



Join the *Anti Stigma Network*

Together we can end stigma. [Why Join Us?](#)

<https://www.antistigmanetwork.org.uk/>

What is stigma?

- *Stigma results from a process whereby certain individuals and groups are unjustifiably rendered shameful, excluded, and discriminated against*



Stigma is a social process: it occurs when power differentials allow one group to successfully devalue and exclude another



“The consequences of stigma violate basic human rights”

THE LANCET

Lancet Commission on Ending Stigma and Discrimination in Mental Health (2022)

First UK death linked to 'zombie' drug xylazine

Xylazine: Powerful 'zombie drug' known as Tranq has 'penetrated' UK market, experts warn

Xylazine has already been labelled an "emerging threat" in America - and now experts say the public health danger has spread to Britain.

NEWS > HEALTH CARE

'Zombie drug' kills 11 after being found in pot vapes and knockoff pills in UK

New research shows xylazine, an ulcer-inducing tranquilizer linked to the deadly U.S. opioid epidemic, is on the rise.

SHARE

'Zombie' drug xylazine found in cannabis THC vapes in UK

1 day ago



Flesh-eating 'zombie drug' sweeping US is linked to 11 UK deaths

Cause for alarm, warn academics, as xylazine penetrates UK's illicit market

News > Health

What is xylazine? The flesh-eating 'zombie' drug linked to 11 deaths in UK

Xylazine, designed as an animal tranquillizer, has been linked to at least 11 deaths in the UK



STIGMA CAN LEAD TO DEHUMANISATION

- People who use (some) drugs are not only stigmatised, but are dehumanised
- Perceived to be ‘less than human’, and less likely to experience human emotions than the general public and other excluded groups

STIGMA CONTINUES, EVEN AFTER DEATH

- ‘Ungreivable’ lives
- Families ‘contaminated’
- Internalised – come to believe external criticism

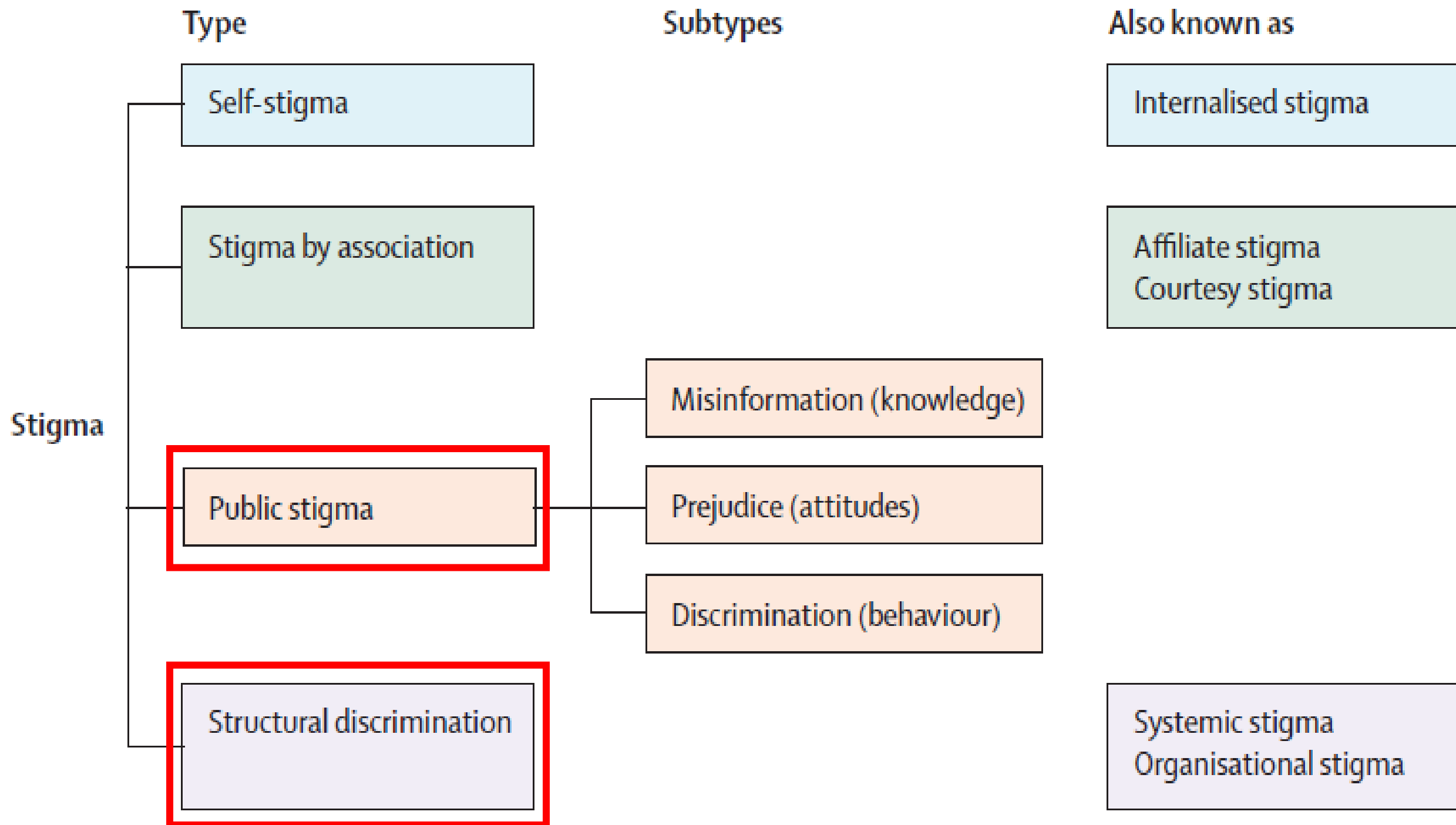
*I was told she was a f***** j***** and a f***** w***** who had not deserved to live.*

‘They should be given drugs with rat poison so that we got rid of them.’

It was not right when my GP told me that “everyone is the maker of their own fortune.”

‘You were lucky to have been spared any further anguish when he died’

Maybe people don’t think we are grieving since he was just a drug addict



Identity management

- We all manage how we present ourselves in our everyday social interactions
- People who use drugs may 'distance' themselves from roles, associations or services which imply particular (stigmatised) social identities:
 - Actively stigmatise others to deflect attention
 - Distancing from a (former) stigmatised 'drug using' self, by not attending services
 - Avoiding 'spoiling' of pro-social identities (e.g. parenting; employment; neighbour)
 - To confirm 'usualness' with peers who also use drugs



- When society devalues a group of people, it legitimises collective action to penalise them through systems, policies and practices, and/or restricting access to health and social care services
- These actions are the foundation of inequity, and send the message that some people are not worthy of support

Stigma and DARD

Marginalisation of PWUD – loneliness, exclusion, social distance → reduced recovery capital – vicious cycle of maladaptive substance use

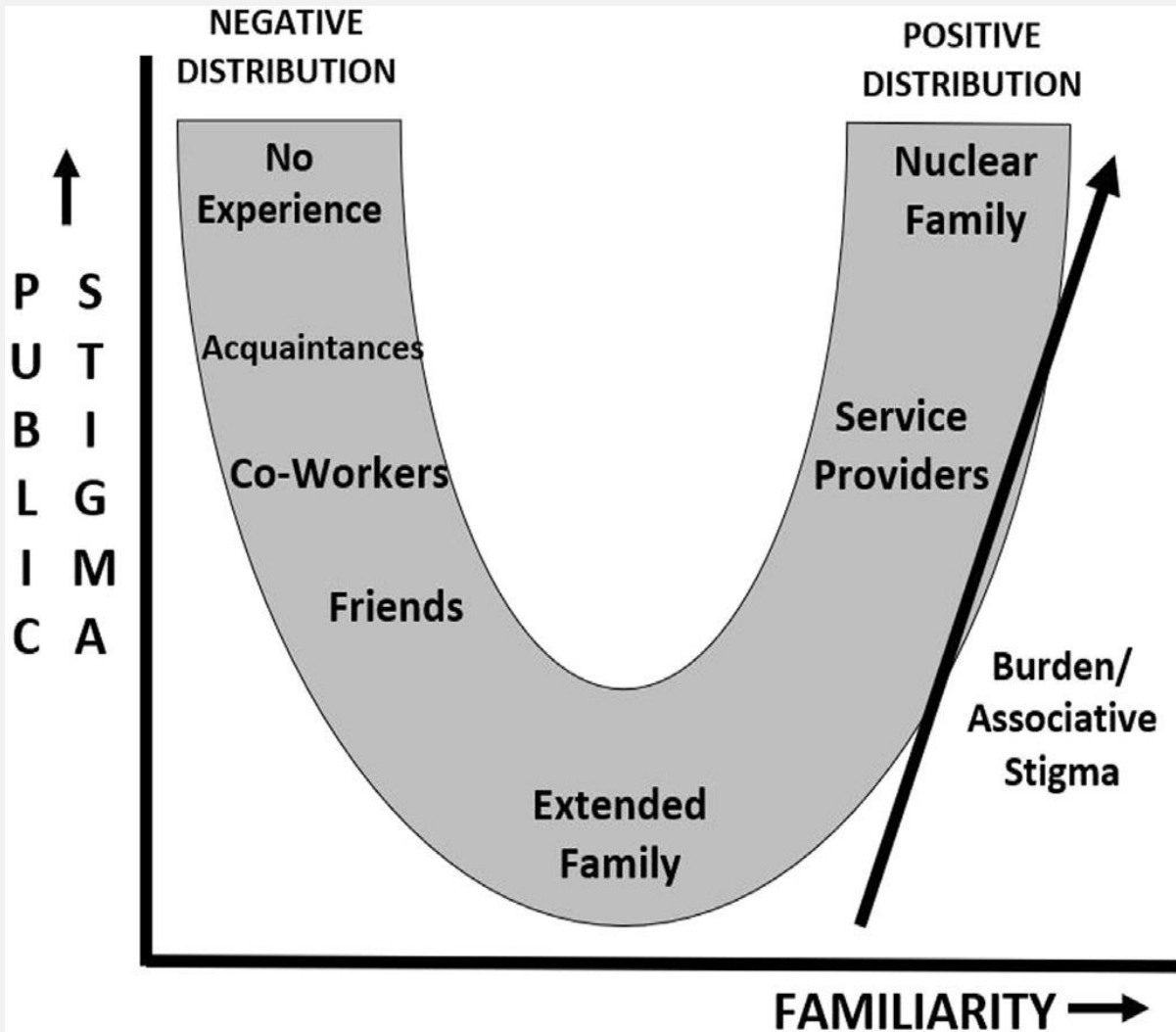
Quality of care – denial of care, dehumanisation, discounting concerns, distrust, clients/patients referred to junior staff

Neighbourhood and community cohesion

Reduced public support for spending on drug treatment and other types of support; increased preference for punitive responses

Families – shame, guilt, isolation, reduced quality of life – intergenerational

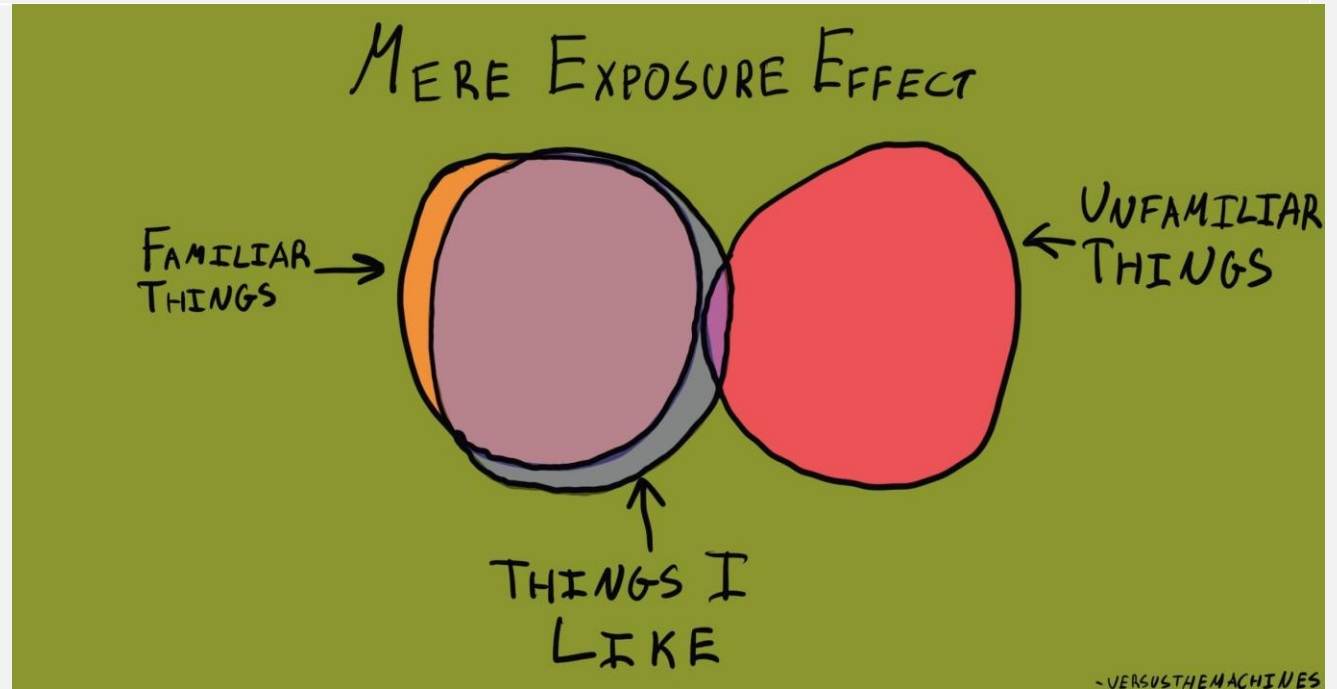
Impact on workforce – devalued career pathway, poor retention of staff



- Greater familiarity with stigmatised issues has been found to be associated with lower ratings of blameworthiness, fear, and stigma, and a greater desire to help affected groups.

40% have only encountered drug use problems on the TV in a documentary or a movie/TV show, or had never observed a person with a drug use problem.

FAMILIARITY WITH PEOPLE EXPERIENCING SUBSTANCE RELATED PROBLEMS



MEDIA, PUBLIC STIGMA, AND POLICY SUPPORT

- Media representation one determinant of public stigma towards PWUD
- As most people don't have direct personal contact with drugs, or the people who use them (especially opioids) media can shape public perceptions, support and understanding of drugs-related issues through agenda setting, editorialising, preferential platforming etc
- Level of public stigma associated with differential support for policies and preference for resource allocation
- Public support can create pressure for policy change, signify acceptance of a given policy direction, or confirm the credibility of policymakers

Pharmacy withdraws needle exchange service after residents protest

Pharmacy Magazine, 20 Jul 2020 ⌚ 1 Min



News Scottish News Drug deaths

UK's first drug consumption room will be near a PRAM CENTRE selling baby goods

After a furious political row between the SNP and the UK Government, the location for the consumption room - dubbed a heroin 'shooting gallery' - has been unveiled near a supermarket and a shop for new mums and dads

NEWS By [Mark Connor](#)

13:53, 21 SEP 2023

Bookmark



Comments 4



RECOMMENDED



Yousaf forced to re-draw spending plans after top civil servant's RESIGN threat



SNP Government face questions over failure of £16m Brechin flood defences

Llanelli: Protest against drug treatment centre near playground

© 14 September



Protesters claim Llanelli's North Dock could become dangerous for children if a drug treatment centre is opened

HOW ARE DRUG DEATHS REPORTED IN NEWS MEDIA?

- Accurate reporting of data
- Reported against a background that prioritises reporting of violent, drug-related crime
- Over-representation of 'newsworthy' deaths involving young, middle-class white females who are portrayed as 'innocent victims'
- Over-reliance on narratives of blame that often omit accounts of pity and grieving for the deceased
- Presented as discrete episodes, difficult to prevent due to being a predictable outcome of drug use relating to individual responsibility and circumstances
- Relevant structural, economic, and socio-political factors often ignored

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Leah Heyes: Teenager died after taking ecstasy

18 June 2019



NORTH YORKSHIRE POLICE
Leah Heyes, 15, collapsed in a car park on Saturday 11 May

A teenager who collapsed in a car park and later died in hospital had taken ecstasy, an inquest has heard.

Leah Heyes, 15, collapsed in the Applegarth car park in Northallerton in May.

The North Yorkshire coroner confirmed she had died from intoxication of MDMA, the chemical name for ecstasy.

Mr Rob Turnbull adjourned the inquest pending the completion of the police investigation into Leah's death.

- [Latest news and updates from Yorkshire](#)
- [Mum 'heartbroken' over teen 'drug death'](#)

Emergency services had been called to the car park at 21:30 BST on 11 May.


Leah, who was from Northallerton, was taken to hospital in Middlesbrough where she later died.

A 17-year-old boy and an 18-year-old man were arrested on suspicion of supplying Class A drugs and later released under investigation.

Top Stories


- LIVE** King in Edinburgh to lead procession behind Queen's coffin
- Russians 'outnumbered 8-1' in Ukrainian offensive
1 hour ago
- Ukraine war in maps: Russians in rapid retreat in the east
1 hour ago

Features




11 JUN
12 MON
13

What next? A day-by-day guide from now to the funeral



In pictures: King Charles in Scotland and Westminster Hall



- Online study with a randomised design, conducted with a nationally representative sample (UK).
- Representations of older, male, heroin using decedents – the ‘typical’ profile of a DRD in the UK – associated with greater level of stigma
- Decedents were rated as having higher responsibility for and controllability over their own death, and participants reported greater blame and anger towards them
- Simply rebalancing reports of DRD to more accurately reflect mortality profiles may have unintended consequences



Anti-stigma initiatives are extremely important, but are not a substitute for policies addressing upstream determinants of drug harm, long-term funding of evidence-based initiatives, and welcoming and supportive services for all

Recommendations from the *Lancet* Commission on ending stigma and discrimination in mental health



- **Guidelines and resources**
- **Public education initiatives**
- **Contact interventions**
- **Legislation**
- **Protest and advocacy**

- Little evidence on ‘what works’ with respect to drugs – but some exceptions

Key findings of the Commission



The consequences of stigma violate basic human rights eg, reduced job and education opportunities and access to health care, including mental health care




Stigma can be reduced through social contact between people who do, and who do not, have lived experience of mental health conditions



People with lived experience of mental health conditions should be empowered and supported to play active roles in stigma reduction efforts

ADDICT BAG HEAD
ZOMBIE DRUGGIE
SMACK HEAD WORTHLESS
DRUNK DIRTY
INFECTED DANGEROUS
DEGENERATE
LOSER LOSER



PEOPLE FIRST

Stop stigma and discrimination,
strengthen prevention

Rethink
Addiction

#STIGMAKILLS



#SEETHEPERSON, #HEARTHEIRSTORY

Stigma matters.

NHS addictions
provider alliance



Changing Futures
Building Better Opportunities

See Beyond - See the Lives - Scotland

Zoe J. Caroline Lorraine Irene Lucy Holly Zoe W. Fiona Peter Miles Andy Gerry Pauline Ann Philip Support Resources Language and media More

I miss dancing with you!

00:20 / 01:27

Alcohol and drugs are killing the people we love.

“No, I’m not well.
I have a drug problem.”

A drug or alcohol problem is a health condition. People should receive help and support, not judgement.

Let’s end the stigma of addiction.
nhsinform.scot/stigma

Healthier Scotland
Scottish Government

NHS
SCOTLAND

Carry naloxone. It could help save a life.

The only thing worse than seeing my fiancée die of an overdose is knowing I could've saved her.

I'm no angel. But I could save your life.

Carry naloxone. It could help save a life.

If my pal goes over, I'm the nearest thing to a paramedic.

Better to be safe than dead.

Carry naloxone. It could help save a life.

Carrying naloxone is easier than carrying a metal container.

No one deserves to die on the street like a dog. That's why I carry naloxone.

Carry naloxone. It could help save a life.

I'd never heard of naloxone. Until it saved my life.

The only thing worse than seeing my fiancée die of an overdose is knowing I could've saved her.

7605x

BUILDHOLLYWOOD

"I'm a FIRST RESPONDER" "I'm a FIRST RESPONDER" "I am TOO"

Carry naloxone (Narcan®). Save a life.

Recognize the signs of an opioid overdose. Learn where to get Narcan® and how to use it.

NIH HEAL INITIATIVE
HEALing Communities Study New York

HealTogetherNY.org

NIH HEAL INITIATIVE

HEALing Communities Study
New York

"I am a loving son, business owner, and sports fan. I also take medication for opioid use disorder."

PRESCRIBING MEDICATIONS TO TREAT OPIOID USE DISORDER IMPROVES LIVES.

NIH HEAL INITIATIVE
HEALing Communities Study
New York

Learn more about how to provide the best care for your patients in treatment and recovery.

HealTogetherNY.org/

Arts & Social Sciences
Centre for Social Research in Health

Stigma Indicators Monitoring Project
Summary Report

Introduction

Stigma has a major impact on health outcomes for people living with blood borne viruses (BBVs) and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Stigma is associated with mental health issues and social isolation, and can prevent people from using health care. This in turn can create difficulties for public health initiatives targeting the prevention and management of these infections.

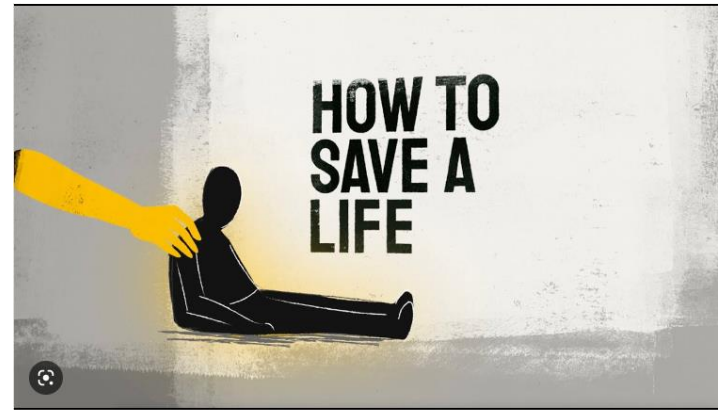
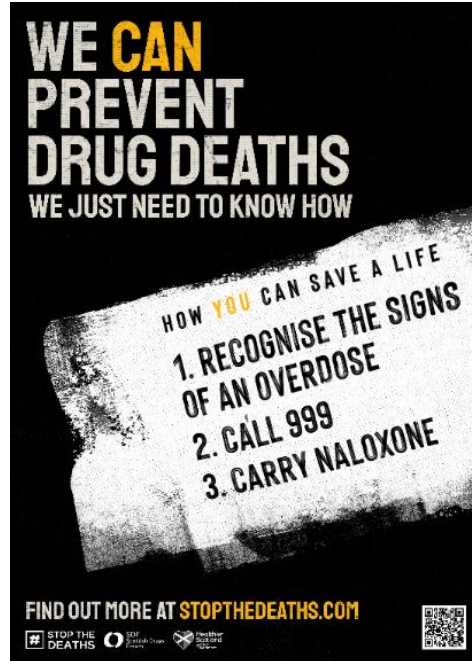
Australia currently has five national strategies addressing HIV, viral hepatitis, and STIs. Each strategy has a clear goal to eliminate the negative impact of stigma and discrimination on people's health. Despite this, there is currently no system in place to monitor experiences of stigma among people with BBVs or STIs.

In 2015, the Australian Government Department of Health provided funding to the Centre for Social Research in Health (CSRH) to develop an indicator of stigma among the priority groups identified by the national strategies.

This report summarises key findings from phase one of the Stigma Indicators Monitoring project.



'How To Save A Life' mass media campaign, August 2021 – Jan 2022



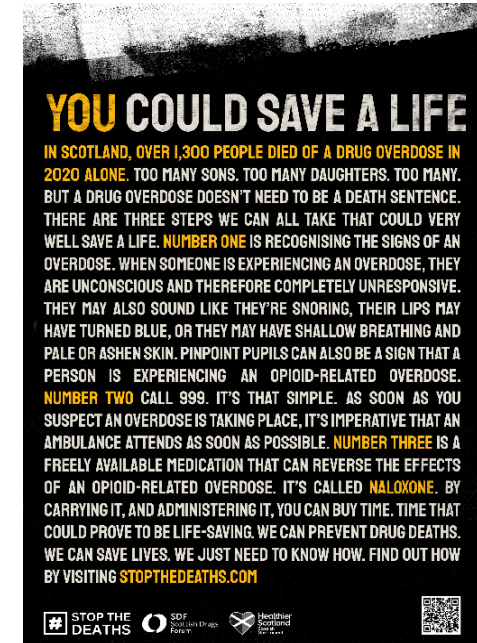
How to Save A Life

Watch



Martin Compston: Line of Duty star voices TV campaign to help prevent drug deaths in Scotland

Martin Compston returns to the nation's television screens on Monday, having voiced a series of adverts to help prevent drug deaths in Scotland.



Main campaign:

- 30th August 2021 - 24th October 2021

Booster campaign:

- 13th December 2021 - 13th January 2022

Delivered on:

- TV
- Radio
- Social media
- Outdoor locations (bill boards, transport hubs, shopping centres, etc.)



Multi-method evaluation of the 'How to save a life' mass media campaign

Kirsten MA Trayner, Harry R Sumnall, Martin Anderson,
Amanda M Atkinson, Andrew McAuley

DRUGS: EDUCATION, PREVENTION AND POLICY
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09687637.2023.2262735>



RESEARCH ARTICLE

OPEN ACCESS

Assessing the reach and engagement with the 'How To Save A Life' mass media campaign on drug-related death prevention in Scotland

M. Anderson^{a,b}, A. M. Atkinson^c , A. McAuley^{d,e}, H. R. Sumnall^c , M. E. Glancy^{d,e}, H. A. Bloomfield^c and K. M. A. Trayner^{d,e}



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

International Journal of Drug Policy

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/drugpo



Research Paper

How to save a life: Public awareness of a national mass media take home naloxone campaign, and effects of exposure to campaign components on overdose knowledge and responses.



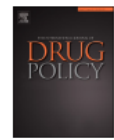
HR Sumnall^{a,*}, AM Atkinson^a, M Anderson^{b,c}, A McAuley^{d,e}, KMA Trayner^{d,e}



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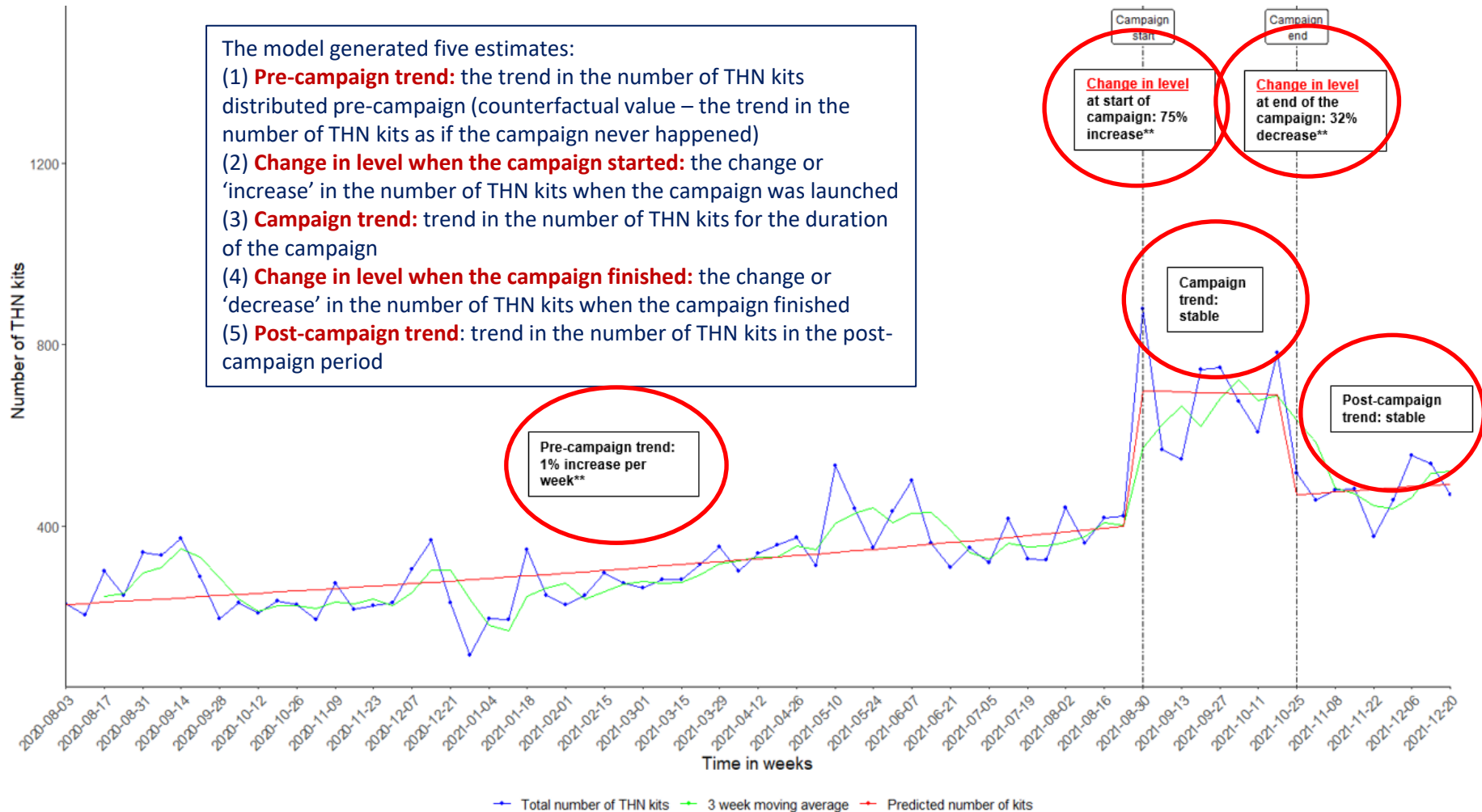


Research Paper

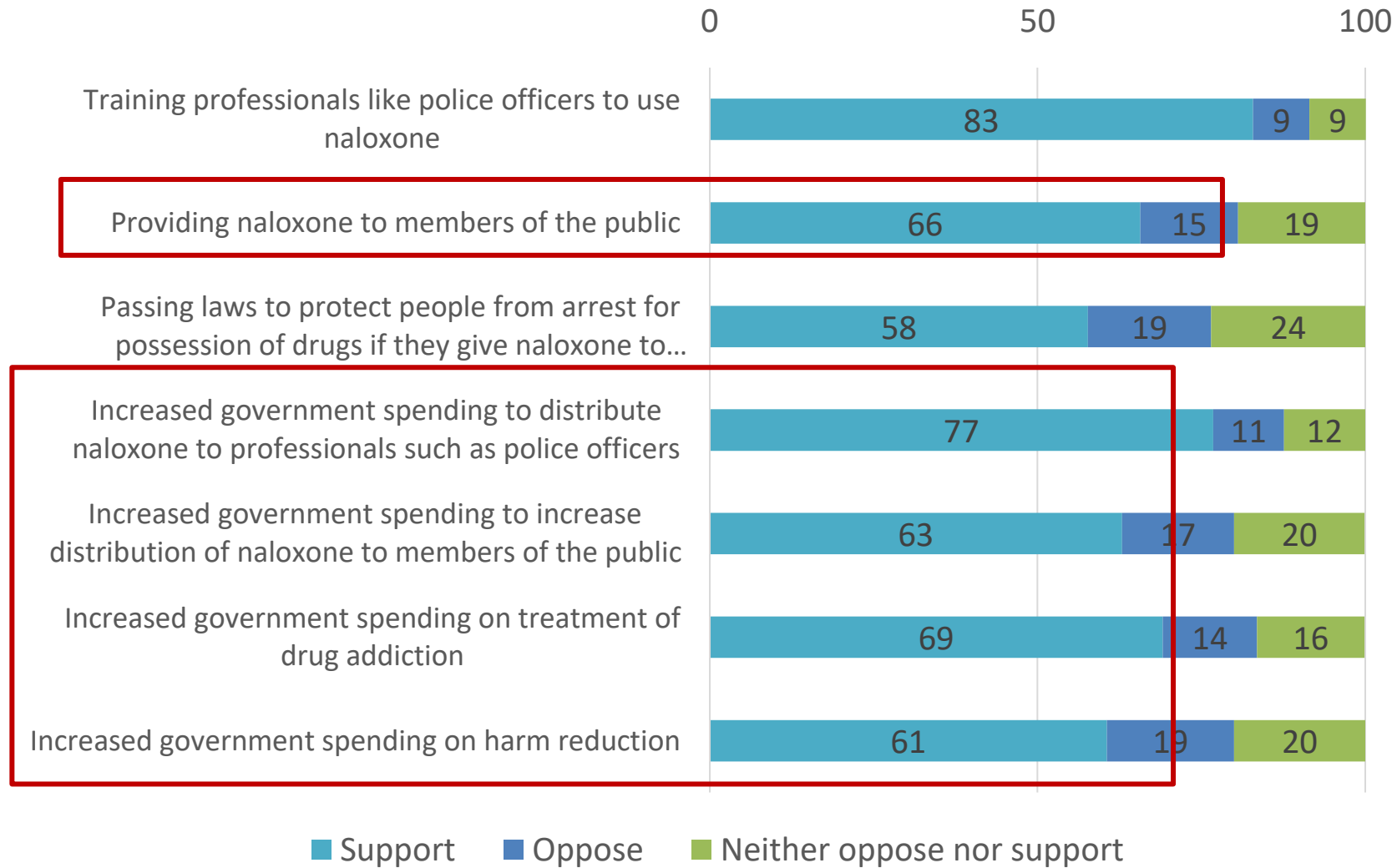
National increase in the community supply of take-home naloxone associated with a mass media campaign in Scotland: a segmented time series analysis

KMA Trayner^{a,b,*}, A Yeung^{a,b}, HR Sumnall^c, M Anderson^d, ME Glancy^{a,b}, A Atkinson^c, M Smith^b, A McAuley^{a,b}

HTSAL increased the community supply of THN for the duration of the main campaign



Public support for naloxone, treatment and harm reduction, n=1,551



SUMMARY THOUGHTS

- Public support for different drug policies depends less on information about effectiveness of particular responses, and more on the moral and political positions people have towards controlled substances, the people who use them, and views about which groups in society are most 'deserving' of support
- Exposure to media is only one factor that determines this
- Initiatives designed to offer guidance on 'addictions' related topics are important, but need to be accompanied by actions to address structural determinants of stigma
- Need to move from 'understanding stigma' to addressing stigma – and evaluating our actions



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