

If you want to change someone's behavior, then what you must do is simultaneously make it easier to do the thing that you want them to do while also making it harder to do the thing that you don't want them to do. This is a basic principle which should be easy to understand and to communicate to others. Measure 110 has done neither, unless the behavior you want to incentivize is public fentanyl use and sale. You have certainly made that easier, by allowing addicts and dealers to continue their behavior without repercussion and even working to destigmatize behavior that is both self destructive and sociopathic. The only conclusion I can draw is that the people you have employed in this project are either completely divorced from reality, or are actively malicious.

So, what needs to be done? Fairly simple. Create low security prisons with all of the services you want to offer addicts, and then arrest them. This can not be a choice, because it's the addiction making the choice, not the person. They can either sit and rot in junky jail, or they can try and get better, but they can't continue to victimize society at large. It doesn't have to be punishment, but it should be, if they are intransigent. People do need to be punished sometimes. It isn't hateful to punish bad behavior, and it isn't kind to allow people to hurt themselves again and again. Also, prioritize people who make themselves a nuisance. People who use drugs in public, who erect illegal structures on public land, and people who steal to support their habit are all problems which damage society at large.

These are not harmless crimes. They emotionally and mentally harm every single person in this city. If you'll allow me to make a comparison, imagine how your mental health would be affected if every single indigent was replaced with a sign saying "Nothing matters - Kill yourself," so that, every time you drive down the street, you couldn't go more than a few blocks without seeing a demoralizing message of nihilistic self destruction. Would you want to live in that place? How long do you think you could go about your business without it getting to you? Life is hard enough without being surrounded by living embodiments of madness and death, left to shamble around the place like dead souls in some decaying ruin of a former civilization. Leaving these people to hurt themselves is harming everyone. If you don't do something, even if it's just the same dumb punishments as always, it's really even worse. It's pretending to care by doing nothing. It's an abdication of responsibility by the healthy to the sick. It's the backwards idea that protecting people is tyranny.

My best friend of 30 years died around this time last year. He relapsed from his opiate addiction and overdosed in his bedroom. His parents found his body on the floor. They buried him alone, in shame, with not a single mourner besides themselves. I still don't know where my best friend is buried. So I understand how stigma and shame can prevent someone from seeking help. But I also understand how addiction takes a person over - how they stop making rational choices. They can not be left to their own devices, because they are the device and the addiction is using them to perpetuate itself. And when getting a fix is as easy as walking a few blocks to the local cluster of tents, it's too easy for the addiction to talk a person into it. And when the police will look the other way, so there's no consequences, that makes it even easier for the addiction to drive. Do I think that Measure 110 contributed to my best friend's death? Absolutely. It's part of the problem - not part of the solution. I have no idea who thinks otherwise, who has a story of measure 110 saving someone's life, but I'll check the comments and see if I come across one.

Thanks for your time and attention.
Let's fix this, for real this time.
People's lives depend on it.