

Stigma and health

- In the alcohol and other drug sector
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Background

- National Strategies for blood-borne viruses and sexually transmissible infections
 - “Eliminate the negative impact of stigma, discrimination, and legal and human rights issues on people’s health”
- Stigma in health care – especially concerning

Stigma...

Leads to the social and economic exclusion of individuals or groups based on real or perceived characteristics

Recognised as a key determinant of health and health inequity

Undermines efforts at each step of the care cascade

- Dealing with stigma is a priority for every service involved in prevention, care, treatment

Hatzenbuehler, M., J. Phelan and B. Link (2013). "Stigma as a Fundamental Cause of Population Health Inequalities." American Journal of Public Health **103**: 813-821.

What is stigma

- Impacts of stigma
 - Stress, shame, depression, isolation, maladaptive coping
 - Less likely to disclose health conditions
 - Avoid healthcare
 - Decreased treatment retention/adherence
 - Increased engagement in risk practices

Stigma

Stigma is important:

- Impact on health care – testing, treatment, care
- Health outcomes
- Costs

Types:

- Between people – attitudes, language, behaviour
- In the policies and structures of organisations, law, media
- Internalised – self belief, self worth

Stigma and quality health care

- excessive costs, morbidity, and mortality associated with poor quality care
- inequitable distribution of poorer quality care and association with stigma:
- “Quality of care is worst for vulnerable groups, including the poor, the less educated, adolescents, those with stigmatised conditions, and those at the edges of health systems, such as people in prisons” (p e1196).

Kruk et al. High-quality health systems in the Sustainable Development Goals era: time for a revolution. The Lancet Global Health. 2018;6(11):e1196-e252.

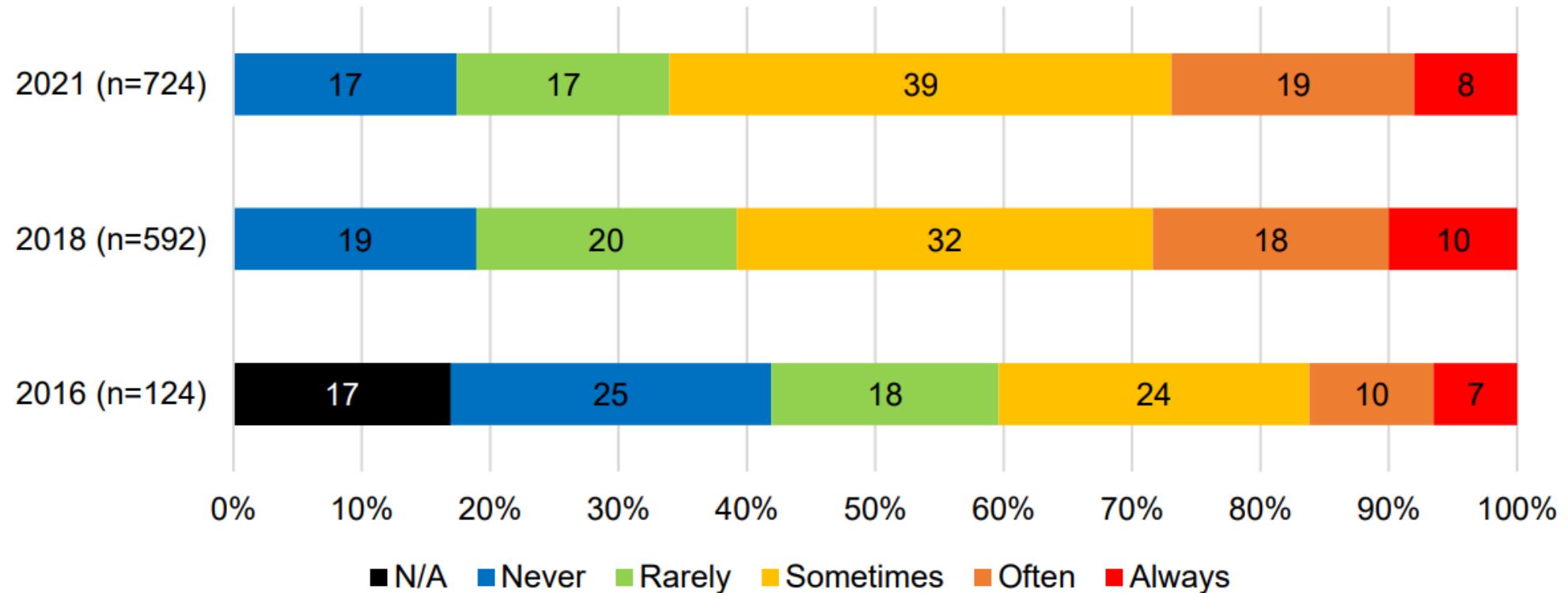
BBV stigma and...

- Broad range of conditions which attract stigma
- 93 identities, conditions and attributes reported as attracting stigma, US adults
 - most participants (>95%) indicated that they lived with at least one attribute
 - 90% reported more than one
 - average of six.
- “stigma affects a substantial segment of the U.S. population at any given time, with most individuals being stigmatized at some point in their lives” (p451).

Pachankis et al. The Burden of Stigma on Health and Well-Being: A Taxonomy of Concealment, Course, Disruptiveness, Aesthetics, Origin, and Peril Across 93 Stigmas. Pers Soc Psychol Bull. 2018;44(4):451-74

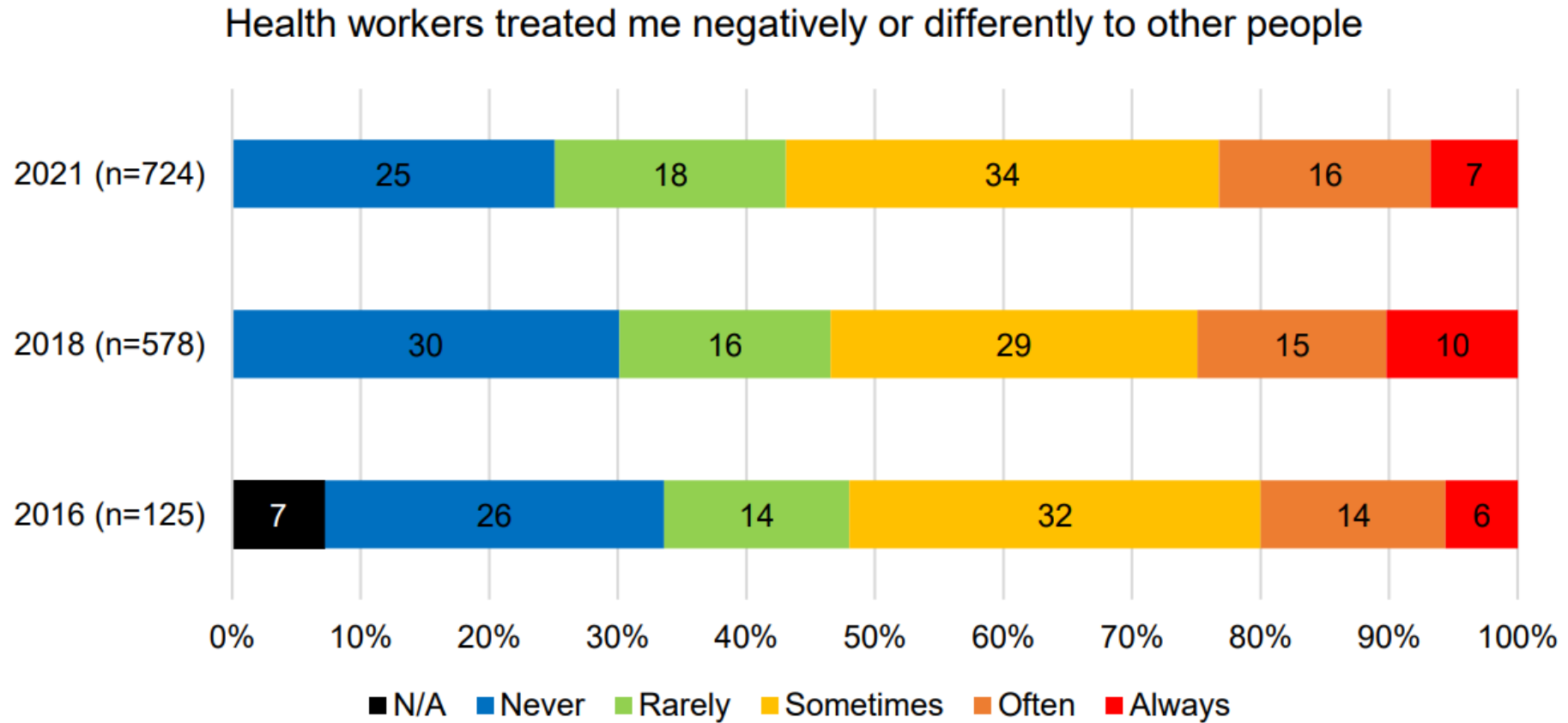
75-80% experienced stigma in last 12 months

In the last 12 months, have you experienced any stigma or discrimination in relation to your injecting drug use?



Note: N/A was not provided as a response option after 2016.

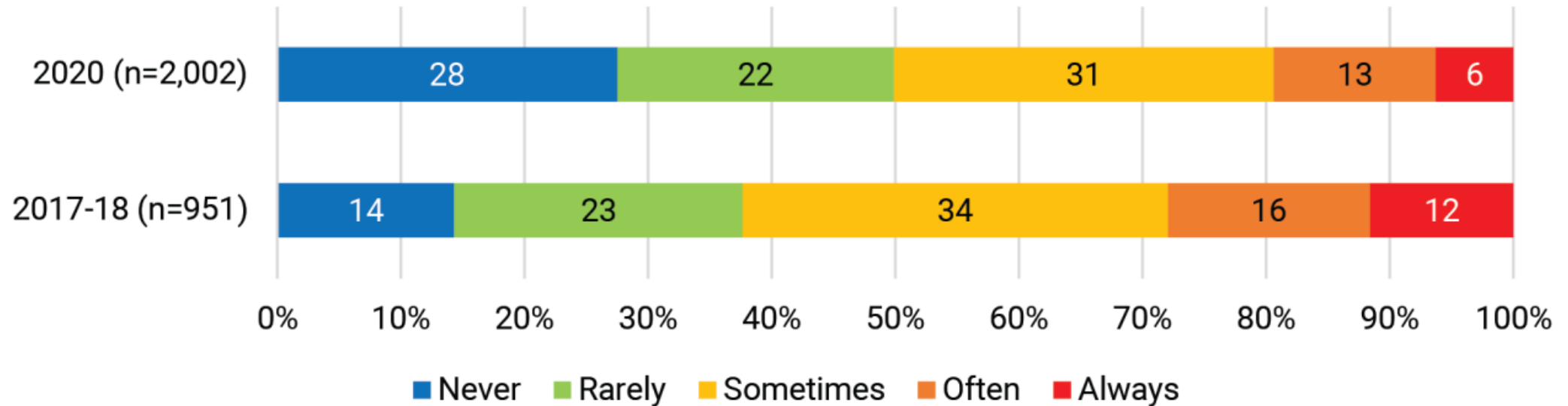
70-75% experienced stigma from health workers, last 12 months



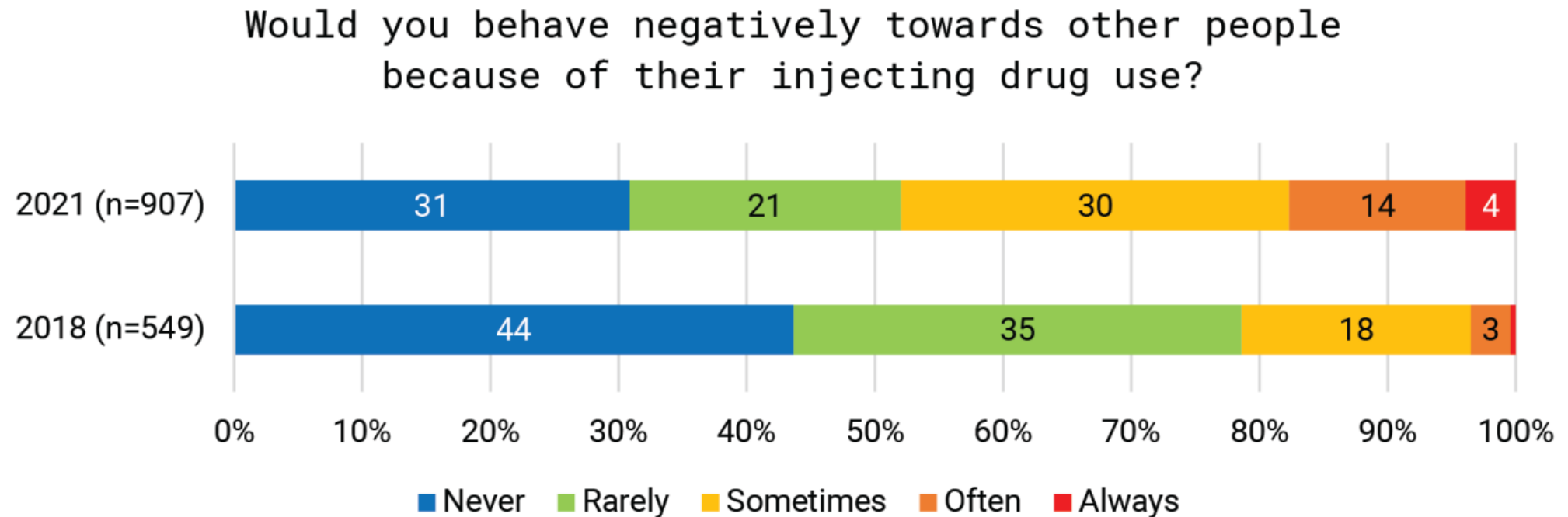
Note: N/A was not provided as a response option after 2016.

General public, 72-86% would stigmatise

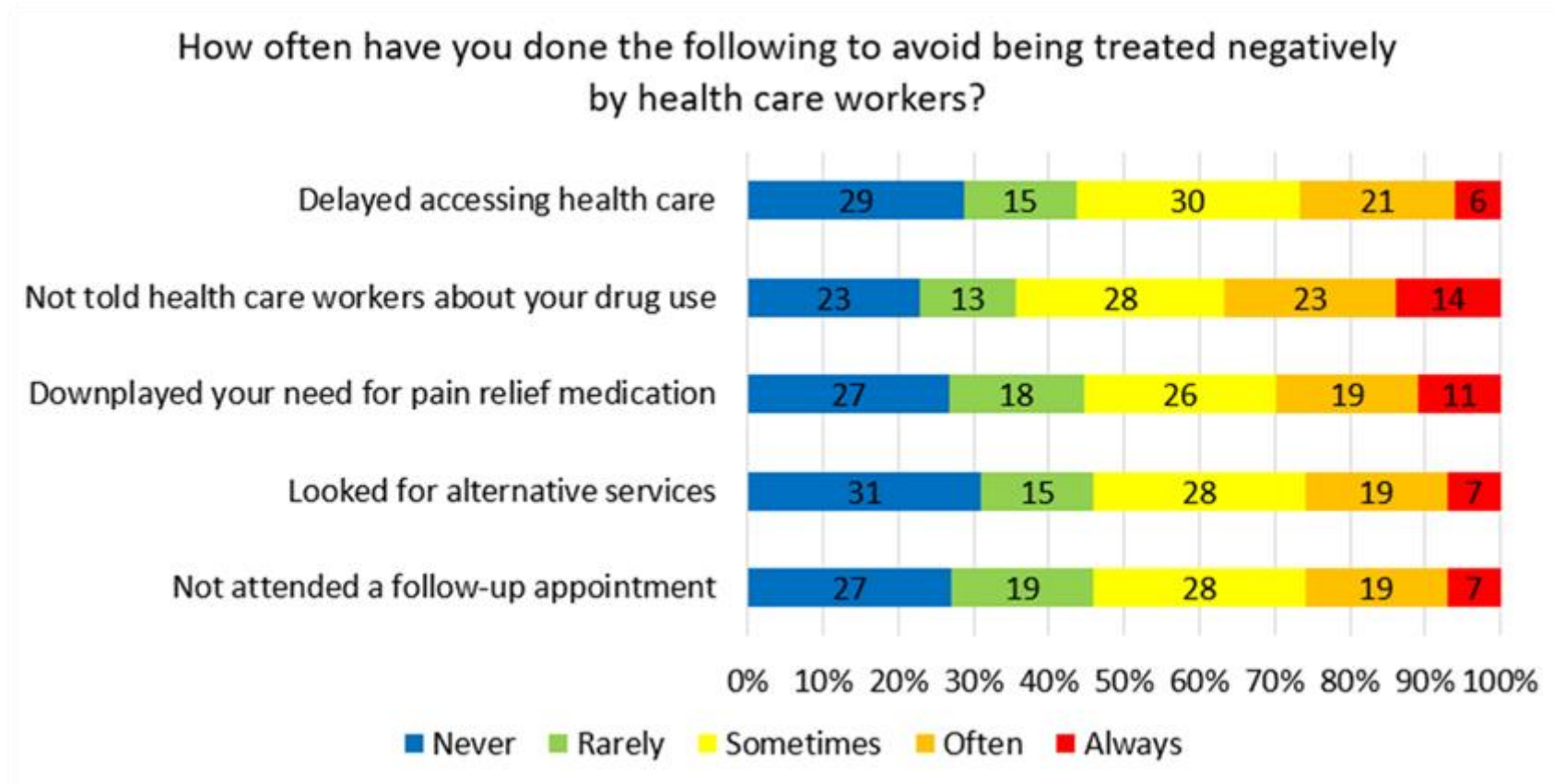
Would you behave negatively towards other people because of their injecting drug use?



Health workers, 56-69% would stigmatise



People who inject drugs, last 12 months



Summary 1

- Stigma – really common for people who inject drugs
- Also - many things attract stigma
- In places like AOD treatment:
 - OAT attracts stigma too
 - Avoid, delay other care because of fear of being treated negatively
 - What can you do to smooth path?
 - Aware of other things that AOD clients may be worried about re stigma:
 - Sexuality/gender, poverty, dentition

Summary 2

- Stigma-reducing KPIs for health care:
- Experience at my service should leave the person feeling like:
 - They have been treated like anyone else
 - Their experience didn't put them off coming back
 - Their experience didn't put them off going to another health service
- In language, practices, policies, relationships with other services



Understanding and reducing stigma for effective and equitable health care

A new Short Course from the Faculty of Arts, Design & Architecture

- Online course with live sessions
- Begins February 2023 (6 weeks)

Stigma Indicators Monitoring Project

- Centre for Social Research in Health
 - <http://bit.ly/stigma-indicators>
 - Plain English summaries
 - Technical reports
 - c.treloar@unsw.edu.au

