

Working Toward Recovery  
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# Duke Medical School late 1960s

- Treat the symptoms of alcoholism and try to get them to cut back on their drinking
- Cirrhosis and DTs was due to nutritional deficiencies
- No understanding of the disease of alcoholism or addiction, no desire to understand Treat symptoms and try to prevent harm



**ASAM** American Society of  
Addiction Medicine

# Addiction

## Short Definition of Addiction

Addiction is a primary, chronic disease of brain reward, motivation, memory and related circuitry. Dysfunction in these circuits leads to characteristic

**biological, psychological, social and spiritual**

**manifestations.** This is reflected in an individual pathologically pursuing reward and/or relief by substance use and other behaviors.

# New definition Sept 2019

- Addiction is a treatable, chronic medical disease involving complex interactions among brain circuits, genetics, the environment, and an individual's life experiences. People with addiction use substances or engage in behaviors that become compulsive and often continue despite harmful consequences.
- Prevention efforts and treatment approaches for addiction are generally as successful as those for other chronic diseases.

# Introduction to same ASAM document

- Since 2011, the public understanding and acceptance of addiction as a chronic brain disease and the possibility of remission and recovery have increased. At the same time, there is growing acknowledgment of the roles of prevention and harm reduction in the spectrum of addiction and recovery

# Addiction as a brain disease:

- When the person with a history of addiction is exposed to another addicting substance, there is a high probability of problematic use and relapse
- Although some people can take other addictive substances, there is increase likelihood of loss of control which can lead to harm

# The best harm reduction is abstinence:

- More people still die from alcohol than opioids
- My patients who are successfully on buprenorphine for a year and get into trouble, usually do so from alcohol: The speedometer and brakes do not work.
- 2018 Cocaine deaths: 15,000 Psychostimulents 13,000

# Increase in cocaine and meth use 2013-2019

- JAMA online Network  
January 3, 2020
- **Evaluation of Trends of Near-Real-Time Urine Drug Test Results for Methamphetamine, Cocaine, Heroin, and Fentanyl**
- [Robert K. Twillman, PhD<sup>1,2</sup>](#); [Eric Dawson, PharmD<sup>3</sup>](#); [Leah LaRue, PharmD<sup>3</sup>](#); et al
- Over one million urine tests: 2013-2019
- Cocaine up 21% and Meth up 487%



Not one epidemic but several

- Changing dynamics of the drug overdose epidemic in the United States from 1979 through 2016
- Hawre Jala et al
- Science Sept 21, 2018

# Recovery

- A process of sustained action that addresses the biological, psychological, social and spiritual disturbances inherent in addiction
- Is a diabetic patient with retinopathy and neuropathy recovered if their blood sugars are reduced? Do we ignore these conditions?

# Social Recovery

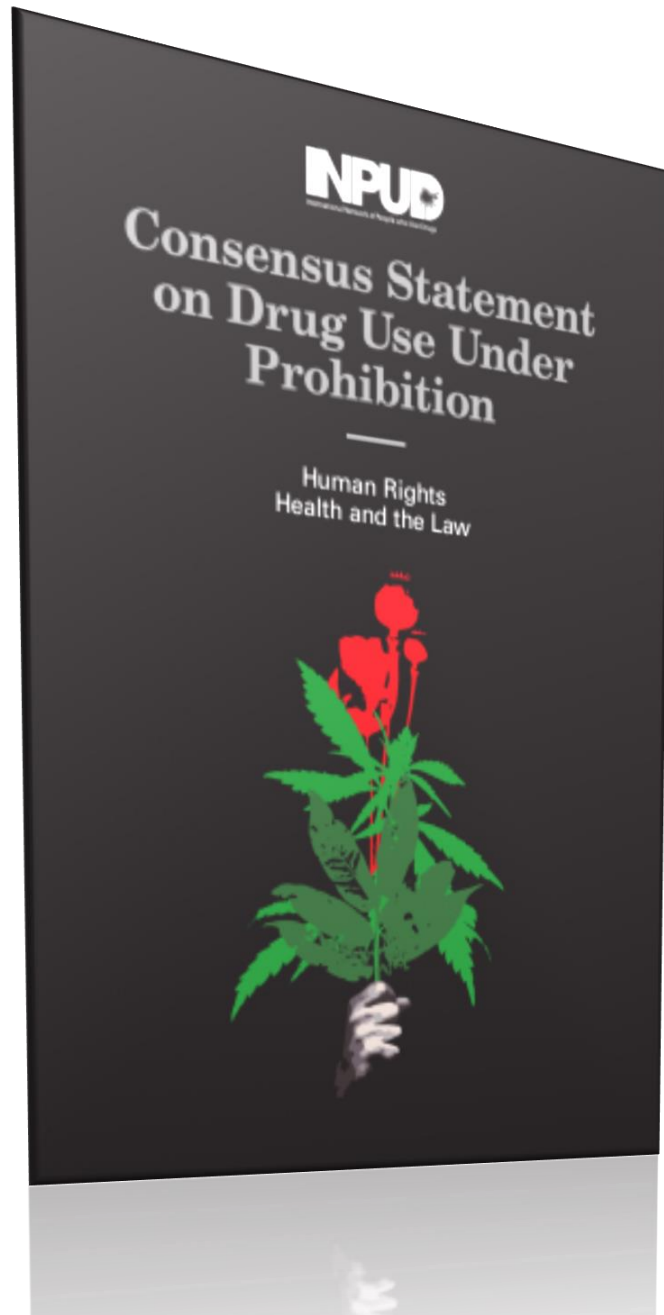
- Sober support system.
- Having nonusing friends
- Finding ways to have fun and reduce stress without chemicals
- Marijuana: my biggest concern is who they buy it from and who they use it with.
- Some of my patients who are buprenorphine still get arrested

Is addiction a disease?

Or is it a choice?



- Nonprofit, registered in England but with chapter in many countries Budget 700,000 dollars
- Extensive Website.
- The document lists 10 rights and 24 demands.



# Human Rights of People who Use Drugs

RIGHT 1: People who use drugs are entitled to their human rights, which must be protected by the rule of law

RIGHT 2: People who use drugs have the right to non-discrimination

RIGHT 3: People who use drugs have the right to life and security of person

RIGHT 4: People who use drugs have the right **not to be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment**

RIGHT 5: People who use drugs have the right to the highest **attainable standard of health**

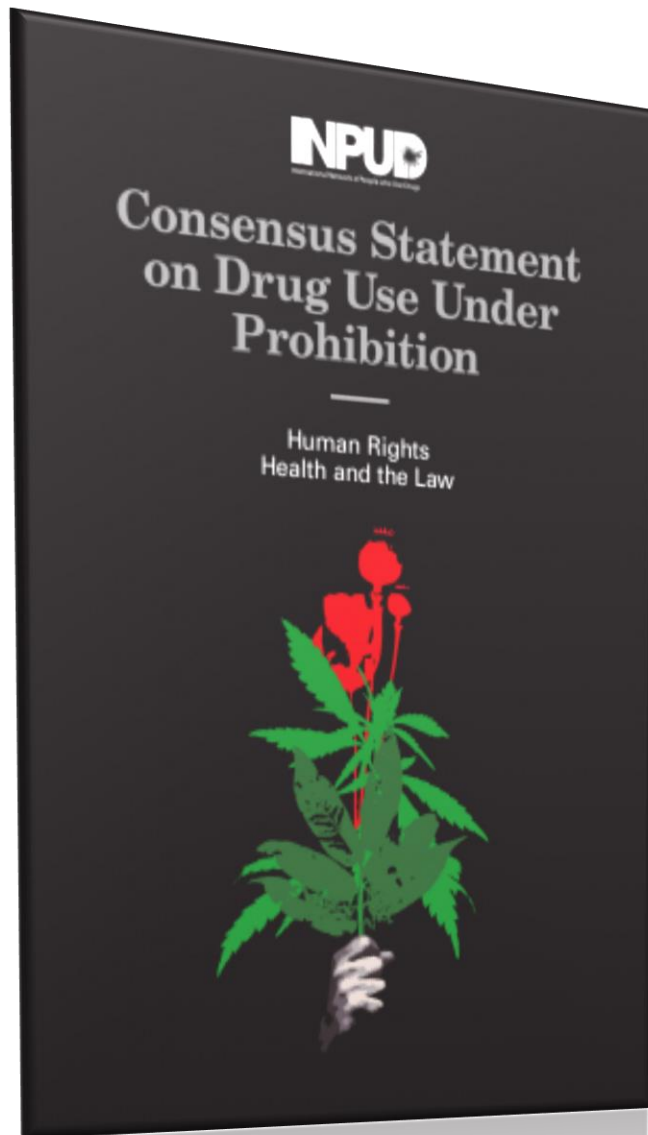
RIGHT 6: People who use drugs have the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work, and to protection against unemployment

RIGHT 7: People who use drugs have the right **not to be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention**

RIGHT 8: People who use drugs have the right to bodily integrity

RIGHT 9: People who use drugs have the right to found a family entitled to protection by the law, entitled to privacy, and entitled to be free from arbitrary interference

RIGHT 10: People who use drugs have the right to assemble, associate, and form organizations



“Further to being seen as dangerous and criminal, people who use drugs – particularly those with drug dependencies – are understood to be sick and pathological. This results from what may be referred to as the ‘addiction-as-disease’ model, which constructs people who have drug dependencies as having a ‘disease’, as being sick, dangerous, and unable to exercise agency and self-determination.” (p.9)\*

“[It] is counterproductive to address drug use as a public health problem, or health problem at all. I mean, it’s counterproductive. I understand that to a certain degree this is partly needed, but the most of this discourse is bad because it’s patronizing people ... this must be changed, because we are not ill because we use drugs.”

(Društvo AREAL, Slovenia, London consultation) (p.10)\*

# Do our patients deserve less than

- Patients with heart disease who have angioplasty
- Patients with cancer who have curative surgery or chemotherapy whose goal is total remission
- 
- And remember:
- Drug use is contagious, addiction is not, but recovery can also be contagious