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**Drugs and Society**

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## **Drugs and Society**

The major problem with the current approach to drug addiction is that harm reduction is regarded as a drastic concept, despite scientific evidence indicating that it is a strategy that can work. Drug and substance users are arrested than being offered methadone therapy. According to Mark Tyndall (2017), the world is still stuck in the thought that the only available option is to stop using drugs. The message in harm reduction is that drugs are dangerous, but there is a need to reach out to those already using drugs. Drug users are sick and hurting, and interventions help them deal with the issue.

One of the alternatives championed by Mark Tyndall is the creation of supervised injection locations. The goal is to allow drug users to inject themselves in clean environments using clean needles, surrounded by experts who can care for them instead of injecting themselves in dirty environments (Tyndall, 2017). These approaches reduce suffering, improve access to healthcare, and dramatically limit the deaths associated with drug use. Also, the current approach of jailing drug users is not working. The media is awash with countless military operations in territories known for drug businesses. We celebrate when jails continue to be constructed to house drug users whose crime is injecting themselves. According to Tyndall (2017), the existing drug laws have established a continuous cycle of incarceration, violence, and poverty. At the core, drug laws are a means of achieving social justice. Even with proper healthcare, drug users are stigmatized. Tyndall (2017) argues that the current approach is upside down because it focuses on abstinence. The lucky ones will get into detox programs like community methadone substitution programs.

Marl Tyndall calls for a full embrace, scale-up, and funding of harm reduction programs in North America. Also, there must be a conversation about drug use and criminal punishment

because punishing people who need medical aid is not working (Tyndall, 2017). Drug use should be regarded as a public health issue and comprehensive social and health interventions should be embraced. Specifically, there is a model that Portugal used, and it proved effective. The country decriminalized drug possession, and resources that were being channeled into fighting drug use were redirected to health and recovery. In the end, drug use among the citizens reduced significantly, overdoses are unheard of, and many addicts have embraced treatment options. Society should focus on rehabilitation and treatment, as opposed to criminal punishment of drug users.

According to Abadinsky (2017), harm reduction is referred to as the guidelines, practices, and programs whose goal is to reduce the adverse health, economic and social costs of using illegal and legal psychoactive drugs. These policies are pivoted on a solid promise to human rights and public health. The Drug Policy Alliance explains harm lessening as a combination of strategies and intercessions that limit the problems related to unproductive racialized drug procedures and drug use (The Drug Policy Alliance, n.d). Besides, harm reduction strategies differ from the punitive approaches to dealing with the drug menace because it acknowledges the humanity and dignity of others. Normally, harm reduction is meant to bring drug users into an environment of care to lessen the negative consequences of using drugs while promoting social inclusion and optimal health (The Drug Policy Alliance, n.d.). Hence, the majority of drug users do not need treatment but assistance to avoid the risks. Abadinsky (2017) posits that harm reduction methods appreciate drug use, and focus is placed on limiting harm while the use continues.

The Drug Policy Alliance call for the adoption of crucial harm reduction strategies, which are discussed as follows:

### **Discrimination Targeting Drug users**

The Drug Policy Alliance is working to eradicate the apparent discrimination towards drug users. Again, the organization is keen to limit the stigma linked with problematic drug use while championing compassionate and judgment-free strategies to dealing with addiction among drug users.

### **Drug Overindulge**

One of the leading causes of death in the United States for those below fifty is unintentional drug overdose. According to the Drug Policy Alliance, we can avoid most drug-related deaths. Thus, the organization leads the nationwide effort to reduce the deaths associated with drug overdose by championing sensible solutions and enhanced policy considerations at the local and federal levels.

### **Naloxone**

Naloxone is an FDA-sanctioned drug that is low-priced and works to reverse the effects of opioid overuse devoid of any likelihood for abuse. Nonetheless, many opioid users are still incapable of accessing this drug. The Drug Policy Alliance is working hard to ensure that many users can get naloxone, which can be crucial in overdose emergencies.

### **Favorable Legislation**

Drug users often fear arrest when they call emergency services via 911, even when they witness cases of a drug overdose. However, these persons can be encouraged to seek medical intervention by offering them immunity for violating drug laws, a dubbed Good Samaritan

strategy. The Drug Policy Alliance pushes for broad protection of drug users to ensure that they do not hesitate to call for emergency services when they witness overdose cases.

### **Supervised Consumption Services**

Overdose deterrence centers and managed injection amenities are officially certified centers intended to limit the well-being and public order concerns related to drug use in public. Normally, these centers allow addicts to use drugs but in a supervised and managed environment. The Drug Policy Alliance is at the forefront in championing supervised consumption programs in the country.

### **Access to Syringes**

Programs aimed at ensuring that drug users access sterile syringes can help limit the spread of HIV and Hepatitis C among drug users by limiting the sharing of unsafe syringes and providing safe disposal of used syringes. Besides, the body advocates for an end to the policies that outlaw the possession of syringes and reduce the supply of sterile syringes.

### **Drug Testing**

Also known as adulterant screening, this method allows individuals who use drugs to pinpoint the substances they intend to start using and assists them by preventing the harms linked with mistakenly consuming materials contaminated with harmful toxins like fentanyl. Notably, the Drug Policy Alliance is keen on advancing policies that allow comprehensive supply and use of testing kits and equipment and drug examination study.

To sum it up, many countries have explored various options of dealing with drug use. However, harm reduction methods as an alternative way of fighting the war on drug abuse remain the best way of managing the menace. Research has shown that aggressive law enforcement strategies are not working, hence needing a more surgical method of dealing with

the problem. One of the methods that scientific data have backed to realize success is adopting harm reduction strategies, which worked in a country like Portugal. At the same time, they can work for different countries, provided there is enough goodwill and support from various stakeholders.

### References

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Ideas worth Spreading.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/mark\\_tyndall\\_the\\_harm\\_reduction\\_model\\_of\\_drug\\_addiction\\_treatment](https://www.ted.com/talks/mark_tyndall_the_harm_reduction_model_of_drug_addiction_treatment)

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