

Drugs and Alcohol Today Conference 2015



On 3rd September ILLY attended the Drugs and Alcohol Today Conference at the ILEC Centre in London. The conference was a great success, featuring a fascinating programme of presentations, panel discussions and seminars covering topics from current practice to new treatments and the impact of changes in national policy.



Keynote Address **Roger Howard, BOB** *'Focusing on Abstinence or Harm Reduction as Pathways to Recovery'*

How do we define recovery? Roger argues that the abstinence vs. harm reduction treatment ideologies need not be opposed. Emphasising that abstinence is not realistic for all service users, Roger argues that it is possible for some to live a fulfilling, stable life without being substance free; the alternative is that entrenched users face long term stigma and run the risk of disengaging from treatment altogether. Recovery is not always linear-government and practitioners must work together to create more flexible approaches to treatment.



Panel Discussion Highlights

Steve Brinksman, Viv Evans OBE, John Jolly, Rosanna O'Connor, Tim Sampey

Hep C: Treatment & Recovery

- There are 15,000 new cases of Hep C every year, yet only 5,000 people are treated annually
- New treatment sofosbuvir offers a 'cure' to Hep C, and is equivalent to a nine week course of antibiotics
- Wales & Scotland have begun taking measures; why are England sitting on the fence?

Alcohol: beyond minimum unit pricing

- A good idea? It is an effective strategy which can be used in line with other policies eg. Drink driving
- A bad idea? it could cause crime to rise, and will not affect affluent middle classes

Examining Recovery of whole Families

- Families are often overlooked or stigmatised
- They are not just a cog in the recovery of the service user, but require independent support

Seminar Highlights

Harm Reduction and Naloxone Dr Chris Ford, Kevin Jaffray, Dr Judith Yates

- Naloxone is a life-saving synthetic drug administered to victims of opioid overdose
- From 1st October 2015, naloxone will be available without prescription
- Mortality in Scotland /Wales, where naloxone is widely distributed, has decreased by 17%



We are happy to discuss any of our findings from the day, feel free to call us on 020 7749 2222.



ILLY Systems

Supporting Families where Drugs & Alcohol are a feature **David Ader, Michael O'Toole, Oliver Standing**

- **Adfam** have undertaken a one year pilot project across five sites, measuring the outcomes of family support services
- Initial results have helped evidence and quantify the positive impact of family services, and there are plans to rollout the project on a larger scale during autumn 2015

Supporting Drug & Alcohol related Bereavement **Alex Mooring, Oliver Standing, Dr Christine Valentine**

- The **University of Stirling** conducted a three year research project to aid the development of guidelines for working with substance misuse-related bereavement
- 106 bereaved adults were interviewed, and a focus group of 40 workers (police, coroners, paramedics, etc) consulted.
- Research findings suggested:
 - Poor collaboration between services
 - Little to no training in bereavement
 - Stigmatisation of families
- Where do we go from here?

Drugs and Alcohol Today

Conference and Exhibition



Alcohol: New Pathways, Going Digital **Mark Holmes, Dylan Kerr**

- Mark & Dylan (**HAGA**) discussed new digital methods of improving treatment including Skype sessions
- Early implementation of these measures have shown benefits which include reaching out to a new cohort of clients, perhaps due to the increased comfort and confidentiality of attending sessions digitally from one's own home.



Managing the Dualism of Domestic Violence and Substance Misuse **Maria Cripps, Lesley Weber**

- 60-70% of men who assault their partners are under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time
- Substance misuse services rarely address violence issues during treatment
- Current government strategy is too focused on women/girls – but men are victims too

Key Findings: Latest Overview of Drug Related Deaths **Claudia Wells, Office of National Statistics**

- 2% of male deaths were related to substance misuse in 2014
- This is the highest substance misuse-related mortality rate since 1996
- However, deaths have decreased by 17% in Wales/Scotland, possibly due to naloxone distribution
- Heroin, morphine and benzodiazepines are the main cause of drug-related death

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