

The Truth About Stigma

Let's talk about it.



Learn how stigma impacts those living with substance use disorder. Presented with the help of Ginny, the Virginia Neonatal Perinatal Collaborative's mascot.



THE TRUTH ABOUT STIGMA

So, what is stigma?



Stigmas are negative beliefs, views, or discrimination against a person or group to set them apart from normal societal views.

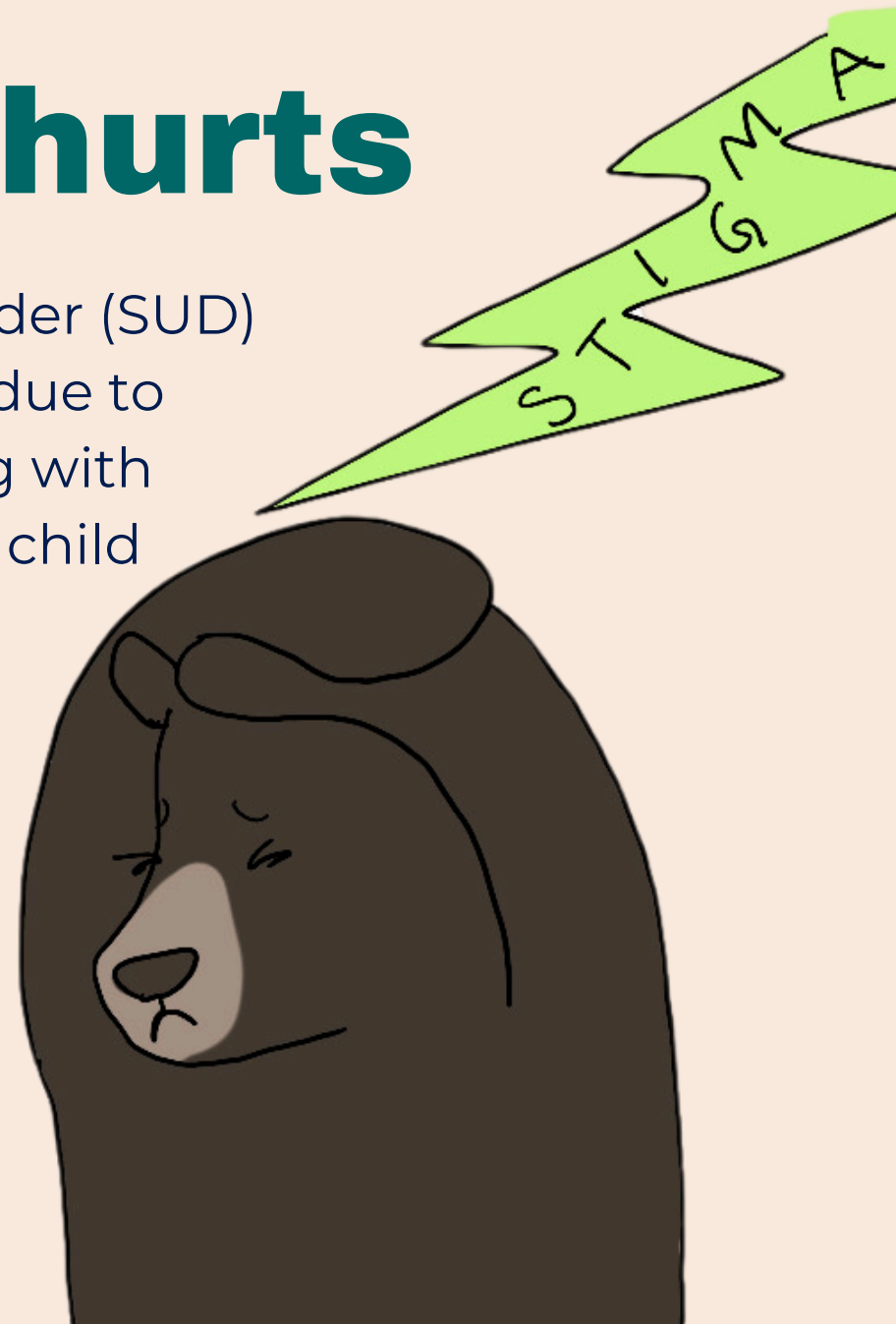
Stigma makes addiction seem like a personal choice and that a person has moral failings or weak will power.



How stigma hurts

Folks living with substance use disorder (SUD) may be seen as unfit to be a parent due to others' biases. Pregnant people living with SUD are more likely to be referred to child welfare services (CWS) or have their parental rights taken away.

These attitudes are harmful, and can prevent people from seeking out healthcare out of fear of facing judgment from healthcare providers or losing parental rights.



As we continue, we are going to talk about different types of stigma: internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and gender stigmas.

INTERNALIZED STIGMA

People with SUD may begin to believe the negative stereotypes. This can lead to anxiety, isolation, poor self image, and hopelessness.

This mindset may keep folks from engaging with support systems or seeking out medical care.



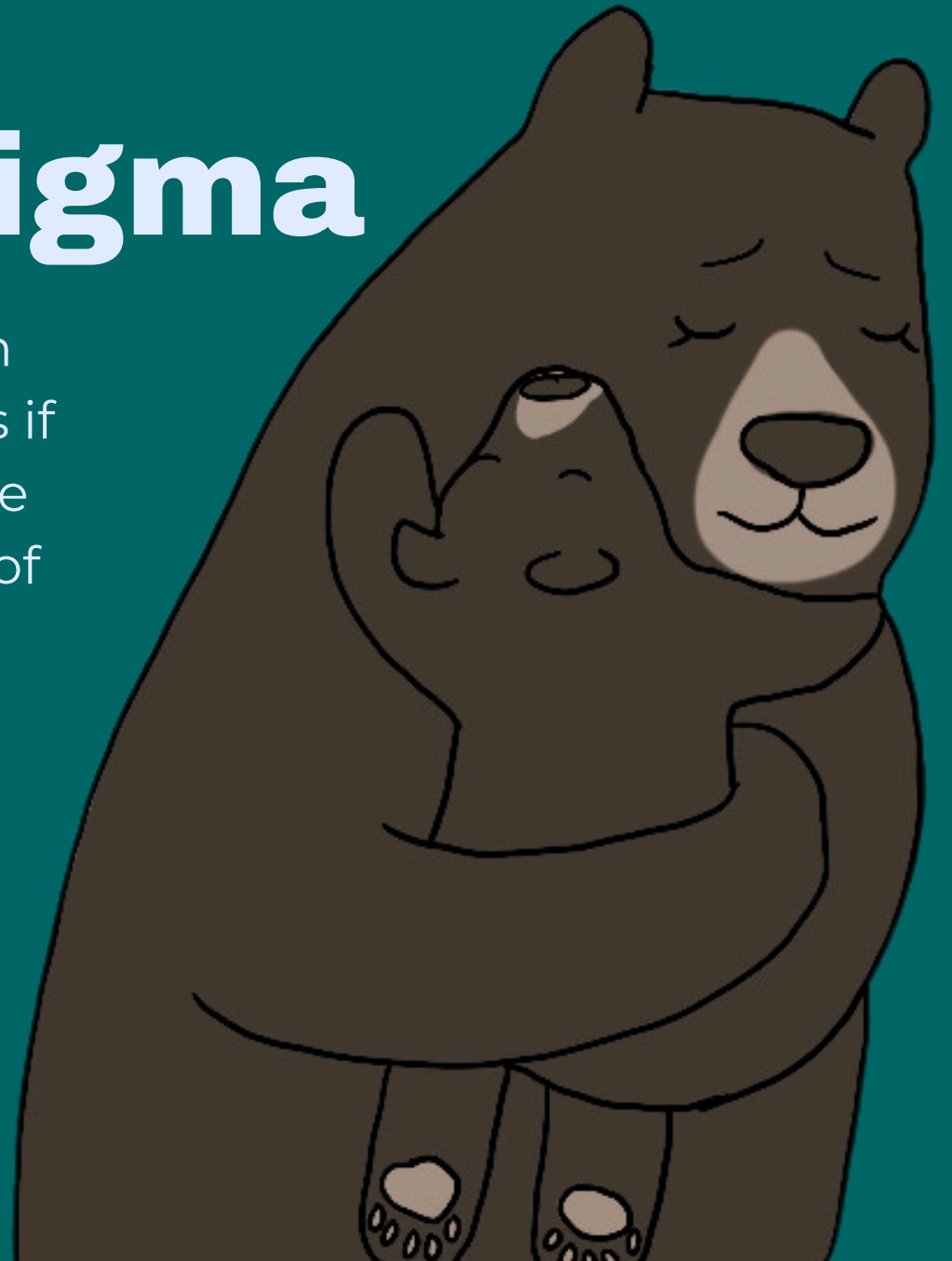
Interpersonal Stigma

Stigma that a person faces in interactions with others is interpersonal. For example, a newly pregnant person who uses substances loses previously supportive friends and partners. This can cause feelings of isolation and even depression. It can also increase the risk of overdose.



Gender stigma

People that identify as women are more likely to face stigmas if they use substances due to the societal norms and pressures of women taking on a maternal/caregiver role.



Thanks for reading.

This is the first part of a series that will talk about various topics pertaining to SUD. Come back to learn more about better language choices, different types of providers, harm reduction strategies, and other important topics.



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Resources

If you would like to learn about other resources as well as tips to prepare for your baby, see below:

**PREPARING FOR YOUR BABY:
Information for Pregnant People
with Substance Use Disorders**
<https://tinyurl.com/23x3s3dn>

SAMHSA's National Helpline
1 (800) 662-HELP



Reference article for this slide set:

Weber, A., Miskle, B., Lynch, A., Arndt, S., & Acion, L. (2021). Substance Use in Pregnancy: Identifying Stigma and Improving Care. *Substance abuse and rehabilitation*, 12, 105–121. <https://doi.org/10.2147/SAR.S319180>