



Beyond Niceness: Rethinking Stigma Around Substance Use Disorders

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Patient advocate

Hippie

Terrible CrossFitter

Learning Outcomes

1

Identify misconceptions surrounding SUD, particularly those contributing to stigma, such as the perception of addiction as a result of moral weakness or lack of willpower.

2

Identify and articulate specific knowledge gaps revealed in the needs assessment, with a focus on understanding the complex interplay of genetic, environmental, and neurobiological factors contributing to SUD.

3

Identify common misconceptions and inaccurate stereotypes surrounding individuals with SUD, such as viewing addiction as a result of moral weakness, a lack of willpower, or a choice rather than a medical condition.

4

Summarize a comprehensive set of advocacy strategies to effectively promote accurate understanding of Substance Use Disorder (SUD) and reduce associated stigma.

Addiction vs Dependency

Addiction

- Use of substances regardless of harm and consequences

Dependency

- Physical need
- Tolerance and withdrawal potential

Addiction vs Dependency

- Person drinks two gallons of diet soda a day. They know it's bad for them, but it has become a favorite drink. They drink almost no water.



Source: Kanperm, N./Shutterstock

Addiction vs Dependency

- Person vapes every chance they get. They want to quit and are sick of the expense but continue.



Source: New Africa/Shutterstock

Addiction vs Dependency

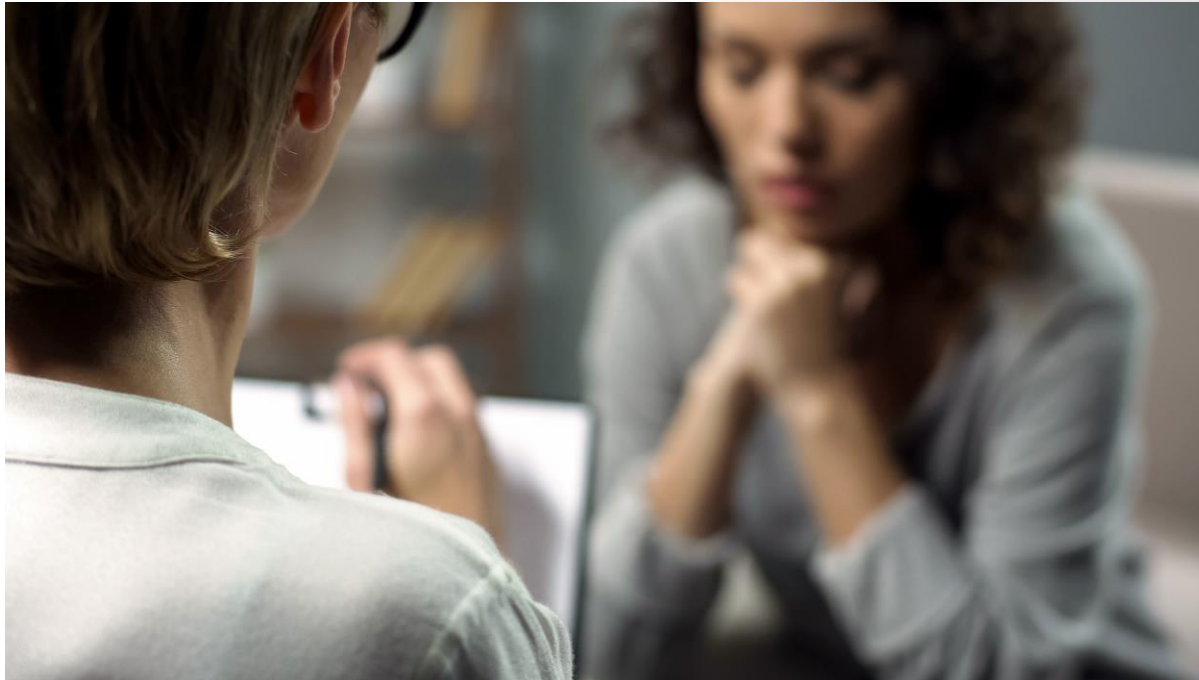
- Person is going to a pain medicine doctor and takes daily Norco as prescribed.
 - Runs out early sometimes and takes their mothers scripts.
 - Isn't working as well and starts snorting it.



Source: Benoit, M./Shutterstock

Addiction vs Dependency

- Person had a C-section three weeks ago. They were prescribed narcotics and took them as directed. They have run out, but they have really appreciated the extra boost of energy these pills give them. It's been wonderful with the new baby and their other kids. They ask the doc for a refill, even though their pain is not the issue.



Source: Motortion Films/Shutterstock

Addiction vs Dependency

- Person spends every second they can on their phone. They are stressed about being behind at work and at home and use their phone time to relax. They get frustrated when they get interrupted.



Source: Anna_Kim/Shutterstock

Stigma in Words

Person First Language

- People are not defined by location or diagnosis
 - Room two, versus person in room two
- Person with substance use disorder
 - NOT - the substance abuser

Abuser versus Person in Recovery

- Phrases like junkie, druggie, or addict have negative vibes
- We know better, so we can do better
- Person in recovery
- Person that is actively using substances
- Person not in recovery
- Person seeking recovery

Clean/Dirty

WIPE THESE FROM YOUR VOCABULARY

- Instead:
 - Supports recovery/does not support recovery
 - Urine drug screen shows only prescribed substances
 - Urine drug screen show fentanyl
 - Screening shows methamphetamine

Babies

- Babies cannot be addicted
 - This is defined as the use of substances regardless of harm and consequences
 - Not possible for a baby
- Babies can be DEPENDENT
- Important for the family to use the right words so that their implicit biases are curtailed



Source: Sirtravelalot/Shutterstock

Non-Compliant VS Decline Recommendations

- No matter how good our advice is
 - The treatment team is not the boss of the person
 - They don't HAVE to do what you say

IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU

Stigma in Medications

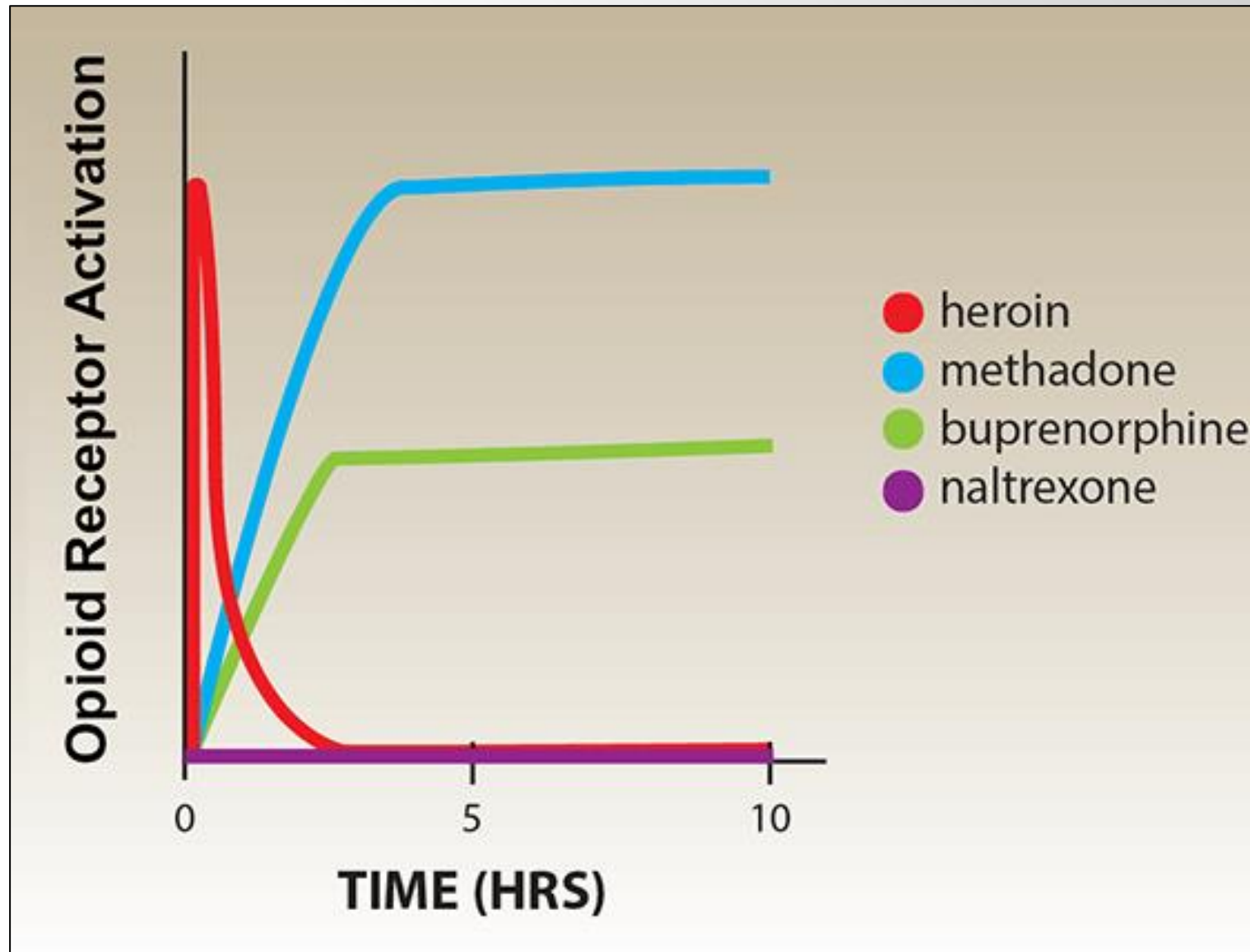
MAT versus MOUD

- Medically Assisted Treatment
- Medication for Opioid Use Disorder
- Subtle but important difference

MOUD

- Include:
 - Buprenorphine
 - Subutex, Suboxone, Sublocade and more
 - Methadone
 - Naltrexone (Vivitrol)

Replacing One Drug With Another



Trading one addiction for another?

Addiction: The use of substances regardless of harm and consequences

Treatment does not cause the loss of control of use

No constant cravings

Not doing illegal activities to obtain medication

No destruction

Able to work, parent and play

Does cause physical dependence

Long term treatment

Lower risk of death by overdose

Higher engagement levels with care and services



“Your depression medicine has been working really well for you. You can work, parent again, and feel connected. So, we want you to wean off it”

Stigma in Care



Source: Orawan Wongka/Shutterstock

Office Environment

- Eyeroles
- Change in mood after meds reviewed
- Judgement
- Expectations that are higher than others
- Expectation that are unreasonable for those early in recovery

Sleep Medicine

- Declined care for all patients with history of SUD
- Even when in long term recovery with children over age one

Pharmacy

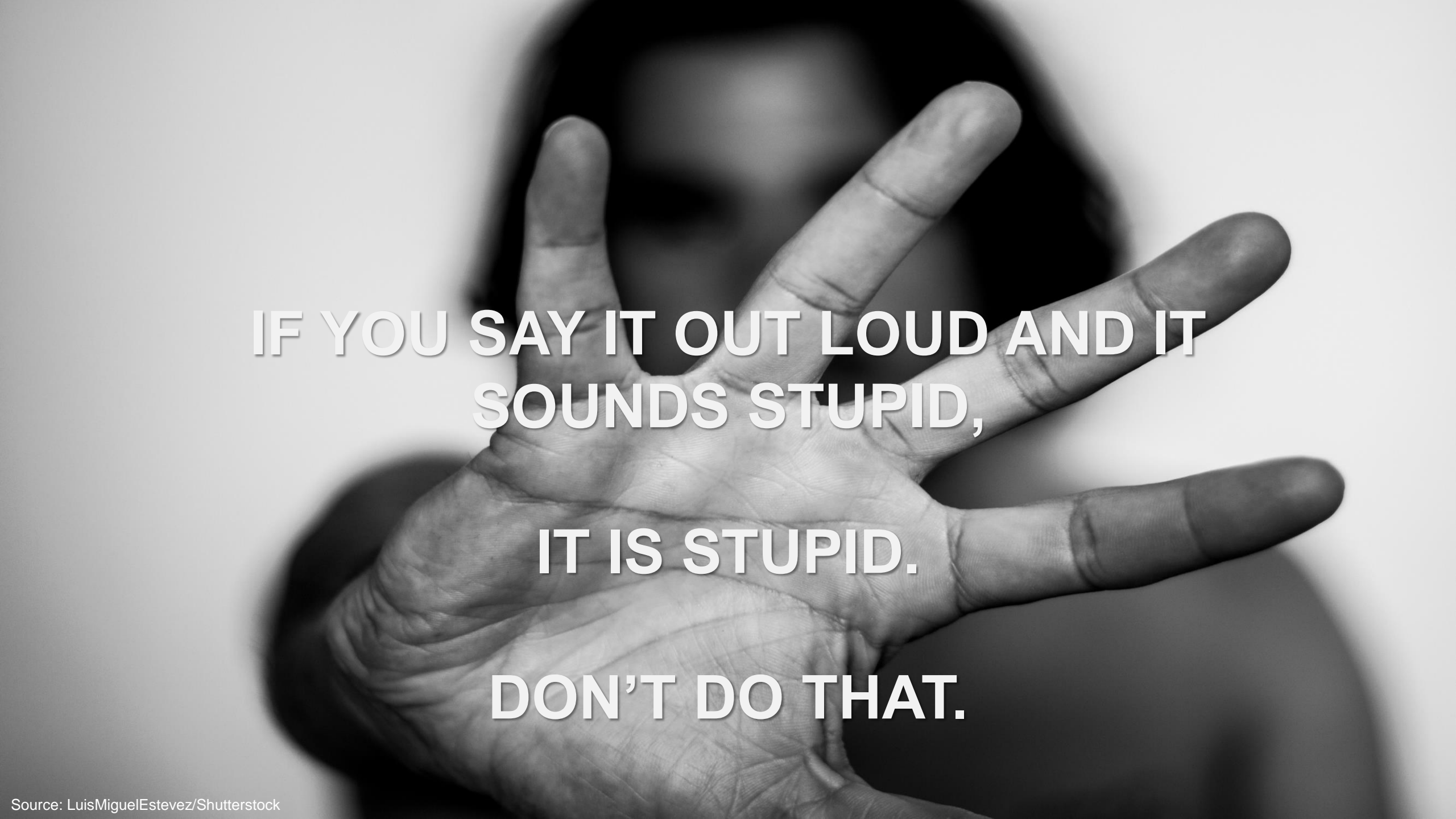
- Biased conversations
- Poor treatment
- Refusal to give Subutex
- Placing personal biases on care

Hospital

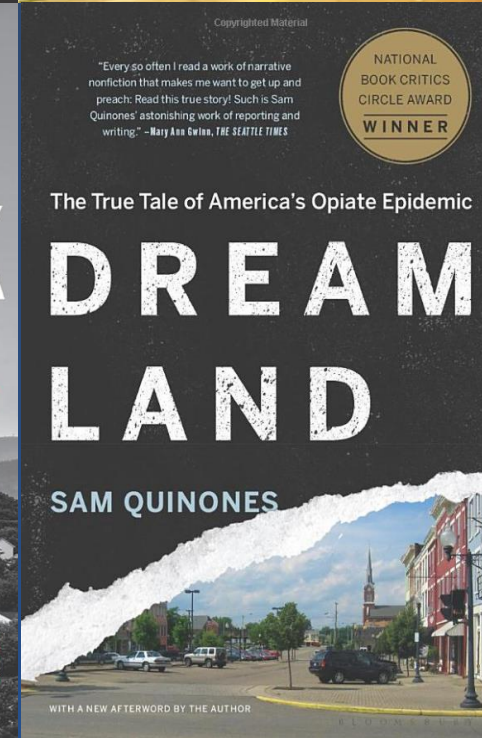
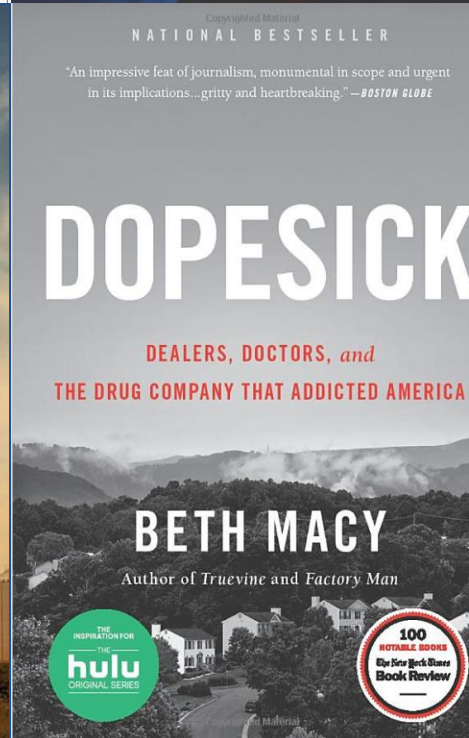
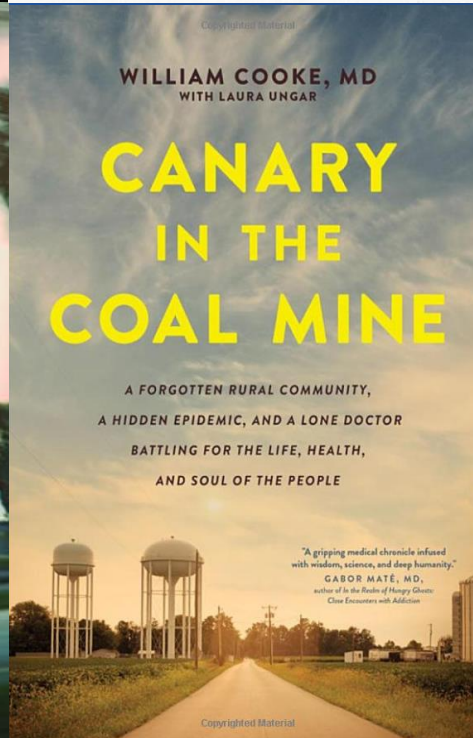
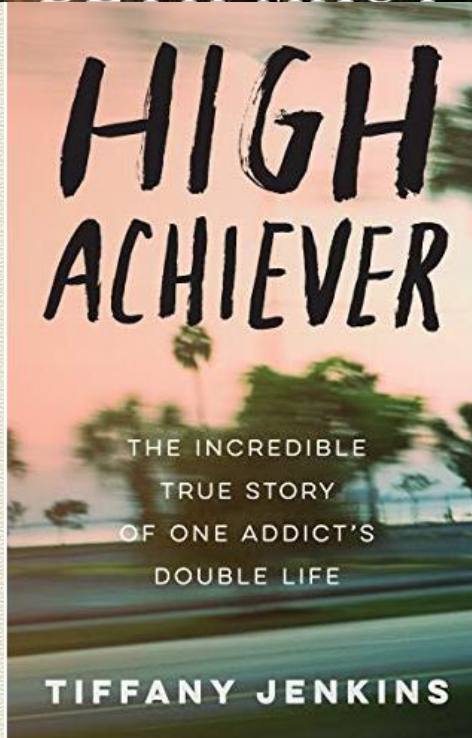
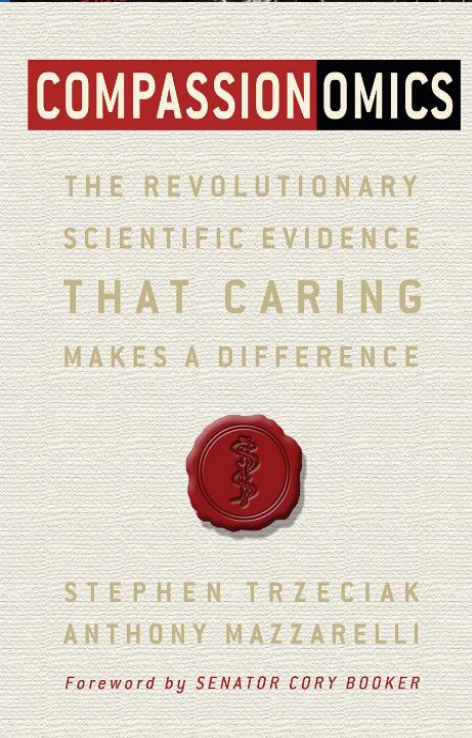
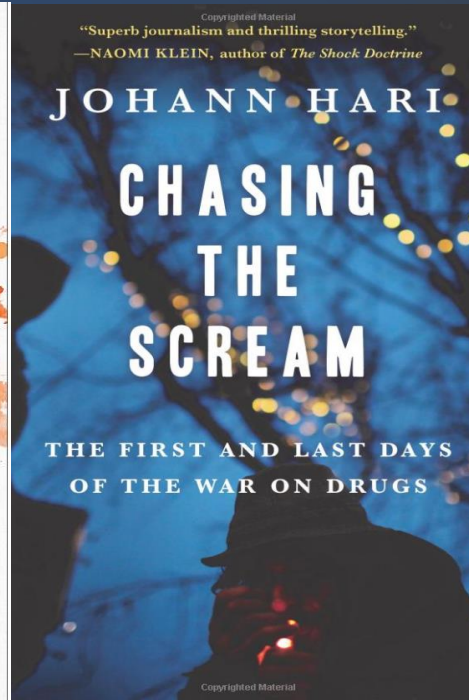
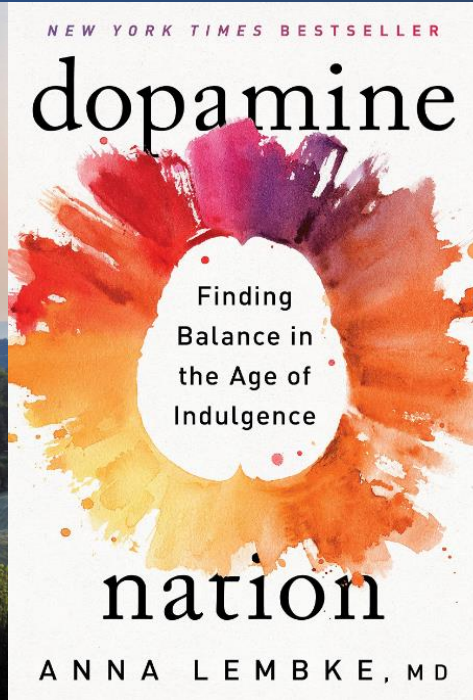
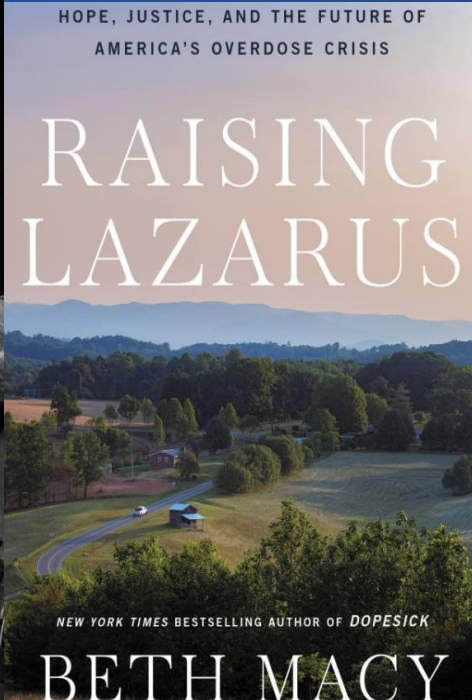
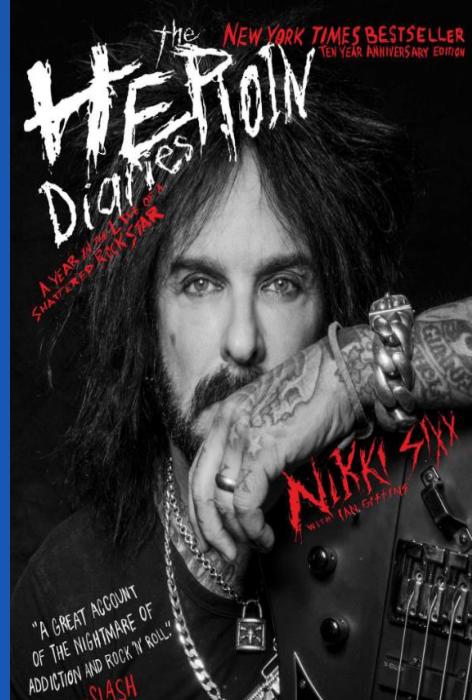
- “drug seeking”
- “high maintenance”
- “difficult”
- “frequent flyer”

Residential Recovery

- Our way or the highway
- Science out the window



**IF YOU SAY IT OUT LOUD AND IT
SOUNDS STUPID,
IT IS STUPID.
DON'T DO THAT.**





You have completed the course:

Beyond Niceness:
Rethinking Stigma Around Substance Use
Disorders

Thank you!