

Using your story to talk with different groups of people about addiction, recovery, stigma and discrimination

Tips:

No matter who you're talking to, make sure that they *understand what recovery means* - being free from addiction to alcohol and other drugs.

There are many pathways to recovery – on your own, mutual aid groups, professional treatment, medication-assisted treatment, faith – but regardless of the path, the people that you are talking to need to know that when someone is in recovery they aren't trying to stop using alcohol or illicit drugs, but are free from addiction.

Here are some messages that you can use to talk with different audiences.

Doctors, nurses and other health care professionals

The Business Case for People Powered Health (NESTA 2013)

The acute care model still dominates in the UK - addiction should be recognised as a chronic condition.

The financial business case for People Powered Health rests on two key areas of benefit.

The first is the ability to mobilise the asset base that is patients, service users and their communities. Joining up these individual efforts allows them to add to far more than the sum of the parts.

The second area of benefit is reductions in unplanned admissions and the requirements for expensive, acute care.

The NHS in England & Scotland could realise savings of at least £4.4 billion a year if it adopted People Powered Health innovations that

involve patients, their families and communities more directly in the management of long term health conditions.

These savings are based on the most reliable evidence and represent a 7 percent reduction in terms of reduced A&E attendance, planned and unplanned admissions, and outpatient admissions.

There is therefore both a social and financial imperative to introduce a People Powered Health approach.

Appointed and elected officials

Helping people achieve long-term recovery from addiction saves society money in the long term, particularly when the costs of health care, imprisonment, crime, and the toll on family members are taken into account.

The Centre for Social Justice estimates addiction costs the UK £36 billion each year.

Drug treatment prevents an estimated 4.9m crimes a year, resulting in a saving of £96m in costs to the public, businesses, criminal justice and the NHS. Not to mention the benefits that it brings to the individual, their family and their community.

Discrimination against people in recovery in employment, housing, education and health care is unfair and counterproductive as it makes recovery even more difficult to achieve.

Hundreds of thousands of people across the UK are in long-term recovery from alcohol and other drug addictions and thousands more get well every year. They are living proof that recovery is happening and that there is a real solution to the problem of drug and alcohol addiction.

We urge you to recognise and support Public Health England's priorities. And in Scotland's, A fairer healthier Scotland - in particular:

- Helping people to live longer and more healthy lives by reducing preventable deaths and the burden of ill health associated with smoking, high blood pressure, obesity, poor diet, poor mental health, insufficient exercise, *and alcohol*.
- Reducing the burden of disease and disability in life by focusing on preventing and recovering from the conditions with the greatest impact, including dementia, anxiety, depression *and drug dependency*.

Scotland's culture, economy and environment – so that inequalities are no longer acceptable, the factors that perpetuate them are being addressed and people have the resources to live healthier lives.

- The way public services are delivered – so that they promote early intervention, prevent health getting worse, and meet the needs of local people and communities.
- The choices made by individuals – so that everyone, including those currently most disadvantaged, has the opportunity and capacity to achieve better outcomes for themselves and their families.

Business sector

Drug, alcohol and other substance misuse at work is everyone's concern. It damages health, causes absenteeism and reduces productivity.

The Health and Safety at Work Act states employers should adopt a substance misuse policy, in consultation with their staff.

This policy should aim to support affected employees rather than punish them. Discriminating against people in recovery in employment makes it even more difficult for them to turn their lives around and be productive workers and members of society.

The talent of recovering addicts had been left untapped for too long. People in recovery can be highly-motivated, loyal and committed workers.

General Public

Recovery from addiction takes time, patience and support. There are many ways that people can get the help they need and we can never give up on helping family members and friends reclaim their lives.

We are the faces of your neighbours, business leaders, school teachers, clergy, nurses and other ordinary representatives of your community.

The only difference is we have recovered from addictions.

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All of us know somebody – a family member, a friend – who is trapped in addiction. We need to be honest about the effect this is having on all our lives and work together to promote solutions.

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