



The opposite of addiction is connection. That's what I've learned — connection to community, your culture, to a meeting, to your family. But, most importantly, to yourself.

Robert Coberly | *Tulalip Tribes*

Robert (pictured on the front with his daughter, Andrea Coberly) is in recovery after finding connection in a Native-centered treatment program.



Learn more about moving past stigma.
ForNativeLives.org/story



FOR OUR LIVES

We are changing
the stories we share
about addiction.

Our stories matter.



Stigma works to keep us apart. But in our cultures, we are all together.

Stigma refers to negative beliefs that people share. Stigma about opioid use and addiction can harm many people in our communities — including people with substance use disorder, but also their relatives and friends.

We are taking action.

As fentanyl overdoses take Native lives, many of us are working to move past stigma. We can start by learning more about addiction, treatment and recovery.

What to understand about opioid addiction.

Addiction is a disease.

It changes the way a person's brain works, and it's often fed by trauma. Addiction can happen to anyone, and it's treatable.

Culturally centered treatment helps people recover.

Treatment that combines traditional healing practices with other forms of medicine can help Native people. Medication for opioid use disorder (such as methadone, buprenorphine or naltrexone) can help people stop using fentanyl and other opioids.

Recovery is lifelong.

It has ups and downs, and sometimes it includes relapse. People with supportive, involved families and communities are more likely to stay in long-term recovery.



ONE WORD CAN CHANGE A STORY

The way we talk about addiction tells a story that others take to heart. It's a story about how we see and think of people living with this disease. Here are a few ways we can tell a story that builds trust and a sense of hope.

Ask and listen.

By asking people about their wins (even small ones), we acknowledge their strength. When we ask what they need rather than assuming we know, we honor their dignity.

Use names, not labels.

When we say *Jacy is in treatment* or *Susan is in recovery from substance use disorder*, we honor them as whole people rather than as "addicts" or "ex-addicts."

Try saying 'no longer using.'

We often say someone in recovery is "clean." But using drugs doesn't make a person "dirty."

Help build understanding.

You can remind others that addiction is an illness, often connected to trauma. You can describe the courage and strength that it takes to choose treatment. You can talk about relapse as a part of recovery that people can overcome with support.