

West Philly's Take on Substance Use & Harm Reduction

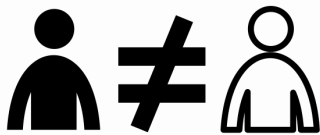


In order to address growing concerns about substance use and the escalating overdose crisis in West Philadelphia, the Center for Addiction Medicine and Policy at Upenn interviewed community members to hear their perspectives and develop culturally-tailored solutions. Here is a snapshot of what we learned!

Who did we interview?

We interviewed community members who live or work in West Philadelphia to hear their thoughts about substance use, harm reduction and resources available in their community. Our goal was to take this information and use it to create programs that are effective, useful and culturally-appropriate.

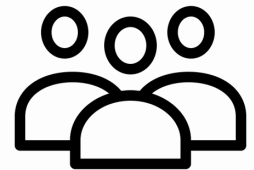
What did we learn?



Substance use is a growing issue in West Philadelphia and city-wide. The ongoing **War on Drugs** impact the uptake of services for People Who Use Drugs (PWUD).



Structural racism and other societal factors makes it hard for West Philadelphians to build trust with healthcare and academic institutions



Generational trauma places black communities like West Philadelphia vulnerable to substance misuse and overdose

How did we respond?

In response to the community's concerns, our team conducts weekly outreach in West Philly along the Market-Frankford Line (69th, 60th & 52nd street stations!). We also provide access to resources and support throughout West Philly to support People Who Use Drugs (PWUD) through a variety of services. To learn more, scan the QR code above, visit www.penncamp.org, or call 484-278-1679!

A Deep Dive into West Philly's Take on Substance Use & Harm Reduction

<p>Substance use is a growing issue in West Philadelphia and city-wide. There are historical issues that impact the uptake of services for People Who Use Drugs (PWUD).</p>	<p>"I think it's interesting that ...now that substance abuse is affecting white people, now they want to have needle exchange programs.... But with the crack epidemic, all the black people that were impacted by it went to jail or prison and they were just allowed to buy and live their ways. So, personally I think it's contradictory and I wonder why now all of the sudden that white people are majorly impacted, it's a national issue. But when black people - when it was a whole crack epidemic, they were all punished."</p>
<p>Structural racism and other societal factors makes it hard for West Philadelphians to build trust with healthcare and academic institutions</p>	<p>"...In order to build trust with those people, we have to make room for the people who are already living in that community to feel safe and not feel threatened by the gentrification... coming in and moving them out of their residences. So, when you come together and tell the people that you're not trying to buy up all of the property to kick them out and that their homes are gonna be stable and that they'll be able to engage in that community, then maybe things can start changing. "</p>
<p>Generational trauma, produced by years of disenfranchisement, racism and other forms of oppression places black communities like West Philadelphia vulnerable to substance misuse and overdose</p>	<p>"...there's a lot of generational trauma and things that are passed down. Yeah, if you're experiencing so much pain that you feel like you don't have a way out and you have no one to go to and no other answer, the numbing through or at least self-soothing through substances is obviously a sign of a broken system. So we shouldn't be criminalizing the victims of the system. We should be fixing the system, so that people get what they need, so they don't have to be self-medicating and self-soothing with something that's actually doing more harm to them than good sometimes."</p>

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