

It is harder to approach drugs as a crime when it happens to someone you know and love. Then you notice the entangled web of interconnected barriers of mental health, housing, deteriorating relationships, self-destructive behaviors- things not solved by jail and/or a criminal record. Rather, if we could approach addictions as a public health concern, rather than the justice system concern, there is greater probability of restoration of the individual to a productive life.

I live a block from a popular camping spot for house-less people. Many struggle with drugs and mental health and our city's plan is to just keep these people moving. With more available accompaniment and treatment, I would have more hope for these folks, some of whom I know personally. To approach with punishment, someone who is struggling, is short-sighted and hypocritical, as if we all have never needed help from time to time. When criminal acts are solely punished, and no treatment, it is wishful thinking that people will somehow magically resume life- free from the addictions that precipitated the behaviors in the first place.

Please, fund treatment.

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