It is Time for a New Approach

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Melanie Whitter, Principal Associate
Abt Associate Inc.

Partners for Recovery (PFR)

Overview

- Substance Use Conditions -- A Public Health Issue

- Why Do We Need To Adopt A Public Health Approach

- What Needs To Change

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Questions

- Does society treat substance use (SU) conditions as health matters?

- Should these conditions be viewed and treated as public health issues?

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Substance Use Conditions — A Public Health Issue

- Substance use (SU) conditions pose a serious threat to the health and economic well-being of families, communities, & nations.

- SU affect people of all backgrounds and does not discriminate against age, gender, income level or ethnic group.

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Substance Use Conditions - A Public Health Issue:
The Global Impact

- Harmful use of alcohol was the fifth leading risk factor for premature death and disability in the world (WHO, 2002).

- A causal relationship exists between harmful alcohol consumption and more than 60 diseases and injury, including:

  - Liver cancer, cirrhosis of the liver, epilepsy, homicide and motor vehicle accidents (WHO, 2009).

- In 2000, tobacco, alcohol, and drugs contributed to 12.4% of all disease-related deaths (WHO).

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Substance Use Conditions - A Public Health Issue:
The National Impact

- In 2003, 22.3 million individuals (12 & older) were diagnosed with substance abuse or dependence (NSDUH, 2008)

- Two thousand infants are born every year in the U.S. with fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS)

- Six thousand children die each year because of parental smoking, primarily due to sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and respiratory infections (RWJF,2001)

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Substance Use Conditions - A Public Health Issue:
The National Impact

- Substance use problems often begin in childhood and adolescence (14 year old is the average).

- Alcohol and drug use has been associated with 51% of all adolescent driving accidents; 39% of all driving fatalities; and 40% of all hospitalized accidental injuries. (ONDCP, 2009).

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Substance Use Conditions - A Public Health Issue:
The National Impact

- Economic Burden
  - Lack of prevention and treatment costs society more than $600 billion a year (CASA, 2009).
  - One out of every 14 hospital stays – was related to substance use conditions in 2004 (AHRQ, 2007).
  - States are spending millions more for patients diagnosed with substance use conditions
    - $104 million in medical case and $105.5 million in behavioral health care a year (Psychiatric Services, 2009)

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Why Do We Need To Adopt A Public Health Approach?

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Substance Use Conditions Are Preventable And Treatable

- Every dollar invested in prevention achieves a savings of up to $7 in areas such as substance use treatment and criminal justice system costs (NIDA, 2007).

- Early and brief interventions were found to be effective, up to four years later, in reducing alcohol use, days of hospitalization and emergency department visits (Fleming et al., 2002).

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Substance Use Conditions Are Preventable And Treatable

- A five-year study of 4,411 clients who received substance use treatment showed: (National Treatment Improvement Evaluation Study, 1997).
  - Increase:
    - Employment
    - Income
  - Decrease in:
    - Homelessness
    - Criminal activity
    - Drug and alcohol use

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Why Do We Need To Adopt A Public Health Approach
Substance Use Conditions Are Preventable And Treatable

Disease	Adherence	Relapse
Hypertension	Less than 60%	50 – 60%
Diabetes	Less than 50%	30 – 50%
Asthma	Less than 30%	60 – 80%
Substance Use Conditions	30 – 50%	50 – 60%

McLellan, T., PowerPoint Presentation, "How Can Treatment be more Accountable and Effective? Lessons from Mainstream Healthcare," San Antonio, TX, 2005.

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Why Do We Need To Adopt A Public Health Approach

- Substance use conditions are:
  - Complex with biopsychosocial components; and
  - Progressive and chronic in nature
- The complexity of substance use conditions requires a multifaceted approach
- Prevention/intervention can eliminate, delay and reduce future and more serious problems.
- By focusing on prevention/intervention for the entire population and treatment and support for individuals, more effective results can be achieved.
  - Interventions aimed at changing health outcomes for an individual is less likely to be successful than an intervention that changes outcomes for families, communities and society (H.Herman,et.al Who, 2005).

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Why Do We Need To Adopt A Public Health Approach

- The approach is comprehensive with interventions occurring at the systems, community and individual levels and…

  - Examines the service infrastructure, including its interface with the primary health care delivery system and other allied systems.

  - Expands partnerships and enhance the roles of non-government entities, such as families, faith-based organizations, education, business, civic organization, general public, and the media

  - Provides education to policy-makers and practitioners, business and community leaders, advocates, educators and journalists.

  - Supports policies which promote healthy and safe communities.

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What Needs to Change

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What Needs To Change

- To more effectively address this preventable, treatable…yet progressive and potentially deadly disease, changes must occur in the following areas:
  - Terminology
  - Attitudes
  - Policies
  - Practices
  - Resources

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Terminology

Alcohol and Drug Health Field	Substance Abuse Field
Individual with a substance use condition	- Substance abuser - Addict - Druggie - Junkie - User
Positive/negative toxicology	- Clean/dirty urine - Failed drug test
Treatment	- Drug-free treatment - Medication assisted treatment - Methadone treatment
Completed Treatment Protocol	Graduated
Patient	- Client - Consumer - Participant

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Attitudes

- Information on SU must be based on science, rather than traditional beliefs or misperceptions.

- The system must improve (more people must be reached) for attitudes to change.

- Until SU is treated as a health condition, e.g., language, media messages, it will still be viewed as a quasi social problem.

- People who are managing their disease and living healthy lives and their allies must speak out
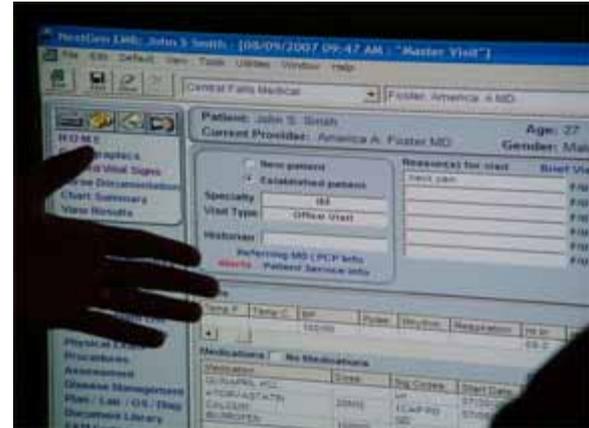
Policies

- Support alternatives to incarceration

- Abolish Uniform Policy and Provision Laws (UPPLs)

- Eliminate mandatory sentencing

- Pass Health Care Reform

- Restore professional and drivers licenses for ex-offenders

- Eliminate discriminatory employment, housing, and educational policies

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Practices

- Macro

  - Ongoing community needs assessment
  - Inform, educate people about SU
  - Develop a systems of care to address SU

- Micro-Treatment Practices

  - Discharging a patient for a relapse
  - Resistance to use of medications
  - No drug use before entering treatment

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Resources

- Resources must be enhanced to support this new approach:
  - Informational- science-based
  - Structural - technology (electronic health records, e-interventions, therapy, & check ups)
  - Human- multidisciplinary workforce
  - Fiscal – better fund communities to build capacity AND to respond to the following disparities:
    - Fewer than 10% of those with SU receive treatment – the lowest of all diseases (ONDCP, 2009).
    - Private insurance for treatment grew an average of 0.1% annually between 1993-2003 compared with a 7.3% growth rate for all health care (Mark TL, et al, 2007).

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Questions To Guide Your Work In Adopting A Public Health Approach

- Is behavioral health promoted as a part of total health?

- How well are policymakers, community partners, and the general public informed about substance use conditions?

- Is the media a partner in communicating alcohol and drug health information?

- Are people and organizations engaged in promoting and supporting alcohol and drug health?

- Are policies, regulations, laws aligned with the current knowledge?

- Does the workforce possess the necessary competencies?

- Are people receiving quality services and supports?

- Are services being regularly evaluated?

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