The Counter Narrative Project in collaboration with Harm Reduction Coalition and Beam present

The Ties That Bind

Black MSM, Crystal Meth & Family

September 27th, 2018 | 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM ET

Webinar

RSVP below at:
Presenting Organizations

- The Counter Narrative Project
- Harm Reduction Coalition
- BEAM (Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective)
Webinar Guidance

- All participants will be on mute for the duration of the webinar.
- Presentations by three speakers.
- Q&A.
Agenda

- Welcome and Introduction
- Instructions for Q&A
- Learning Objectives For Webinar
- Introduction of Presenters
- What Is crystal meth and What do we know about Black gay men and crystal meth use?
- Framing the Conversation in Healing Justice
- How our Feelings About Substance Use Have Been Shaped
- Strategies to Support Our Family, Friends and loved ones who are using meth
- Q&A
Learning Objectives For Webinar

● Provide historical context for how substance use has been shaped for Black people;
● Provide some context for how crystal meth impacts Black gay men and our families;
● Provide some strategies to support Black gay men using crystal meth using healing and restoration techniques.
Presenters

Johnnie Ray Kornegay III  
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Yolo Akili  
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Jacen Zhu  
Founder of #TakeDownTina
"I dare myself to dream. If I cannot vocalize a dream, which is the first step toward it’s realization, then I have no dream. It remains a thought, a vision without form. I dare myself to dream that our blood is thicker than difference."

- Joseph Beam
What Is Crystal Meth?

• Crystallized methamphetamine, a type of amphetamine.
• The term amphetamine refers to a group of synthetic drugs that stimulates the central nervous system by increasing the amount of certain chemicals in the body.
• Other common names for crystal meth are: chalk, crank, crystal, ice, meth, speed, T and Tina.

For more information visit: https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/methamphetamine
Methamphetamine Use Among Black Gay Men

- Participants reported using multiple substances and used, on average, nine days within the last 30 days.
- They spent an average of US$159 per month on methamphetamine and a median of US$398 on all substances.
- Primarily used in private venues, such as at home or in the homes of friends, and reported obtaining methamphetamine from multiple sources.
- Men who reported exchanging sex for methamphetamine reported greater use in public venues, such as sex clubs, sex parties and circuit parties.

For more information visit: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19301167
Framing The Conversation in Healing Justice
What is Healing Justice?

“Healing Justice is rooted in traditions and practices of ancestral, cultural, environmental, spiritual, physical, emotional context and conditions that center healing in relationship to our collective bodies, memory, and resiliency.

Healing Justice seeks to confront and transform historical and intergenerational trauma from oppression, policing, surveillance, colonization and attempted genocide in our lives.

It centers collective safety and healing as integral to our political liberation.”

-Prentis Hemphill and Cara Page
**Emotional Justice:**
Acknowledgement and validation of the legacy of harm and untreated trauma.

**Reparative Justice:**
Policies, activities, and institutional practices that seek to repair harm that individual, societal and institutional injustices have created.

**Healing Justice:**
Creation of and restructuring of community traditions, spaces and neighborhoods into places that affirm, support, heal and sustain the emotional lives of community members based on the legacy of harm and untreated trauma.

**Transformative Justice**
Active processes, guidelines, policy and practices that transform the root cause of inequities within systems and recreate life affirming, healing and emotional justice centric conditions.

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Author: Yolo Akili Robinson
Part One: How our Feelings About Substance Use Have been shaped
“Negro Cocaine ‘Fiends’ Are A New Southern Menace”

- Article published on February 8, 1914 in the New York Times
- Frames and correlates substance use to race in demeaning way
- “Murder and insanity increasing among lower-class Blacks, because they have taken to ‘sniffing’ since deprived of whiskey by prohibition.”

For more information visit: https://nyti.ms/2puW4uj
“New Violence Seen in Users of Cocaine”

- Doesn’t specifically mention race, but does mention geography - East Harlem.
- “In New York and other cities where crack use has become widespread, the police and drug treatment experts say they are being confronted by an increasing number of cases of violent, erratic and paranoid behavior among heavy cocaine users, and the growing appearance of a condition known as cocaine psychosis.”
- “With powdered cocaine taken through the nose, cocaine psychosis can take years to develop, and most users have never experienced the condition. But when powdered cocaine is taken regularly over many years or is smoked, particularly in daylong binges as it is among crack addicts, psychosis becomes much more common.”

For more information visit: https://nyti.ms/2xwf1RO
“The Opioid Crisis” vs. “The Crack Epidemic”

Crack Epidemic Perceptions

Those affected: Black & Brown, Urban, Unemployed
Villains: Neighborhood drug dealers

Resolutions
Imprisonment, Expanding War on Drugs, Three Strikes Law

Opioid Epidemic Perceptions

Those affected: White, Suburban/Rural, “Blue Collar”
Villains: Pharmaceutical companies

Resolutions
Prevention, Treatment, Legislation

For more information visit:
What the ‘Crack Baby’ Panic Tells us About the Opioid Epidemic - The Atlantic
http://bit.ly/2I9eVUb
How does all of this relate to our interactions with loved ones using crystal meth?

- Substance use has historically been associated with:
  - Deviancy
  - Incarceration
  - Immorality
  - Violence
  - Absence

- All of this impacts how we show up for our loved ones, as we also grapple with social and structural racism.
The war on drugs not only destroys families and communities, it criminalizes PEOPLE; for physical addiction and or substance use, instead of approaching substance use and addiction—whether for coping or pleasure as being possibly representative of a need for counseling support, harm reduction education, social intervention or an issue rooted in other forms of discrimination and distress.

Source: San Diego Free Press
The War on drugs as a construct has contributed to a culture of shaming, fear and stigma towards our community members struggling with substance use that has furthered more isolation, psychological distress and despair for our communities.
The fear and shame around addiction lives in our bodies, hearts and minds. It lives in the experiences we ourselves or our communities have had with substance use. It shows up on our language, our practices and our dialogue. To effectively practice harm reduction and healing justice, we have to get clear about our own shame, fear and experiences and continually reconcile them with the realities of the broader systems we exist in.
What are the possibilities?

- Decriminalization/Policy Shift
- Expansion of peer support and innovative harm reduction substance use counseling services
- Universal health care
- Collective rituals and healing support for communities impacted by the drug war
- Access to Narcan and training for professionals.
Part Two: Strategies to Support our family, friends and loved one’s who are using meth.

An interview with model and founder of #TakeDownTina, a mental health advocate and a spokesmodel for the D.C. PrEP Campaign, Jacen Zhu
Plant seeds of recovery without being “preachy” and/or “judgmental”.
Be a positive influence. (Invite them, love them, show them, & support them and yourself)
Sober Fun. Do thing with your friends that are fun and don’t include drugs and/or alcohol.
Tools To Help Us: Explore Support
Further resources:

SAMHSA’s National Helpline – 1-800-662-HELP (4357)


PartyBoi Documentary Trailer
Q & A