring free and public education to all children in the least restrictive environment. **See *Individualized Education Plan (IEP)***

### **Infants with Prenatal Substance Exposure (IPSE)**

Infants exposed to alcohol and/or a controlled substance (illicit or prescribed) ingested by the mother in utero. Prenatal substance exposure may cause a spectrum of physical and developmental challenges related to growth, behavior, cognition, executive functioning, language, and achievement. **See *Early Childhood Intervention***

### **Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)**

Any behavior that one partner uses to establish control over the other—with no bearing on whether the two partners reside together or not. IPV is inclusive to all forms of relationships, including current or former spouses, domestic or same-sex partners, boyfriends and girlfriends, dating partners, including casual sex partners. **See *Domestic Violence (DV)***

## J K

### **Joint Case Review**

A teaming approach that brings together cross-systems partners, parents, and other family members with the common goal of monitoring progress and adapting treatment and case plans as needed. *(Also commonly referred to as staffings, child and family team meetings, or shared decision-making meetings).*

## L

<b>LGBTQIA2S+</b>	An acronym or phrase that represents members of a community who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex, asexual, Two-Spirit, and other gender or sexual identities.
<b>LGBTQIA2S+ Affirmative Treatment</b>	Services designed to move beyond just inclusion by centering the experiences of its community members. LGBTQIA2S+ affirmative treatment services are committed to addressing the underlying community-specific issues such as familial, cultural, and systemic stressors contributing to higher rates of substance abuse and co-occurring disorders.

## M

<b>Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD)</b>	An evidence-based approach for treatment of opioid use disorders consisting of three FDA-approved medications—buprenorphine, methadone, and naltrexone. MOUD is most effective when paired with other psychosocial treatment services, including medication management, individual or group counseling, and recovery-oriented supports. <b>See <i>Evidence-Based Interventions</i></b>
<b>Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)</b>	An agreement between agencies intended to support interagency collaboration through defining agency roles, mutual agreements, and coordinated efforts.
<b>Mental Disorder</b>	A wide range of conditions affecting mood, thoughts, and behavior causing impairments that range in severity from mild, moderate, or severe.
<b>Methamphetamine</b>	A powerful, highly addictive stimulant that affects the central nervous system. Methamphetamine comes in various forms including powders, crystals, and pills; and can be smoked, snorted, swallowed, or injected when dissolved in water or alcohol. <b>See <i>Stimulants</i></b>
<b>Minimum Sufficient Level of Care (MSL or MSLC)</b>	A practice standard tied to reasonable efforts that guides child welfare casework practice and the courts in ensuring a child's safety while also not causing unnecessary separation through removal. MSLC sets the standard for minimum sufficiency—it is not and should not be interpreted as the ideal standard.
<b>Mood Disorders</b>	A classification of mental health diagnoses marked by impairments to a person's emotional state of well-being (i.e., how someone thinks and feels) that begin to interfere with their ability to carry out functions of their daily lives. Mood disorders range in severity from mild, moderate, to severe.

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**Motivational Enhancement** Strategies used to emphasize parents' ability to voice personal goals and values in ways that elicit their own motivation to change, and to make choices about their treatment options that are individualized and culturally responsive.

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**Motivational Interviewing (MI)** An effective therapeutic method aimed at promoting an individual's behavioral change. Practitioners use MI strategies to help identify any potential ambivalence toward change while guiding clients through the 5-step readiness for change process. While MI can be used with many different focal populations, it has been tested rigorously within the substance use disorder demographic and has shown to be highly effective in promoting favorable outcomes.

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**Mutual Help Organizations** Also known as self-help groups or mutual aid, mutual help organizations bring together individuals in recovery to share their experiences and to provide support to one another.

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## N

**Naloxone** An FDA-approved medication that rapidly reverses an opioid overdose. Naloxone, commonly known by its brand name, Narcan, is administered as an injectable or prepackaged nasal spray that works by quickly restoring slowed or stopped breathing. **See Harm Reduction**

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**National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW)** A national resource center providing information, expert consultation, and training and technical assistance to child welfare, dependency court, and substance use disorder treatment professionals to improve family recovery, safety, and stability.

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**National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)** The national research funder for all aspects of drug abuse and addiction as part of the National Institute of Health (NIH).

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**Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)** A withdrawal condition that may result from an infant's prenatal exposure to certain substances. **See Infants with Prenatal Substance Exposure (IPSE)**

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**Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome (NOWS)** A subset of NAS that is specific to opioid exposure. **See Infants with Prenatal Substance Exposure (IPSE)**

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**Neurodevelopmental Needs** Infant, child, or adolescent needs relating to delays in development, including potential learning challenges, neurodevelopmental disorders, and social-emotional difficulties that may be contributing to challenges in the home and school settings.

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## O

### Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation ([ASPE](#))

An office within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that acts as the principal advisor to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on policy development and is responsible for major activities in policy coordination, legislation development, strategic planning, policy research, evaluation, and economic analysis.

### Opiates

Are naturally derived medications. Nature produces the main ingredient, opium, which is extracted directly from the poppy plant. By definition, the only natural opiates are morphine, codeine, and thebaine (also known as paramorphine).

### Opioids

Are chemically derived medications that produce the same effect as opiates. There are two classifications of opioids—semisynthetic and synthetic. Examples of semisynthetic opioids include oxycodone, hydrocodone, as well as the illicit drug heroin; whereas synthetic opioids include buprenorphine, methadone, and fentanyl. **See *Fentanyl***

### Opioid Use Disorder (OUD)

A treatable disease causing clinically significant impairment or distress as a result of opioid use. **See *Addiction***; **See *Substance Use Disorder (SUD)***

## P

### Parentification

When a child or adolescent takes on developmentally inappropriate levels of responsibility for others such as caring for a parent or younger more dependent siblings, a dynamic common in families affected by substance use and co-occurring disorders.

### Peer Recovery Support

Services designed and delivered by people with lived expertise, available in a multitude of settings including child welfare, mental health, and substance use disorder treatment. Peer recovery support services help engage and retain parents in the recovery process, reduce the likelihood of return to use, leading to sustained recovery.

### Personality Disorder

A group of mental disorders marked by rigid and unhealthy patterns of thinking and relating thereby causing significant challenges related to school, work, friendships, and relationships.

### Person-First Language

A language paradigm shift that reduces stigma by restructuring terms to place emphasis on the person rather than their disability, diagnosis, condition, or ailment. Examples include a person with a substance use disorder, infants with prenatal substance exposure, and children in out-of-home care.

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**Protective Capacities**

Behavioral, cognitive, and emotional characteristics that can specifically and directly be associated with a person being protective of their child. They are specific qualities that can be observed, understood, and demonstrated as a part of the way a parent thinks, feels, and acts. Protective capacities speak to the ability to act on behalf of a child to ensure their immediate and ongoing safety.

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**Protective Factors**

Include strengths and attributes of families, communities, and larger societies that reduce risk and promote the overall health and well-being of children, parents, and families. These will look different for each family but generally include knowledge, skills, strengths, supports, or connections that serve to protect against threats of harm and are associated with a greater likelihood of positive family outcomes.

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**Psychotic Disorders**

A group of severe mental disorders characterized by their disconnection from reality. The two telltale symptoms of these disorders include delusions, or false beliefs, and hallucinations such as false perceptions. Other common symptoms include disorganized thinking, incoherent speech, unusual behavior, and poor hygiene.

## Q

**Quality Improvement Center on Domestic Violence in Child Welfare ([QIC-DVCW](#))**

Develops, tests, evaluates, and disseminates innovative interventions that improve how child welfare agencies and their partners work with families experiencing domestic violence and are involved with the child welfare system. QIC-DVCW goals are to increase the safety and well-being of adult and child survivors and promote accountability and positive change in people engaging in family violence.

## R

**Recovery**

A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.

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**Recovery Management Plan**

A tool to help individuals in recovery plan and respond to potential indicators for return to use by increasing awareness of activators or triggers, identify and access recovery supports, and steps to carry out to ensure child and family safety.

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**Return to Use** A less stigmatizing term used to describe when a person in recovery uses substances after a period of abstinence. This may look like a single episode after an attempt to stop or multiple episodes spanning years of long-term recovery. This shift in terminology reinforces that substance use disorders are chronic, life-long conditions that may have a recurrence of symptoms similar to other medical conditions.

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**Risk Factors** Refer to the likelihood of a child's future maltreatment. This may include any reasonably foreseeable substantial risk of harm to a child—while these are not considered active safety threats, they can be anticipated to have severe effects on a child at any time.

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## S

**Safety and Risk Assessment** Systematic collection of information to help determine the presence of any immediate safety threats to children while also identifying any potential risks for future harm.

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**Safety Factors** Refer to present or impending dangers to a child or insufficient caregiver protective capacities to ensure a child is protected from danger. Safety factors are immediate problems that need to be resolved to protect a child or prevent further harm.

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**Safety Plan** A collaborative practice tool that is written in a way that helps parents and families fully understand the reason for the protective intervention. A safety plan contains detailed action steps that clearly outline what needs to happen to ensure child safety including how safety threats will be mitigated, steps the parent will take to protect their child, steps others will take to support the parent in keeping the child safe in the home environment, and detailed information about how the safety plan will be monitored.

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**Screening** A process for evaluating the presence of a potential substance use or co-occurring disorder that typically involves a set of observations and questions administered using a validated tool. When paired with collaborative protocols, screening can ensure early identification and quick access to comprehensive assessment and treatment.

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**Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)** A term used to describe when someone becomes deeply affected by the traumatic experiences of another individual, community, or larger system. In child welfare settings this may also be referred to as vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, or burnout.

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**Self-Stigma** A term referring to when individuals affected by substance use and co-occurring disorders experience a level of self-shame as a result of internalizing or believing public or structural stereotypes about their chronic health condition.

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<b>Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)</b>	Circumstances that have a significant impact on health, well-being, and quality of life. Examples of SDOH include access to stable housing, safe communities, quality education, employment opportunities, and affordable healthcare.
<b>Stages of Change Model</b>	Also referred to as the transtheoretical model, is a common way to understand the ways in which behavioral change occurs in addiction recovery. The model consists of five main stages: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance.
<b>Stigma</b>	When applied to substance use or co-occurring disorders, stigma refers to any combination of labeling, stereotyping, bias, or discrimination that prevent individuals from getting the help that they need resulting in negative health and well-being outcomes. <b>See <i>Bias</i></b>
<b>Stimulants</b>	Substances that alter the mind and body by increasing mood and energy levels. Stimulants are known and commonly misused for their ability to produce a rush leading to increased productivity, performance, and heightened euphoria. Adderall, cocaine, and methamphetamines are all examples of stimulants. <b>See <i>Methamphetamine</i></b>
<b>Structural Stigma</b>	Also referred to as institutional stigma, includes laws, policies, or regulations that can both intentionally and unintentionally result in discrimination. Structural stigma can limit the opportunities, resources, and well-being of individuals affected by substance use and co-occurring disorders by prohibiting access or utilization to specific types of treatment interventions.
<b>Structural Trauma</b>	Refers to trauma experienced as the result of structural inequities that have disproportionately impacted children and families from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. <b>See <i>Collective Trauma</i></b>
<b>Substance Use Coercion</b>	Tactics used by the partner using violence to control and/or manipulate their partner's use of substances, access to treatment, and other sources of protection. <b>See <i>Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)</i></b>
<b>Substance Use Disorder (SUD)</b>	Occur when the recurrent use of alcohol and/or drugs causes clinically significant impairment, including health problems, disability, and failure to meet major responsibilities at work, school, or home. <b>See <i>Addiction</i>; See <i>Opioid Use Disorder (OUD)</i></b>

## T U V

<b>Toxic Stress</b>	Excessive or prolonged activation of stress response systems in the body and the brain. Toxic stress can have damaging effects on learning, behavior, and health across the lifespan. <b>See <i>Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)</i></b>
<b>Trauma</b>	An event, series of events, or set of circumstances experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening, with lasting adverse effects on the individual's mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being. <b>See <i>Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)</i></b>
<b>Trauma-Informed Care</b>	Infuses and sustains trauma awareness, knowledge, and skills into organizational practices and policies to promote a culture of safety, empowerment, and healing.
<b>Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS)</b>	A national data system of annual admissions and discharges from substance abuse treatment facilities in the United States. TEDS collects information on service settings, treatment details, and demographic variables from state agencies for all patients aged 12 or older.
<b>Treatment Plan</b>	An individualized plan of action with measurable goals and outcomes developed by a client and substance use disorder treatment provider to reduce substance use and related adverse consequences.

## W X Y Z

<b>Xylazine</b>	An extremely powerful sedative approved by the FDA for veterinary use in large animals such as horses, cattle, or other large non-human mammals. Xylazine is an emerging drug trend and is often added to other illicit substances and has been linked to an increasing number of overdose deaths nationwide.
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