

The NIDA: How we are Preventing Drug Use

We are the lead federal agency that supports scientific research on drug use and the consequences that come with drug use. We use different prevention principles to help parents, educators, and community leaders create research-based drug abuse programs at a community level. Prevention programs should enhance protective factors and reverse or reduce risk factors.¹ We work in cooperation with prevention scientists to create examples of research-based programs to show strategies that have been proven effective. We have been fighting drug abuse since 1974, and we will continue to fight it through our research, working with other agencies to expand our knowledge, and creating and amending legislation to help addicts recover and get the help that they need.

I have watched many people within my family experience the consequences of substance abuse. I have seen addiction tear apart homes, relationships, etc. However, I've also seen people recover from the deepest parts of their addiction. They got their lives, children, and their happiness back. Recovery is possible, and we are here to help you understand that if you or a loved one struggles with addiction, you are not alone. Even if substance abuse has sent you or a loved one to jail, you can still get help and recover. Our goal is to help anyone who is struggling with addiction so you can get your life back as well. The Second chance Act of 2007 gives funding to government agencies and nonprofit organizations for employment assistance, substance abuse treatment, family programming, mentoring, and other assistance for anyone who is returning to the community after being in jail. This act allows you access to help at getting back to a normal life even after being at rock bottom.

¹ National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2020, June 2). *Chapter 4: Examples of research-based drug abuse prevention programs*. National Institute on Drug Abuse. Retrieved October 1, 2021, from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/preventing-drug-use-among-children-adolescents/chapter-4-examples-research-based-drug-abuse-prevention-programs>.

We research many different substance addictions, but one of our main concerns is the opioid epidemic. We have been researching opioid addiction since 2013 when over 1.9 million people struggled with prescription opioid addiction. We have been working to achieve a balanced approach to assure that people can get the pain medication they need without the high risk of becoming an addict. We have been working with the HHS and the NIH to increase the access to treatment services, recovery services, and better pain management practices. Accessing addiction treatment can be very difficult due to the costs of it, but the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act has changed that. This act was created to ensure that Americans are able to get mental health and addiction treatment no matter what financial situation they are in. Our three main goals of this act are to make affordable health insurance available to more people, expand the Medicaid program, and to support innovative healthcare methods to lower the costs of healthcare in general. We have also been working with the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism and the NCI to expand our research on the different types of addiction. Whether you're addicted to heroin or tobacco, your addiction is very real and we want to help you recover. Working with the NIAAA has allowed us to combine our knowledge on drugs such as opioids and heroin together and their knowledge on alcoholism and its impacts.

We have also worked with the NCI to expand our research. Thanks to their efforts, we have been able to create research centers across the United States to learn more about the many aspects of tobacco addiction such as the causes, preventions, nicotine addiction treatment, and the health consequences of using tobacco products. As stated before, our main goal is to help addicts no matter what they are addicted to, and we are very lucky for these agencies' willingness to help us reach that goal.

We want to help anyone and everyone that we can. Substance abuse is a huge issue across the country, and we want to decrease the amount of people who struggle with it. With our efforts and the efforts of other agencies, we are continuously learning more about how to help people who are struggling and attempting to lower the numbers of addicts and overdoses that occur each day. As stated before, we want you to know that you are not alone and you are able to recover from the worst of addiction.