



VIDEO DISCUSSION GUIDE

Better Now: Life Without Substance Use

INTRODUCTION

The Partnership @drugfreeNH and UNH Extension created the video *Better Now: Life Without Substance Use* as part of a video series aimed to increase awareness around substance misuse of opioids, alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, and other substances. Watch all the videos in the series designed for social media at The Partnership @drugfreeNH.

We want to thank Kim, Chad, Justin, Dylan and Tonya for sharing their personal journey with all of us. Your stories help us hold hope in our hearts for those experiencing substance use disorders.

HOW TO USE THIS VIDEO

Better Now: Life Without Substance Use can be used in a variety of ways to start a conversation about what we can all do to support the people in our lives who challenged with substance use. The video can be shown in a group setting or one-on-one, at a gathering of people in-person or virtually. For each question, we have provided you background information on where you can find more information or seek help. We have provided links when possible.

As you pull together the details of your event you might want to consider inviting others to join you. Reach out to one of the local peer recovery community organizations to invite an individual to share his or her personal story.

Suggested places to show this video:

- Staff meetings
- Coalition meetings
- Trainings and workshops
- Professional development events
- Parenting groups
- Health classes
- Recovery groups
- Health fairs
- Other settings where people gather to talk about health and wellness

We hope this video and discussion guide inspires and motivates you to think about substance misuse and prevention differently. After watching the video, we hope you:

- **BELIEVE** that you and those you love can recover. There are multiple pathways to recovery.
- **UNDERSTAND** the challenges that individuals, families and communities face when dealing with a substance problem like access to treatment, stigma and bias, and a lack of knowledge about addiction.
- **KNOW** about resources available to support a person experiencing substance use disorder.

DESCRIPTION OF VIDEO

The people in this video share how they recognized it was time for them to stop using substances, and how that decision changed their lives for the better. Justin, Dylan, Kim, Chad, and Tonya are all in long-term recovery. They let us in on how they knew it was time to change and what life looks like on the other side of their substance use disorder. Their stories inspire us with hope that recovery is possible for everyone.

Substance use disorder (SUD) can happen to anyone. It is a progressive, chronic condition that changes a person’s brain, making it difficult to stop. What starts as a way to fit in or deal with strong emotions, mental health or pain, can become a compulsive need to use more frequently in higher amounts. SUD is treatable with counseling and medication.

Preventing the misuse of tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, and opioids is a complex public health issue that requires a collective action approach. There is an urgent need to support people who use drugs with services and harm reduction strategies, so they can keep each other and themselves safe and alive until they are ready for treatment. Together, we can address the barriers that people and communities face to achieving health and well-being.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS?

<p>1.</p>	<p>For someone experiencing the misuse of substances, there are nine local Doorways throughout New Hampshire that are run by local hospitals. While each Doorway is a little different, they all offer help, support, and services to those struggling with substances. They also provide free opioid prevention kits that include naloxone, fentanyl test strips and information. .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What resources, services and treatment are available to those in your community with substance use disorder?• Who would you call for help if you or someone you loved needed help? <p>Additional Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your doctor or pediatrician• <i>Community Mental Health Centers</i>• <i>NH Children’s Trust</i>: Family Resource Center• School: <i>student assistance programs</i>, resource officer, guidance counselor, school nurse• Worksite: Human Resources, Employee Assistance Program• <i>NH Center for Excellence on Addiction</i>• 9-8-8 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline
<p>2.</p>	<p>Why someone develops substance use disorder or addiction is complex. It is usually a combination of individual and environmental factors. Knowing about protective and risk factors can help families, schools and community groups understand what they can do to support healthy environments. Protective factors have been consistently identified in research to be the social conditions, relationships, and experiences that promote positive development, mental health, and wellness, and prevent high risk behavior (such as substance use, violence).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are some things we can do to connect with young people in our lives so they feel seen and heard?• What are some protective factors you’ve experienced in your family, school, workplace or community?• What actions can you take to increase protective factors and reduce risk factors in your family or community? <p>Additional Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>NH Regional Public Health Network</i> with Substance Misuse Prevention Coordinators• <i>NH Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services</i>

3.

All substance use comes with a risk of poisoning or overdose. Some substances, like fentanyl, carry a higher risk. Harm reduction is a set of strategies that people who use drugs (PWUD) can employ to keep themselves and others safe and alive while they use. It is based on the premise that there are safer ways to use drugs. Some harm reduction strategies are:

- **Know the signs of an overdose**
- **Use with another trusted adult - never use alone**
- **Have naloxone on hand and know how to use it: The local Doorways and Regional Public Health Networks provide opioid prevention kits with free naloxone and fentanyl test strips**
- **Test your drugs with fentanyl test strips**
- **Use clean equipment**
- **Go low and go slow: starting with a low amount of the substance**
- **Do not drive impaired or under the influence of any drug**

Additional Resources:

- [*NH Harm Reduction Coalition*](#)
- [*Syringe service programs*](#): free sterile supplies and safe disposal at nhhrc.org
- [*NH Regional Public Health Network*](#)
- Your local hospital
- 9-1-1 for an overdose or poisoning

4.

Stigma is a powerful force that prevents people from getting and offering help. Stigma causes negative attitudes, stereotypes, shame, and fear toward people who use substances. People who use substances often internalize these feelings. Stigma is reinforced through words, actions and even violence. It can create an environment where people feel devalued, dehumanized, and isolated because they struggle with substance use.

- **How does stigma prevent someone from asking for help?**
- **How does stigma prevent someone from offering help?**
- **In what ways has stigma influenced the way you think about or treat people who use substances?**
- **What can be done to fight stigma?**

Additional Resources:

- [*Shatterproof*](#): resources on preventing and addressing stigma.

For more information visit The Partnership @drugfreeNH.org

