

My name is Carlos Rodriguez Lanz III and I'm writing this letter on behalf of Uhuru SaSa cultural club as a clerk and on behalf of myself a former addict.

When we debate addiction in society, as it exists today the conversation seems too often to be centered on criminalization/de-criminalization as the only ways or means to address this social issue. However in reality what we are failing to acknowledge is the fact that these addicts are human beings. Real People whose spirits and souls are in a state of trauma, or purely detached from reality. It has been proven that using incarceration/criminalization methods as a means to address the cycle of addiction and everything that comes as a by-product thereof, has failed miserably and only deepens the social consequences and experience to the addict themselves and to the citizens.

In my opinion what has to be considered is a multi-part solution, based on recovery, treatment and hope. By providing hope, we can then provide clarity and a purpose for the addict. Some key components that I've found most common and most troubling to be associated with addicts post-fentanyl, are heightened states of drug induced dependency, psychosis, resentment, and no sense awareness/presence of mind, I mean completely disconnected.

I've also found that today's addict is so complacent and comfortable in the systems and environments that they artificially create within their communities, that they are

willing to hold down others who may be at an inflection point, for the sake of not wanting them to dismantle the system or structure that's been created. We must also recognize the need to incorporate an incentives based structure that rewards those individuals whom have the resolve to seek, engage and complete treatment, with the emphasis being on regaining independence and understanding how to identify potential new crutches, that may be created subconsciously, such as coffee, cigarettes, etc.

emphasizing independence is crucial because co-dependency comes in many forms. In closing I believe in order to create a resolution that is fully sustainable mental health awareness has to be apart of the equation. Most addicts are too addicted to change and don't know why. Sub conscious Self sabotage will always factor into the equation unless we consciously connect the dots.

I would love to continue to assist in furthering the conversation and building/creating a sustainable path forward for all parties involved. Please feel free to contact me officially through our staff advisor Tracy Barnes [Tracy.R.Barnes@doc.oregon.gov](mailto:Tracy.R.Barnes@doc.oregon.gov) or via mail

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Yours truly,  
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