



INTO LIGHT
PROJECT

Changing the conversation about drug addiction

Educational Programming ideas for INTO LIGHT Project Exhibition

Drug Addiction: Real People, Real Stories

for particular majors in higher education

Anthropology—The study of the human experience, biology, the way we think, evolve, culture. There is a definite culture in the world of addiction not only specific to the individual with addiction, but for those around them, their family, friends; society. Addiction is a systemic occurrence that can be used as a lens through which to view the modern human condition. Questions to ponder on this might be: How does the lived experience of addiction affect morality, law, biology, neurochemistry, agency and free will? How does addiction, and particularly an epidemic of drug-related deaths, influence society?

Biochemistry

Very relevant to the study of addiction as biochemists study the chemical processes of living organisms. What do we know scientifically about addiction? How does addiction affect the brain and therefore, the behavior of the individual? Does addiction fit the disease model? Why or why not?

Business, Business Management and Human Resources

Those who seek careers in these concentrations will be managing people, some of which will have a substance use disorder, or be in recovery. According to the CDC 46.3 million people aged 12 or older (or 16.5 percent of the population) met the applicable DSM-5 criteria for having a substance use disorder in the past year, including 29.5 million people who were classified as having an alcohol use disorder and 24 million people who were classified as having a drug use disorder.

Additionally, there is a negative consequence from substance use on the economy and the workforce. About 70% of those with SUD are employed, making the workplace an important setting to address SUDs.

What is the current view from a business management perspective of those with drug addiction? Discuss the responsibilities of those who manage people with regard to employees who are in active addiction or in recovery?

Creative Writing—Storytelling—why is it important to tell the stories of people in our society past and present? What common denominators do we see in the narratives of the people in the ILP exhibition? How can society benefit from your work in creative writing?

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Data Science—How does data science intersect with social movements and art activism? What is its importance in the context of ILP?

Development Studies

View the ILP exhibition, look at the similarities across the stories of those who passed from substance use disorder and read the statistic on prevalence and treatment. What are the economic, political, and societal effects of a large subset of the U.S. population having a substance use disorder?

Digital Humanities

What does someone in this academic field need to know about drug addiction to merge social topics with technology and answer existing research questions?

Education –

Research shows a link between substance abuse and levels of educational attainment. Why? Is this true in your experience? Discuss the role of educators regarding drug use—identifying students at risk, ethical considerations, working with families, mandatory reporting, talking with students about substance use, etc. What do educators need to know about drug addiction? What is their responsibility or contribution in helping to reduce stigma or educating students and others about addiction? What methods might be used to do this in addition to the model and message of INTO LIGHT Project?

Economics—Understanding how current events and conditions shape individuals and impact society. According to the CDC there is a total of \$1,021 billion dollar economic cost of opioid use and fatal opioid overdose cost each year. Over \$120 billion in lost productivity occurs in the U.S. due to SUD's, another \$11 billion in health care costs for drug treatment and medical costs and \$61 billion in criminal justice costs of investigation, prosecution, incarceration, and victim costs. Discuss how drug use affects business and the economy and examine what be done about it.

English –

English is largely about language and communication, reading, writing, and a knowledge of literature and meaning making. Discussion and community also play a part in understanding literature, context, relevance, and societal impact.

How does viewing the ILP exhibition impact those seeking English majors and their future work? What can those in this major contribute to the research or add to the social discourse about this topic?

Film

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The language used about those with SUD's in films is often very negative—and people with addictions are routinely portrayed as lowlifes, criminals, or troublemakers. Students in film majors could benefit from learning the truth about the lives of those with SUD. Having examined the questions around drug addiction will influence new generation filmmakers in various ways. A good outcome would be an honest portrayal of those with SUD, using film to educate, to help to dismantle negative stereotypes, and influence the use of anti-stigmatizing language.

Global Literary Studies

Learning about the history of cultures and how we view the world. Gaining education on addiction as a disease, the history, and how people with drug addiction came to be marginalized and villainized would inform those in Global Literary Studies. Using the ILP exhibition have discussions about the progression of addiction over the years and to the latest epidemic the U.S. is facing. How will this influence your work?

Hispanic/Latin American/Asian studies - These populations are increasing in drug misuse and overdose/poisoning deaths, yet a small percentage seek help. There is, traditionally, significant shame and stigma in Hispanic/Latin American/Asian populations which prevents many from seeking treatment. What about the culture informs choices about revealing an illness and seeking treatment? Is this changing over time? What can be done to have different outcomes?

Journalism

Journalists are storytellers, seekers of truth and have a code of ethics. They involve themselves in fact finding, interviewing, writing, and editing. All these skills are carried out with journalist integrity. What does it mean as a journalist, or a journalism student, to accurately report on the drug epidemic in the U.S. while not using stigmatizing words or images? Will that help contribute to a healthier society?

Law or Legal studies - Legal studies consider human rights, civil rights, and how culture, politics, and society influence legal decisions and law. The altered brain function of those who are addicted to drugs can lead to decisions that cause harm to those experiencing addiction and to people around them. Is the response for this harm by the judicial system too punitive? Should we focus more on treatment and recovery as opposed to incarceration? How do we balance accountability and responsibility for harm against others with recovery and treatment?

Marketing-What are the ethical responsibilities of those in marketing careers? What values guide the profession? How do we responsibility market certain products such as alcohol or pharmaceuticals? How does honesty, responsibility, fairness, and respect for consumers and society play into marketing such products?

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Neuroscience deals with the structure or function of the nervous system and brain. What can neuroscientists do to help inform the public that drug addiction is a brain disorder? What research opportunities are available to address SUD? After viewing an ILP exhibit, what comes to mind for those in this major about their future role?

Nursing—includes the promotion of health, prevention of illness, and the care of physically ill, mentally ill and disabled people in health care settings and in the community. Nurses take a pledge to deliver a high standard of care to everyone. Does that always happen? Are nurses also affected by societal stereotypes that depict those with SUD as drug seeking, or are they able to put personal opinions aside and provide the same standard of care to all people? Another question to explore is the personal cost of caring for those with drug addictions or people who have overdosed, been poisoned, or died by drug use. What are the secondary traumatic stressors, or vicarious trauma that nurses face? Where is the help for health care providers to prevent burnout and to protect mental and physical health outcomes?

Peace and social justice

Students in this major learn to understand conflict, violence, and peace. Developing competencies in fields that contribute to peace, justice and social transformation is key to a more just society. Humanizing addiction, as ILP does, contributes to an understanding of how our current system of addressing addiction dehumanizes and degrades those with addictions. How does the study of peace and social justice apply to those with SUD and their families? How can we provide better outcomes for those with SUD?

Philosophy - The study of philosophy is concerned with exploring possibilities, ethics, and utilizing critical and analytical thinking skills. These are useful skill in making progress toward an ethical standard of care for those with addictions. After reading the stories and viewing the portraits of those who have died from drug addiction—what themes prevail? What questions need answered? How we can use critical and analytical thinking to explore new possibilities for accepting drug addiction as a disease process that responds to treatment? How do we communicate these new ideas broadly?

Political science—Those successfully engaged in political science develop a social awareness that questions systems of government, health care and other societal impacts. After viewing the ILP exhibition, what questions come to mind regarding responsible conduct in terms of policy, justice, and political behavior? Engaging in debate on this topic can produce sound arguments that can inform public policy and health care outcomes.

Health Care/Psychology/Sociology

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Working with individuals, understanding the human condition and human behavior are all key to successful outcomes for those with SUD. The value of human interaction, unconditional positive regard, background, trauma, and understanding are important considerations in recovering from addiction. What is the formula for success in recovery? How do we help those with SUD to recover, face relapse, and continue to move forward in sobriety? What did you read in the ILP narratives that might inform some of these questions? Does it feel like a hopeless task? What does it take to realign brain chemistry so normal functioning is possible? What personal and professional boundaries need to be in place so health care providers stay physically, mentally and emotionally healthy?

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