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Promoting Self-Change From Addictive Behaviors :Practical Implications for Policy,Prevention, and Treatment

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Abstrak

The dynamics of addiction and the need to attribute causes for both addiction and recovery have important implications for clinicians and public policy makers alike. Sometimes treatment providers and public policy makers intervene with addictive behavior patterns when it is unnecessary, calling too much attention to issues that have limited adverse consequences. These patterns of drug misuse tend to resolve without treatment. Alternatively, if policy makers or treatment providers think that addictive behaviors will resolve without intervention, they might act too slowly. Research must determine the latency of self-change, which problems require policy or treatment interventions to help people change, and which expressions of addiction fall somewhere in between. To illustrate, while working on the quitting cocaine project, it was common to see public service announcements that touted, ?One puff of crack and you will be hooked.? This announcement might have kept some people who were ambivalent about whether to try smoking crack from doing it. But, I wonder what effect this message had on the people who already tried smoking crack? This message might have encouraged them to believe that they were doomed to a life of addiction and would not be able to stop. A better, and more scientifically accurate, message would be ?one puff of crack and you can stop, just like most of the people who have used it.? This public health message and its consequences likely would be very different from the other message and most users would recognize that there were others who understood the nature of drug use and that they were telling the truth.