It is Time for a New Approach

2009 National TASC Conference - Charlotte, North Carolina
September 23, 2009

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Overview

- Substance Use Conditions -- A Public Health Issue
- Why Do We Need To Adopt A Public Health Approach
- What Needs To Change
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).
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).
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?
Why Do We Need To Adopt A Public Health Approach

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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Why Do We Need To Adopt A Public Health Approach

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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>Adherence</th>
<th>Relapse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypertension</td>
<td>Less than 60%</td>
<td>50 – 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>Less than 50%</td>
<td>30 – 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td>Less than 30%</td>
<td>60 – 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Use Conditions</td>
<td>30 – 50%</td>
<td>50 – 60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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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
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

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

What Needs To Change

**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
What Needs To Change

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
What Needs To Change

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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What Needs To Change

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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