FROM INSIGHT TO EMPOWERMENT: THE SYNERGY OF PEER SUPPORT & HARM REDUCTION

BY:

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DISCLOSURES

WE HAVE NOTHING TO DISCLOSE

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Embark on a transformative journey as we navigate from insightful perspectives to the empowerment of individuals with the synergy of peer support and harm reduction. Explore how lived experiences provide profound insight, but true empowerment emerges through embracing bodily autonomy, choice, and unwavering respect and advocacy for the rights of individuals navigating their unique paths of mental health and drug use.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

❖ Investigate how stigma and shame contribute to barriers when seeking and accessing care

❖ Define Peer Support and Harm Reduction

❖ Discover the inherent alignment between harm reduction and peer support principles

❖ Identify actionable practices for empowerment through harm reduction and fostering compassion in peer support

❖ Examine the negative consequences of overlooking harm reduction in peer support practices

❖ Discuss the implications of tokenism in peer support

OPEN DIALOGUE INVITATION

War on Drugs: Early Regulations

- Anti- Drug legislation in San Francisco

- 1914 Harrison Tax Act

- Marihuana Tax Act
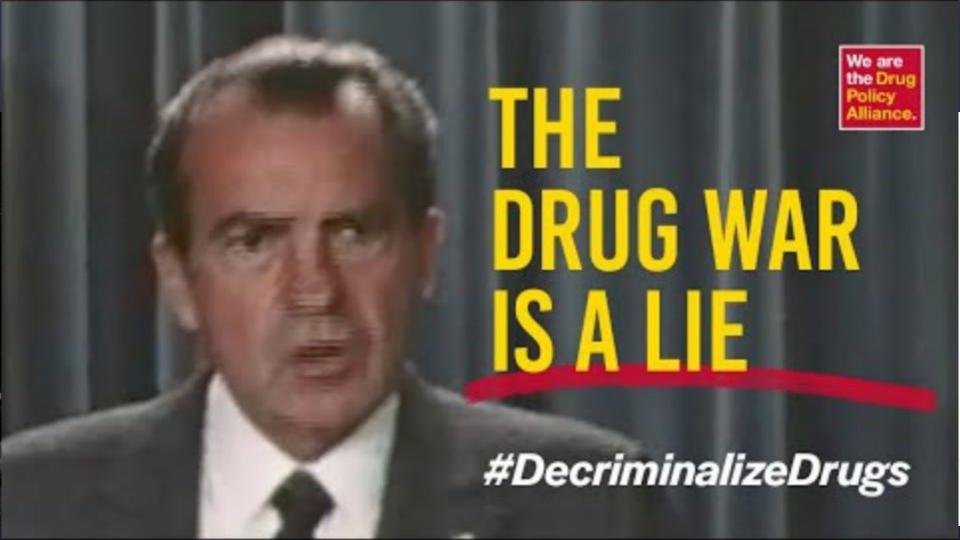
War on Drugs: Just Say No!

- Reagan Administration: "Just Say No"

- 1984 Sentencing Reform Act Dropped rehabilitation as one of the goals of punishment

- Created US Sentencing Commission & made sentences determinate

War on Drugs: Just Say No!

- 1986 and 1988- Anti-Drug Abuse Acts racialized sentencing disparity in cocaine charges

- 100:1- penalty for possession of crack cocaine vs powder cocaine

We are the Drug Policy Alliance.

THE DRUG WAR IS A LIE

#DecriminalizeDrugs

STIGMA & SHAME DISCUSSION

A strong lack of respect for a person or a group of people or a bad opinion of them because they have done something society does not approve of

Different Types Of Stigma

Self-stigma	Public stigma	Perceived stigma
Associative stigma	Institutional stigma	Health care stigma

WHAT ARE SOME CONSEQUENCES OF STIGMA

Stigma is a barrier to receiving healthcare and engaging in help-seeking behaviors, and it results in discrimination and exclusion.

Once you label me you negate me.

Soren Kierkegaard

WHAT IS PEER SUPPORT?

Peer support is primarily considered to represent a recent advance in community mental health, introduced in the 1990s as part of the mental health service user movement. Peer support has its roots in the moral treatment era inaugurated by Pussin and Pinel in France at the end of the 18th century. It has re-emerged at different times throughout the history of psychiatry.

A Certified Peer Specialist:

A person who has their own lived experience of mental health and/or substance use challenges and has completed formal training and certification in the peer specialist model of mental health and substance use-oriented peer support.

SAMHSA (SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION)

Defines peer support workers as individuals who have successfully navigated the recovery process and assist others facing similar challenges. Through shared understanding, respect, and mutual empowerment, peer support workers help people to engage in the recovery process and reduce the likelihood of relapse. Their role involves a range of activities, including advocacy, skill-building, community and relationship building, leading recovery groups, mentoring, and goal-setting

https://www.samhsa.gov/brss-tacs/recovery-support-tools/peers

RECOVERY IS "ANY POSITIVE CHANGE"

Dan Bigg

https://anypositivechange.org/staff-team/

CDC'S DEFINITION OF HARM REDUCTION

"Harm reduction is any behavior or strategy that helps reduce risk or harm to yourself or others. For example, to reduce the risk of contracting or transmitting HIV, you can practice safer sex or safer drug use."

(https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/od2a/case-studies/harm-reduction.html)

Harm Reduction Coalition Definition of Harm Reduction

"Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use. Harm Reduction is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of people who use drugs."

https://anypositivechange.org/staff-team/

NATIONAL HARM REDUCTION COALITION

WHAT IS HARM REDUCTION?

Harm Reduction itself is a philosophy that recognizes that people who engage in risky behaviors, of which there are many, still deserve health and wellness.

~Azzymae Harmredux~

HARM REDUCTION

EXERCISE!

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

EXERCISE

ACTIONABLE PRACTICES FOR EMPOWERMENT

1. Employment and Training Opportunities	2. Shared Decision-Making	3. Safe Spaces for Sharing and Support	4. Building Community Partnerships
5. Advocacy Training	6. Access to Diverse Recovery Models	7. Feedback Mechanisms	8. Celebrating Successes

NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES

Increased Risk of Overdose and Harm

Social Isolation Abstinence

Reduced Engagement with Support Services

Mental Health Challenges

Barriers to Effective Treatment and Recovery

Worsening Public Health Outcomes

WHAT IS TOKENISM?

Tokenism is the practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to be inclusive to members of minority groups, especially by recruiting people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of racial or gender equality within a workplace or educational context. The effort of including a token individual in work or school is usually intended to create the impression of social inclusiveness and diversity (racial, religious, sexual, etc.).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tokenism

TOKEN EXERCISE

"There is no shortage of good intentions and good hearts, but courageous actions are the only things that have ever led to sustainable generational change"

- LALITHA STABLES

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