

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO CONSIDER YOURSELF AN “ADDICT”?:

THE IMPACT OF IDENTITY ON TREATMENT-SEEKING BEHAVIORS  
AMONG INDIVIDUALS WITH SUBSTANCE USE PROBLEMS



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ACBS World  
Conference 16  
July 2018

## Disclosure: No Support



Madeline Benz

- I have not received and will not receive any commercial support related to this presentation or the work presented in this presentation.

# Outline



- Background
- Present Study
- Results
- Key Takeaways
- Implications



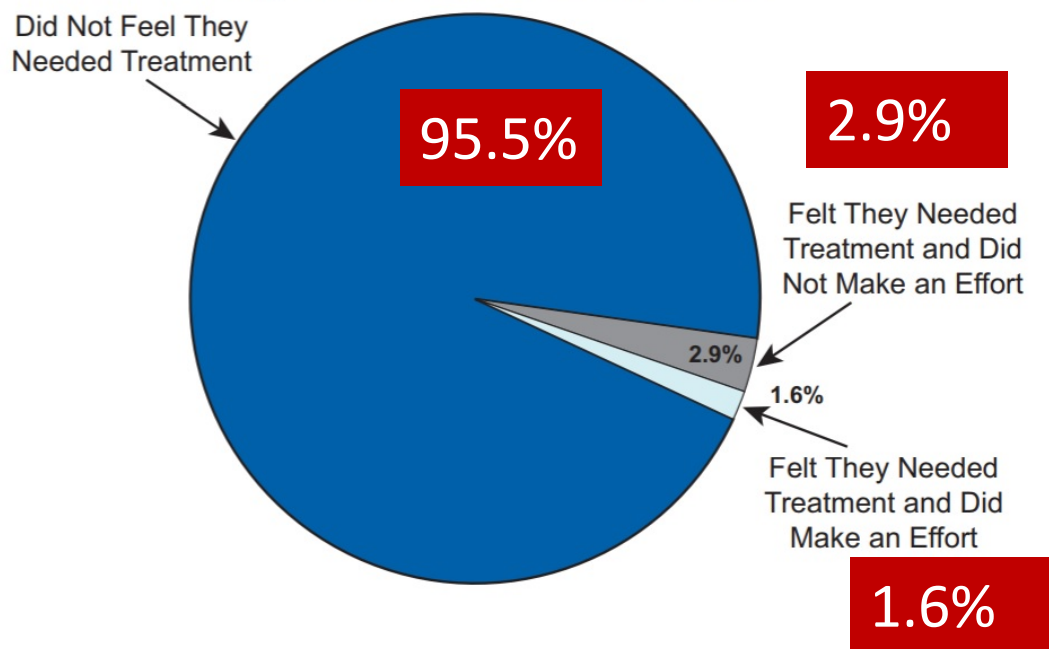
15 mins



# Background: Help-Seeking (SAMHSA, 2013)



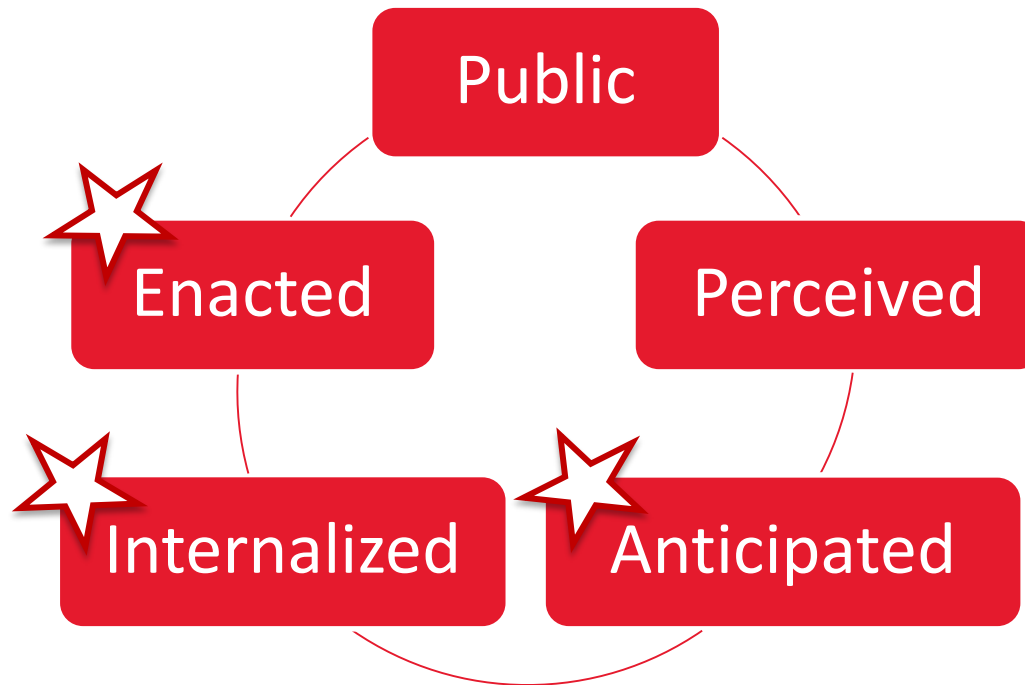
**Figure 7.10 Past Year Perceived Need for and Effort Made to Receive Specialty Treatment among Persons Aged 12 or Older Needing But Not Receiving Treatment for Illicit Drug or Alcohol Use: 2013**



20.2 Million Needing But Not Receiving Treatment for Illicit Drug or Alcohol Use

# Question: Why these low rates of help-seeking?

- Goffman (1963): Stigma is 'an attribute that is deeply discrediting...turning a whole and usual person to a tainted and discounted one'



# Using this model for substance use stigma:

“If they wanted to, they would just quit”

“I’m a bad person”

“I’m weak and pathetic”

“It’s just their character... they can’t be helped”

“It’s their own fault for using drugs in the first place”



“Addicts are hard to work with”







# Using this model for fear of substance use stigma:

“Because I’m an addict, I am afraid healthcare workers will treat me differently”

“I’m an addict, so I’m afraid my family will think I can’t be trusted”



# The Present Study



## Objective

- To examine the impact of **substance-related stigma** and **fear of substance-related stigma** on **help-seeking intentions and behaviors** in a community sample of young adults

## Hypotheses

- **Substance Use Stigma** will uniquely predict intentions to seek treatment and previous help-seeking behavior
- **Fear of Substance Use Stigma** will predict intentions to seek treatment and previous help-seeking behavior above and beyond substance use stigma



# Methods

- Study design:
  - Anonymous, online survey using Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk)
  - Criteria:
    - 18-24 years old
    - score of 8 or above on the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Task OR score of 6 or above on the Drug Abuse Screening Test
  - National sample of individuals with a history of substance use problems from the United States



# Participants

**Table 1. Participant Demographics ( $n = 168$ )**

Age ( <i>SD</i> )	22.84 (1.30)
Race	63.2% White
Marital Status	66.1% Single
Gender Identity	49.1% female 45% male
Sexual Orientation	60.8% heterosexual
Employed Full Time	66.1%
Degree	50.3% BA or higher
Income 10,000 – 49,000	52.6%



# Methods: Measures

## Substance Use Severity

- Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Task (AUDIT)
- Drug Abuse Screening Task (DAST)

## Stigma

- Substance Use Stigma Mechanisms Scale (SUSMS)

## Fear of Stigma

- Adapted SUSMS

## Help-seeking

- History of help-seeking (professional or non-professional)
- Intentions to seek help in the next year (professional or non-pro)

\*Language note: SU stigma = substance use stigma



# Measures

**Table 2. Sample Characteristics ( $n = 168$ )**

Measure	Mean ( <i>SD</i> )	
AUDIT	17.15 (7.57)	<b>Intermediate severity/high risk</b>
DAST	8.18 (6.31)	
SUSMS (SU stigma)	45.36 (16.98)	<b>&gt; Middle of scale</b>
Fear of SU stigma	14.29 (7.01)	
Intentions to seek help for SU	37.98 (19.72)	<b>Low intentions</b>
Measure	Percentage	
Sought help for SU	40.4%	
Overdose	21.1%	



# Results: Bivariate Correlations

**Table 3. Correlations (*n* = 168)**


Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Intentions to HS	-	.27**	.36**	.23**	.39**	.51**
2. Sought Help		-	.39**	.27**	.37**	.33**
3. AUDIT			-	.43**	.51**	.51**
4. DAST				-	.60**	.45**
5. SU Stigma					-	.75**
6. Fear of SU Stigma						-



## Results: Main Effect for SU Stigma

$F(3,165) = 13.11, p < .001 ; r^2 = 19.3\%$

**Table 4. Multiple Regression: Predictors of Intentions to Seek Help ( $n = 168$ )**

	Variable	B	$\beta$	p
Block 2 	<b>AUDIT</b>	<b>.61</b>	<b>.24</b>	<b>.005</b>
	DAST	-.13	-.04	.631
	<b>SU Stigma</b>	<b>.35</b>	<b>.30</b>	<b>.002</b>





## Results: Main effect for SU Stigma

$\chi^2(3) = 35.65, p < .001$ ; Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .265$

Correctly classified 71.8%

**Table 5. Logistic Regression: Predictors of Past Help-Seeking Behavior ( $n = 168$ )**

	Variable	B	Exp(B)	p
Block 2	<b>AUDIT</b>	<b>.09</b>	<b>1.09</b>	<b>.002</b>
	DAST	.00	1.00	.924
	<b>SU Stigma</b>	<b>.03</b>	<b>1.03</b>	<b>.018</b>



# Results: Predicting Help-Seeking Intentions

$F(4,164) = 15.88, p < .001 ; r^2 = 27.9\%$

**Table 6. Multiple Regression: Predictors of Intentions to Seek Help ( $n = 168$ )**

	Variable	B	$\beta$	p
Block 3	AUDIT	.40	.15	.056
	DAST	-.07	-.02	.795
	SU Stigma	-.02	-.02	.875
	<b>Fear of SU Stigma</b>	<b>1.28</b>	<b>.46</b>	<b>.000</b>



## Results:

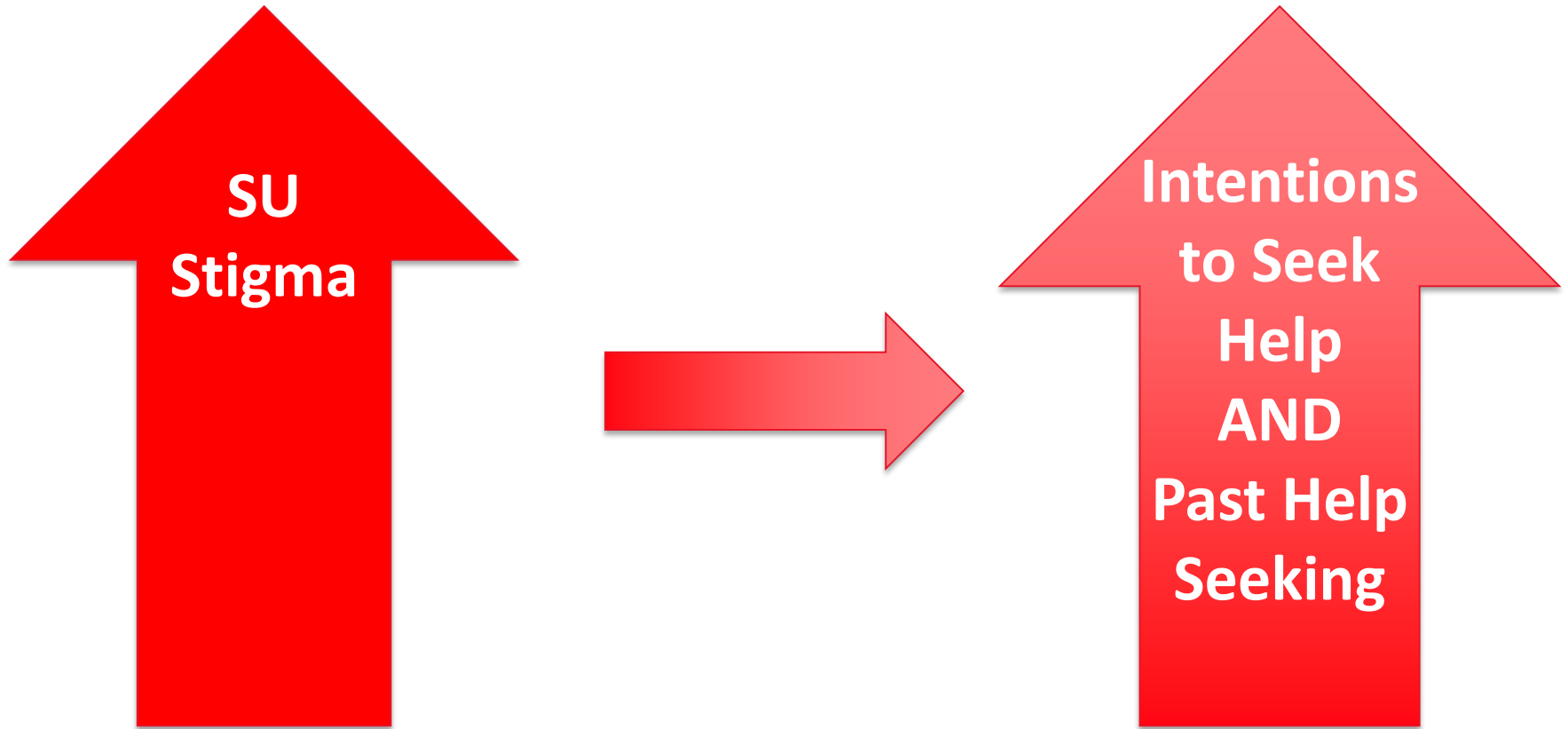
$\chi^2(4) = 35.8, p < .001$ ; Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .257$

Correctly classified 71.2%

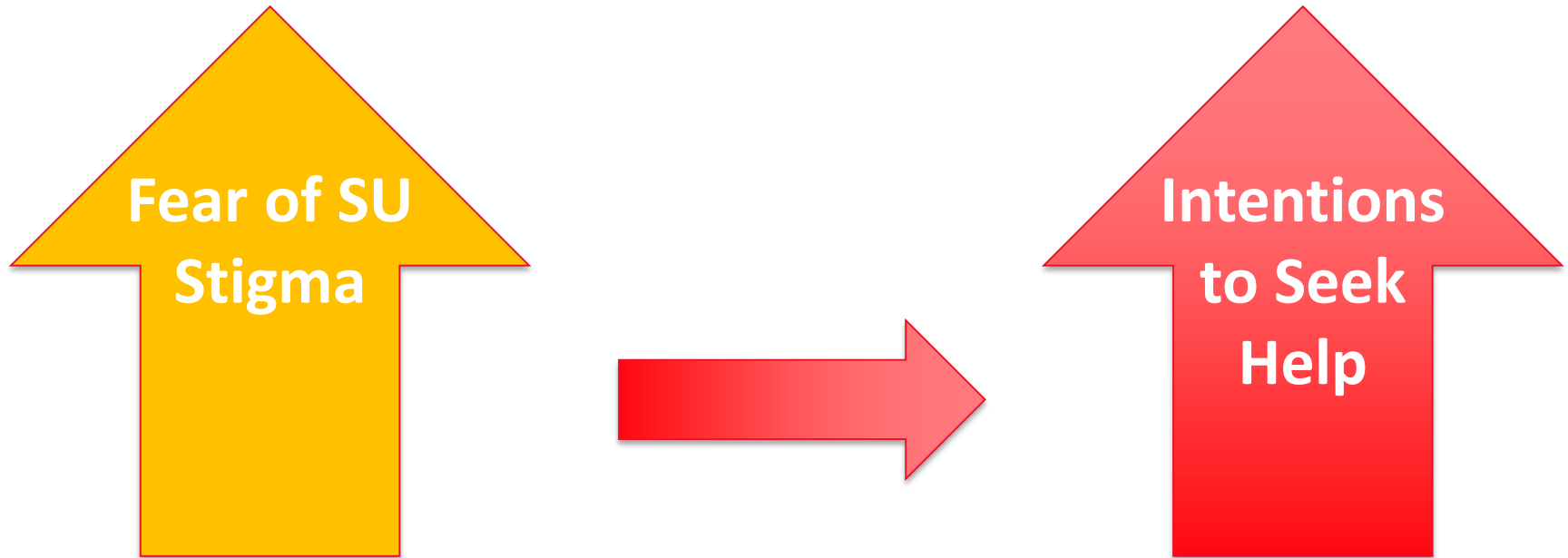
**Table 7. Logistic Regression: Predictors of Past Help-Seeking Behavior Among ( $n = 168$ )**

	Variable	B	Exp(B)	p
Block 3	<b>AUDIT</b>	<b>.08</b>	<b>1.09</b>	<b>.004</b>
	DAST	.00	1.00	.910
	SU Stigma	.03	1.03	.088
	Fear of SU Stigma	.01	1.01	.702

# Discussion of Main Findings: SU Stigma

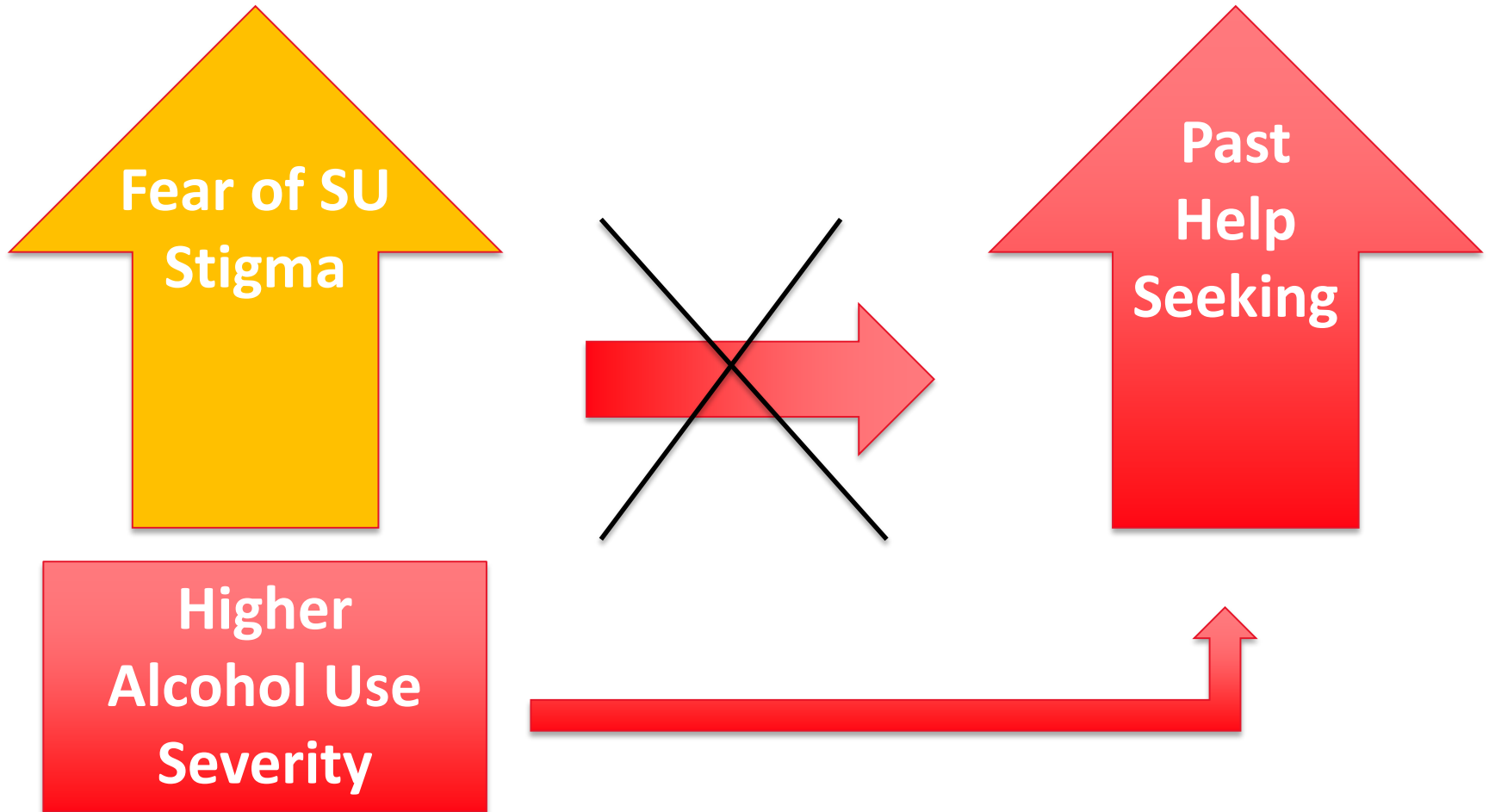


# Discussion of Main Findings: Fear of SU Stigma





# Discussion of Main Findings: Fear of SU Stigma





# Strengths and Limitations

## Strengths

- Non-clinical sample
- Fear of stigma

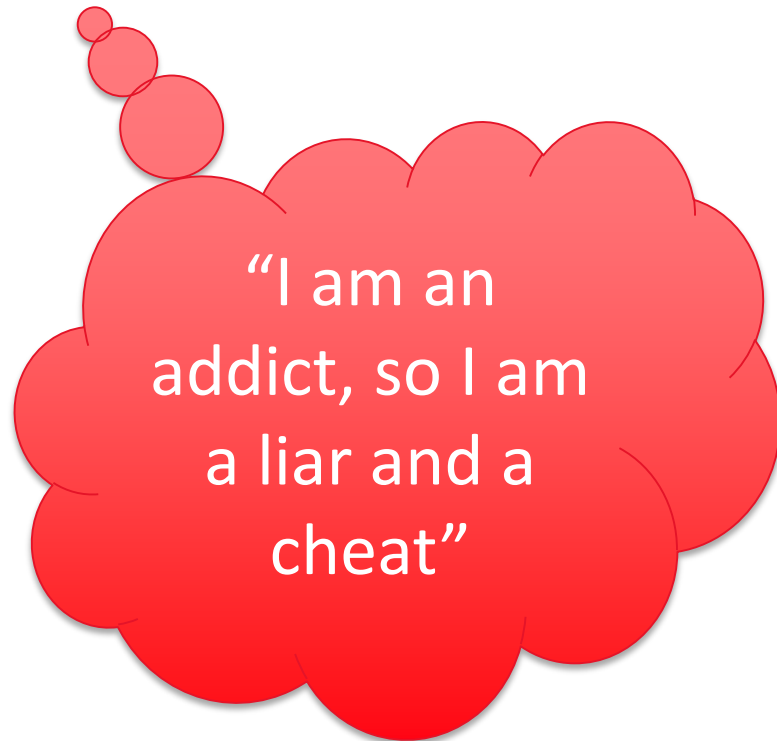
## Limitations

- Intentions to seek help does not always lead to behavior
- Professional and non-professional help-seeking

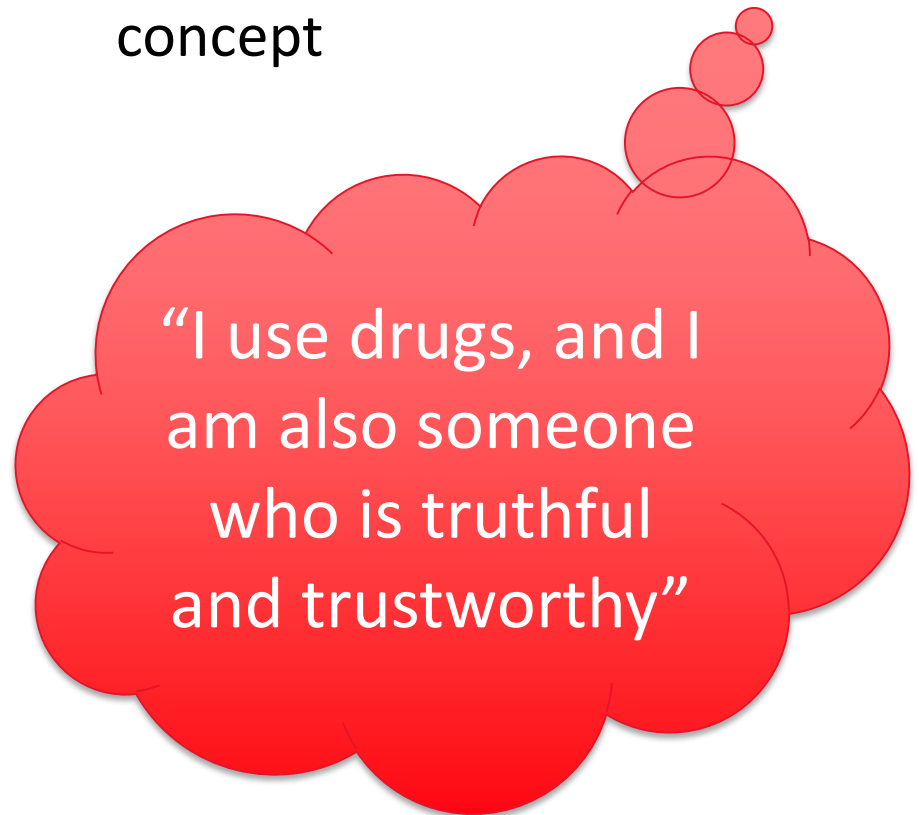


# ACT Conceptualization: “I’m an addict”

- Self-as-content:  
Rigid attachment to self-concept



- Self-as-context:  
Flexible attachment to self-concept

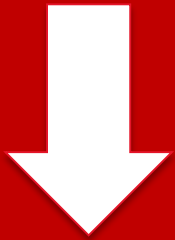






# Key Takeaways and Implications

**“Stigma” overall  
may not always  
be a barrier**



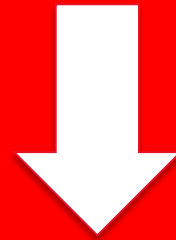
**RESEARCH:** Need  
to understand  
the nuances and  
function

**Fear of stigma may  
motivate treatment  
seeking intentions**



**CLINICAL:** Need to  
consider contextual  
factors in  
interpretation

**Substance use  
severity may  
play a role**



**RESEARCH:** Need  
to explore  
different avenues  
of influence

THANK YOU!

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO  
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THE IMPACT OF IDENTITY ON  
TREATMENT-SEEKING BEHAVIORS AMONG  
INDIVIDUALS WITH SUBSTANCE USE PROBLEMS

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# THE IMPACT OF IDENTITY ON THRIVING:

EXAMINING SELF-AS-CONTENT IN MULTIPLE CONTEXTS

## Presenters:

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**Lia Bishop, MA:** Clinical Psychology, Clark University

**Peter Grau, MS:** Counselling Psychology, Marquette University

**Doug Gazarian, BA:** Clinical Psychology, Clark University

## Discussant:

**Jason Luoma, PhD**

Director/CEO, Portland

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