

Breaking Through Workplace Barriers Caused by Addiction Stigma

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There is a stigma surrounding addiction that causes many adverse impacts for those who are struggling. Perceptions of people who struggle with substance abuse in any form, or those who used to struggle with substance abuse have been around for many years, largely focused on the unpredictable behavior that is often exhibited. Some people who are struggling with addiction even consider [getting help](#) for their problem, but the humiliation and shame that is associated with having this problem is a deterrent that works effectively.

What Is Stigma?

Stigmas are a set of beliefs or attitudes towards a group of people. It is thought by some that these are an effective way of deterring people from joining a specific group that is not deemed to be healthy or socially acceptable. However, more often than not, a stigma exists to humiliate, debase and outcast certain groups of people, leaving them on the outside of society.

What Is The Stigma Surrounding Addiction?

Substance abuse is stigmatized far more than any other health conditions, with it stereotypically being associated with health conditions like AIDS, criminal behavior, unsafe behavior and poverty. The impact of this is a feeling of rejection and discrimination towards those who are abusing substances, not only from society in general but from the legal system and the workforce.

How Does This Influence The Workplace?

It can be difficult for those who struggle with an addiction to hold down a steady job if they are in the later stages of addiction, this is true, but is also not always true. Employment opportunities can be few and far between for those who have already been labeled as a liability from previous employers or other forces due to the assumptions surrounding those who struggle with addiction.

Employers are less likely to provide an opportunity to prove otherwise, leading to a large scale of unemployment for this group.

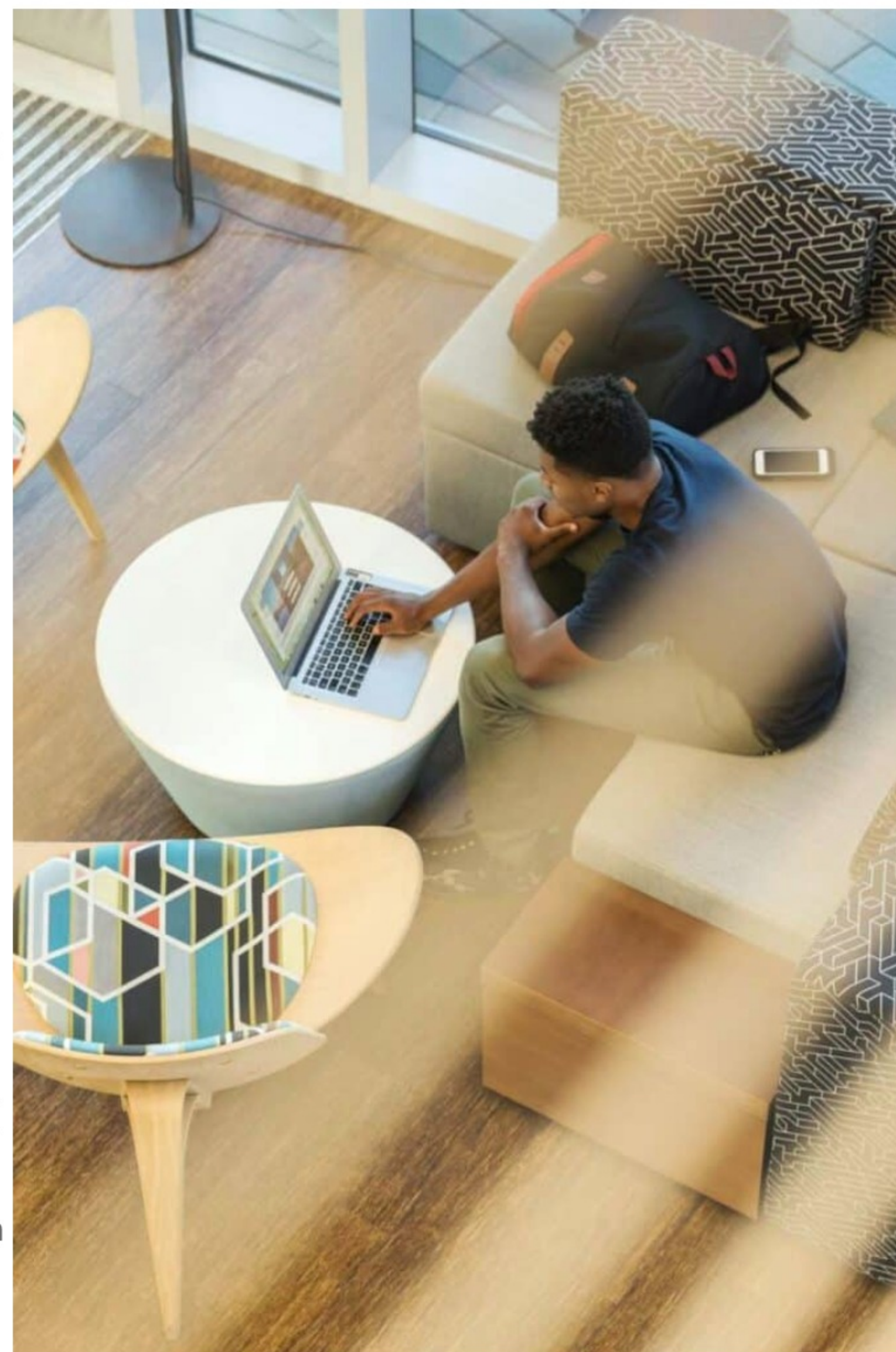
It is even the case that those people who have suffered with addiction in the past may find it difficult to find work, even if they are clean now. This is especially true if they have any kind of criminal conviction from the time where they were struggling with addiction.

How Can We Move Forward?

Instead of contributing to the stigma surrounding those with addiction, and causing more problems by now allowing them to work, support needs to be put in place for those who are struggling. There are places such as [Grand Falls treatment center](#) and many others that can help addicts kick their addiction and get back on the right path.

There are many types of treatment to help, but the air of humiliation and shame needs to be lifted before people are going to be willing to take this option. Attitudes and beliefs need to shift so that we can better understand addiction as the health problem that it is, rather than the idea that it's just an inconvenience that someone has inflicted on themselves.

The only way to end this is through education, and helping people to understand that it is okay to struggle, [but help is available](#).


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