

UNDERSTANDING DRUG-RELATED STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION

Tools for Better Practice
and Social Change



Harm Reduction Coalition

2010

Introductions



- Name
- Organization
- How do you interact with drug users?

Goals



- Identify and explore the reach of drug-related stigma.
- Name strategies for confronting drug-related stigma.
- Promote productive service provision that avoids stigmatizing people who use drugs.

Training Guidelines



- Step up, Step Back
- Non-Judgment
- Talk *with* each other, not *at* each other
- Agree to disagree
- Confidentiality

A few basic principles...



- Drug use exists along a continuum
 - ▣ *Abstinence is one of many possible goals*
 - ▣ *Meet people “where they are at”*
- Drug-related harm can not be assumed
 - ▣ *Drugs can meet important needs*
- Drug users are more than their drug use

What is stigma?



A **social process** which can reinforce relations of **power** and **control**.

Leads to **status loss** and **discrimination** for the stigmatized.

- *Link and Phelan*

ACTIVITY: Forms of Stigma



Stigma from individuals

Institutional stigma

Self-stigma (internalized)

Stigma by association

Key Elements of Drug-Related Stigma



Blame and moral judgment

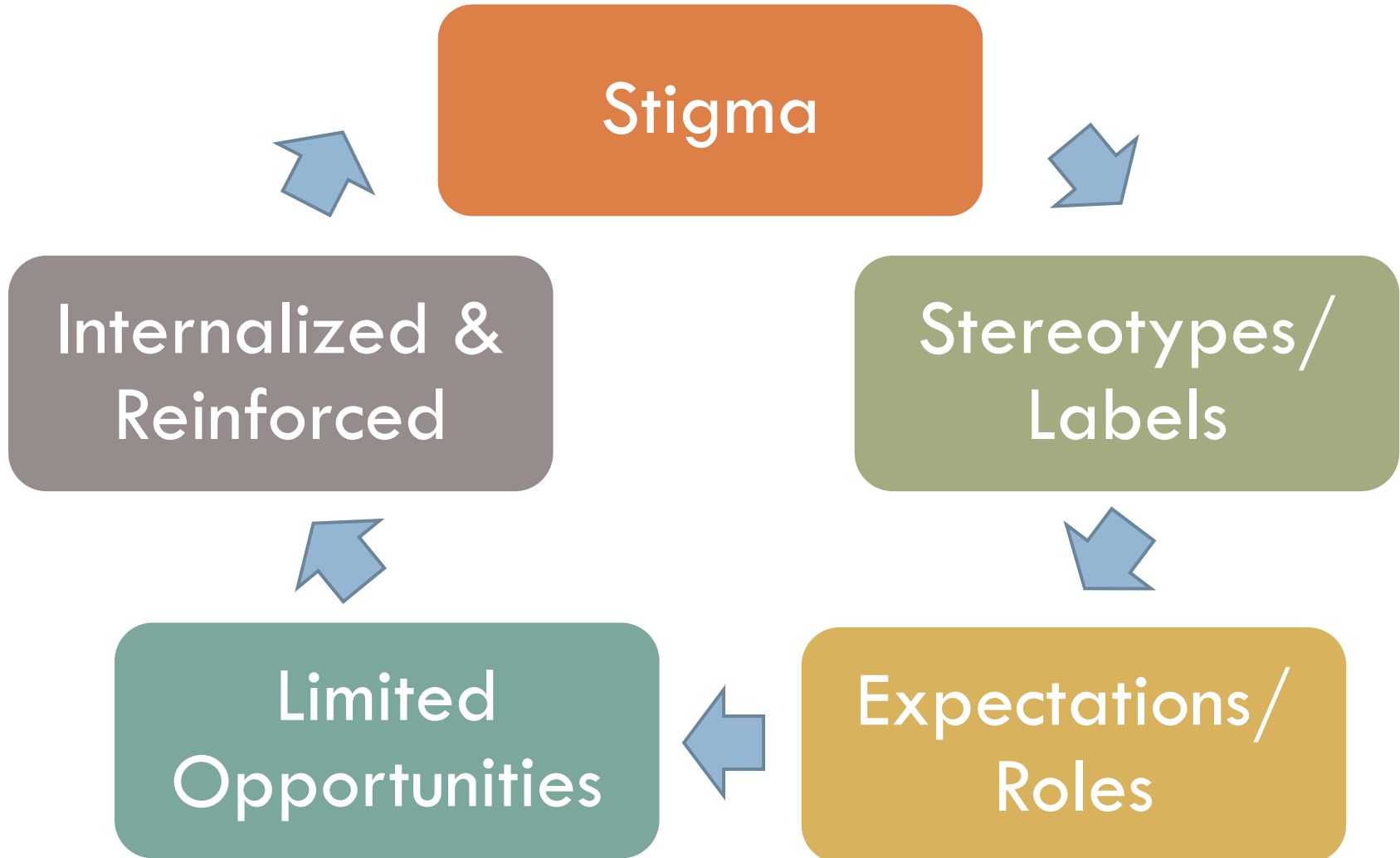
Criminalize

Pathologize

Patronize

Fear and Isolate

Cycle of Drug-Related Stigma



Implications for Providers



- Willingness to access services
- Relationships and trust
 - ▣ *Assumptions*
- Participant risk and behaviors
- Participant self-worth
- Funding

Break!



- 10 minute break -

Video: Labels and Language

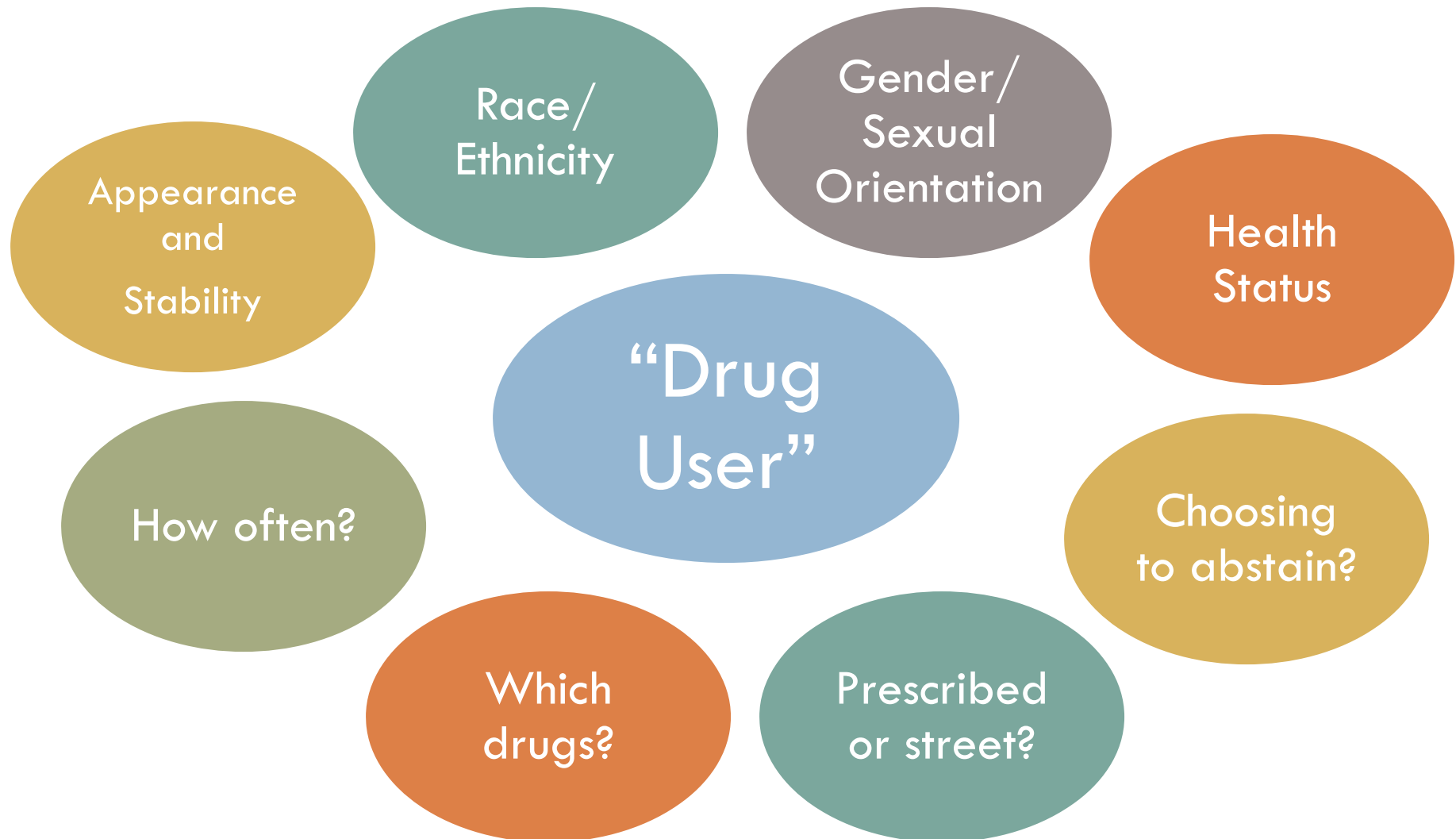


Purpose: *Explore labels and language associated with drugs/drug use and their relationship to stigma*

Pay attention to:

- *Labels & Language*
- *Themes that you see in your work with clients*

Drug User Labels



Language



Junkies, Dope Fiends

Crack-heads, Crack Babies

Drug Addicts, Drug Abusers

Drug Users, People Who Use Drugs

Drug Use, Drug Abuse, Drug Misuse

Clean and Dirty

Relapse vs. Lapse

Functions of Stigma – The “3Ds”



Difference

Keep people out

Danger

Keep people away

Discrimination

Keep people down

Activity: Dynamics of Stigma



Purpose: *To explore different dynamics and consequences of stigma*

Keep in mind the the 3-Ds:

- ▣ *Difference (Keeping people out)*
- ▣ *Danger (Keeping people away)*
- ▣ *Discrimination (Keeping people down)*

Round 1



Brainstorm ways that your institution stigmatizes drug users

Think about behaviors/actions

AND

Why it happens

(3Ds/Beliefs)

Round 2



**Brainstorm ways that drug users
may respond to the stigmatizing
behaviors from round 1**

Name behaviors/actions

AND

Ways stigma may be internalized

Round 3



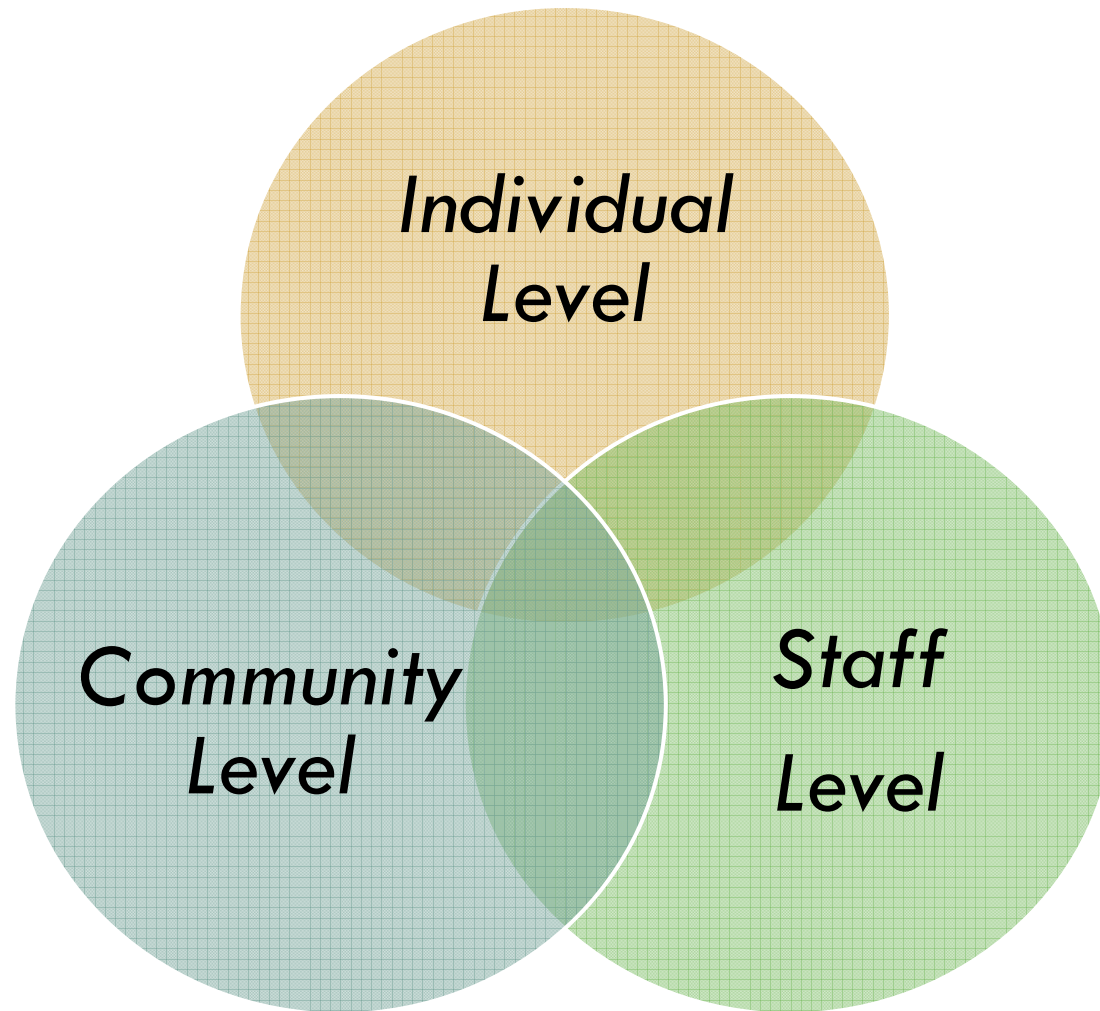
List 3 *strategies/alternatives* to challenge the stigmatizing behaviors you have discussed.

Either from the perspective of the institution

OR

As a provider helping a client

Challenging Stigma, Creating Change



Individual Level



Language

Honesty

Relationships

Disclosure and dialogue

Education and personal development

Staff and Community Level

Staff Level

- Training and education
- Outlets for feedback
- Assessment of practices
- Hiring Drug Users

Community Level

- Participant Advisory Boards
- Awareness Campaigns
- Policy and advocacy
- Events

Release Campaign

