

# 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference and Exhibition on **Addiction Research & Therapy**

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## Stigma in addiction and mental health: Dual diagnosis as a casserole disease

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We don't often take casseroles to the family of those in treatment for addictions and we don't often send cards and flowers to friends and family members who have been discharged back into the community after treatment. Stigma in this biological and neurological approach to addictions, although crucial to treatment, has not moved society away from the stigma of mental illness; especially as it relates to Substance Use Disorders (SUDs). Since stigma is well researched and considered to be an underlying reason for failure of communities and governments to financially support treatment, for clients to seek treatment, and for early dropout rates; this is an especially poignant issue in addictions therapy. Complicating this picture; are the unusually high rates of incarcerated individuals with SUDs, changing drug use patterns to OTC and prescription drugs, and drug legalization issues in many states. Confusion occurs, for many, in cognitively separating criminal behavior from medical treatment and medical treatment from treatment of the SUD. Because a team and community services approach is crucial to intervention, it becomes paramount that we explore stigma with an interdisciplinary focus in order to move beyond stigma and towards a recovering society. This presentation will review the latest research on stigma, in the mental health and addictions literature, and give concrete interactive examples to providers across disciplines based on empirically supported practices. The information presented will not only help with understanding; but also attend to the stigma prevalent in our own conversations, as helping professionals, and how we can help our clients, our colleagues, and the community takes the initial steps in moving away from stigma.

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