



“Everyone  
deserves a  
home”

Port Alberni Shelter Society  
3939 Eighth Ave., Port Alberni, BC, V9Y 4S2

ph: 250-723-6511  
e: [pashelter@shaw.ca](mailto:pashelter@shaw.ca) • w: [pashelter.org](http://pashelter.org)

# **Addiction and Therapeutic Recovery Models “Working Towards a Solution”**

By John Douglas, former Mayor of the City of Port Alberni, 2019



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Our global societies have been in a war to different degrees against certain types of drug addictions for decades, if not hundreds of years. We seem to accommodate addiction to some drugs such as alcohol, cannabis, caffeine and nicotine as well as some more social addictions such as gambling; however we criminalize addictions to some drugs such as heroin, choosing law enforcement and incarceration as a main approach. Why our people are so susceptible to drug addiction is a question for elsewhere and not a topic of this paper. The cost, effect and some current alternatives to law enforcement, incarceration and recovery is a highly relevant topic and what is aimed at in this paper, and a previous one entitled “Working Towards Solutions – Resolving the case between Crime and Addictions”.

This article revolves around my personal experiences and my personal growth within the field of social housing, mental health, poverty, addictions and all of the many other elements which affect those sectors. Much of that learning came from my career in health care in the Vancouver and Vancouver Island B.C. areas; my community experience as a City Councillor and Mayor in the City of Port Alberni; followed by my involvement working on “special projects” with the non-profit Port Alberni Shelter Society. This is a commentary on what I have come to believe as true, and is a statement of how I believe we can move forward in the area of substance use and recovery. It is a continuation of my belief that we can achieve a savings in humanitarian and economic costs by moving our approach on addictions away from the field of criminal justice and into the field of health care.

This paper is not meant to be a scientific treatise – rather it is the expression of common sense solutions found after my experiences and learning on the street. It is, to put it briefly, for the person who has been touched by the tragic impacts of addiction, and for the taxpayers and business communities who are justifiably alarmed at the massive costs of incarceration, crime and subsequent waste of taxpayer dollars under an ineffective system.

While decriminalization of possessing addictive substances and providing a “Safe Supply” are fundamental changes to help move addiction from being treated as a crime and instead treated as a health issue, primarily covered here are some approaches currently in place for recovery out of addictions — or what often is referred to as treatment — and some alternative recovery models which are beginning to be practiced across the globe.

### **Key Messages:**

🔑 Our recovery programs in Canada have not been addressed appropriately. Four week and six week programs simply do not work. Recovery programs need to be longer (the standard at San Patrignano — covered here — is three and one half years) so that an individual can rebuild, restructure, reintegrate and move forward with their life.

🔑 Recovery Communities can be self sustainable economically, as the residents can work within social enterprise models, creating revenue which in turn provides for accommodation and programming costs. This also allows for Recovery to be provided free of charge.

🔑 The traditional western Medical model of treatment does not provide an all inclusive answer or solution to addictions. There is no one size fits all solution, no medication or treatment that is administered in the traditional sense and eradicates addiction. The solution comes from a host of options, some of which may possibly be medical (ie Methadone), some may be harm reduction oriented (overdose prevention), some may be legal adjustments (Decriminalization and Safe Supply). The main solution for recovery comes from the individual; from families; from meeting head on difficult challenges; from successfully making difficult decisions; from setting schedules and goals; from working alongside mentors. This success can come from Therapeutic Communities.

## **Acknowledgements:**

Although written by myself, this work is the result of being involved with the teams of people involved with the Port Alberni Shelter Society(PASS), their employees, clients and the teams of people in our communities across the globe who are trying to move to more workable solutions.

Due to some specific support we have been able to research over the past year different models of Recovery, of Therapeutic Communities, all of these being in North America and Europe.

### **Thanks are due to :**

- \* Sparc BC;
- \* the Port Alberni Shelter Society (PASS);
- \* Executive Director Wes Hewitt and the PASS Board of Directors;
- \* the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) and all of the wonderful staff and programs within that organization;
- \* Recovery Organizations such as the Red Barn Academy; The Other Side Academy; John and Chawna Volken; the Our Place Therapeutic Community; Marta Borges, Pedro Oliveira and Joaquim Fonseca of Portugal; Rob Turnbull and Tracey Harvey of Street to Home; Monica Barzanti and the team of staff and residents at San Patrignano in Italy;
- \* Local, Regional, Provincial and Federal political representatives..

**While built on the foundation of a united effort, the opinions expressed in this paper are solely my own.**

In June of this year I wrote a paper on the Portuguese approach to addictions. If you haven't read that I would strongly recommend it as a precursor to this piece. I also go into my history and career as a Paramedic, City Councillor, and Mayor at the City of Port Alberni. This paper is a promised follow up, dealing with an area of substance use which we can begin to immediately address, Recovery.

One story I have heard frequently used in the climate surrounding opioid use is “the Ogre” story, where villagers notice an overwhelming number of drowning people floating down their local river. The villagers struggle to help pull them out, the crisis being so extreme that it occupies all of their focus. What they don't know is that an Ogre upstream from them is tossing these poor non swimmers into the river. Although their efforts are laudable and most necessary, what they truly need is an “upstream intervention”. What we need for our Opioid Crisis are several interventions:



1. Moving addiction from a criminal to a health issue
2. Provision of a Safe Supply of substances to eliminate crime, fatalities and the spread of disease
3. Establishing appropriate Recovery Models on a large scale

Outlined here is an overview of some our common addiction approaches, in particular at the community of Port Alberni, BC :



### Port Alberni Shelter Society, Today

Sobering Site	OD Prevention Site	Shelter Housing Sites	Food Dist. Enterprise	Farm Market Gardening
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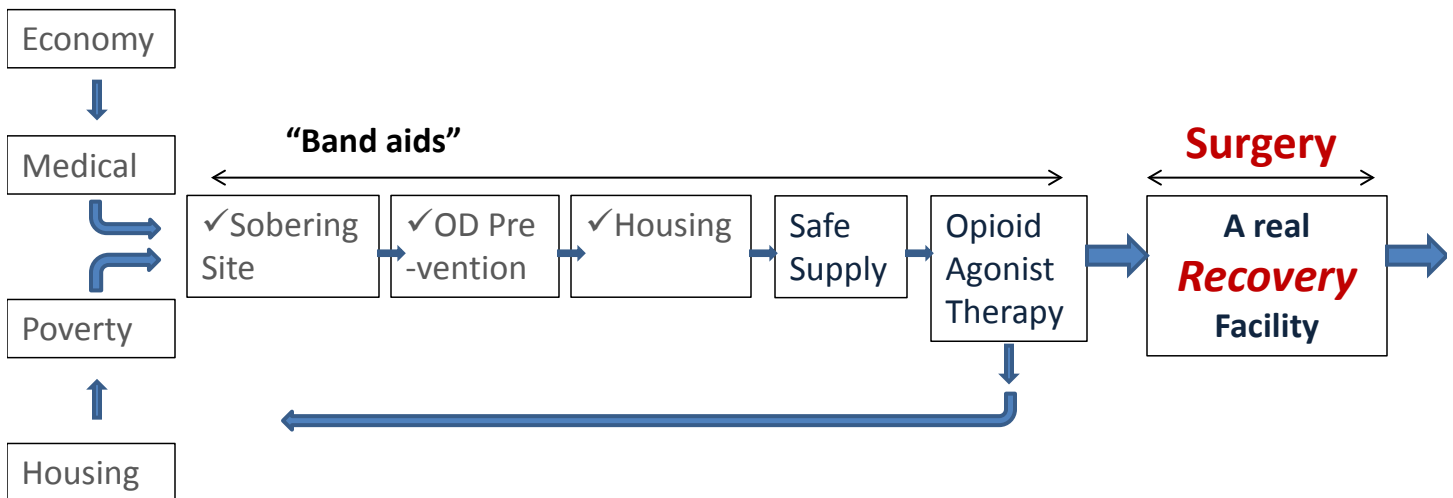




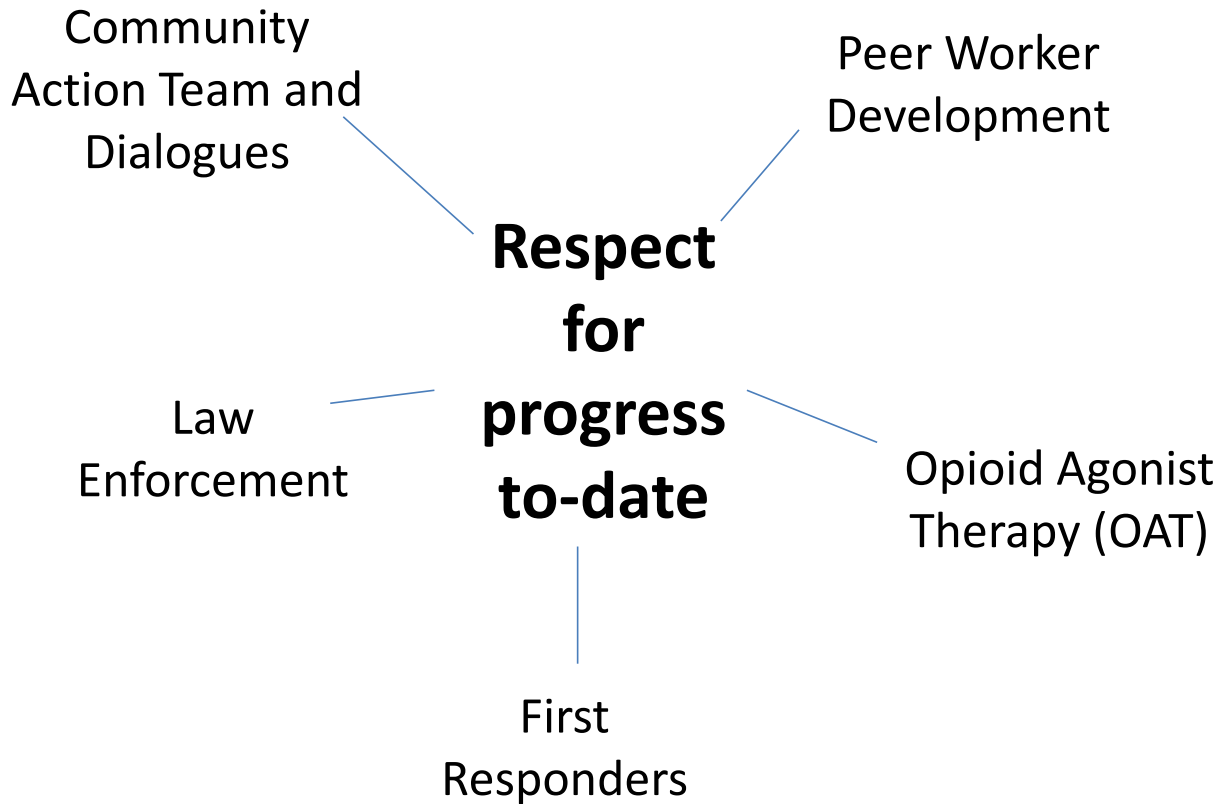
Through working on Harm Reduction, Sobering Sites, Overdose Prevention Sites, Agricultural Market Gardening Programs, Housing and Food Distribution, and through these establishing “contact methods” to link into other organizations and services, some progress had been made. I call this the Bandaid versus Surgery approach. Band aids help with superficial bleeding. Surgery is needed for internal causes. All of these programs are valuable, but they are only bandaids, and don’t provide the “surgery” that is needed.



## To stop costs escalating, we need a number of interventions



The most recent research at PASS has been focussed on the Recovery Sector, as this is where we can build and do the most good while other organizations seek legal changes in the criminal versus health aspect of the equation. In this visual you can see a number of other influences have been listed, including Opioid Agonist Therapies. We need to do the “Surgery” and improve the Recovery Model.



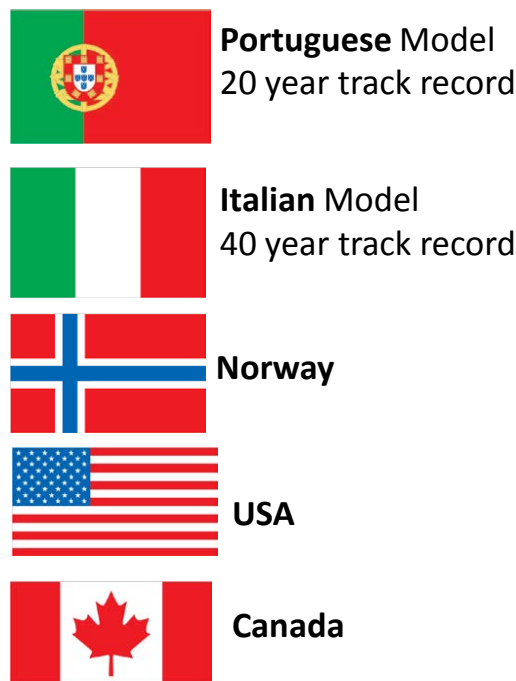
While there are tremendous people at work on addressing the issues and tragedies of substance use ( only a few of whom are illustrated above) the programs of recovery...which we often mistakenly refer to as treatment – are routinely, due to financial or capacity issues – too difficult to enter into and too short to give long term help. Clients of our current “treatment” programs in Canada – if they manage to get into them - often just get cleaned up enough to return to the street and their previous lifestyles.

Therapeutic Communities (T.C.’s) have been evolving around the globe over several decades. Wes Hewitt (PASS Executive Director) and myself have visited and consulted several different models:



## We researched and visited Therapeutic Recovery models

### Successful Opioid Recovery Models



- **Red Barn Academy**, Utah
- **TOSA**, Salt Lake City
- **TROSA**, N. Carolina
- **Habilitat**, Hawaii
- **John Volken Academy**, Surrey, B.C., Washington, Arizona
- **Our Place Therapeutic Community**, Langford
- **Kristiansand**, Norway
- **San Patrignano**, Italy.

*All of these operations have roots in the model practised at San Patrignano, and hence S.P. is the main focus of this paper. Many of our conclusions are drawn from the kind conversations and sharing of ideas by all of the above organizations; as well much of this written report has been derived from prior reports which they have kindly made available. What follows is a very in depth analysis of San Patrignano, most of the notes being courtesy Mr. Tim Stay (TOSA) from his visit in 2017.*



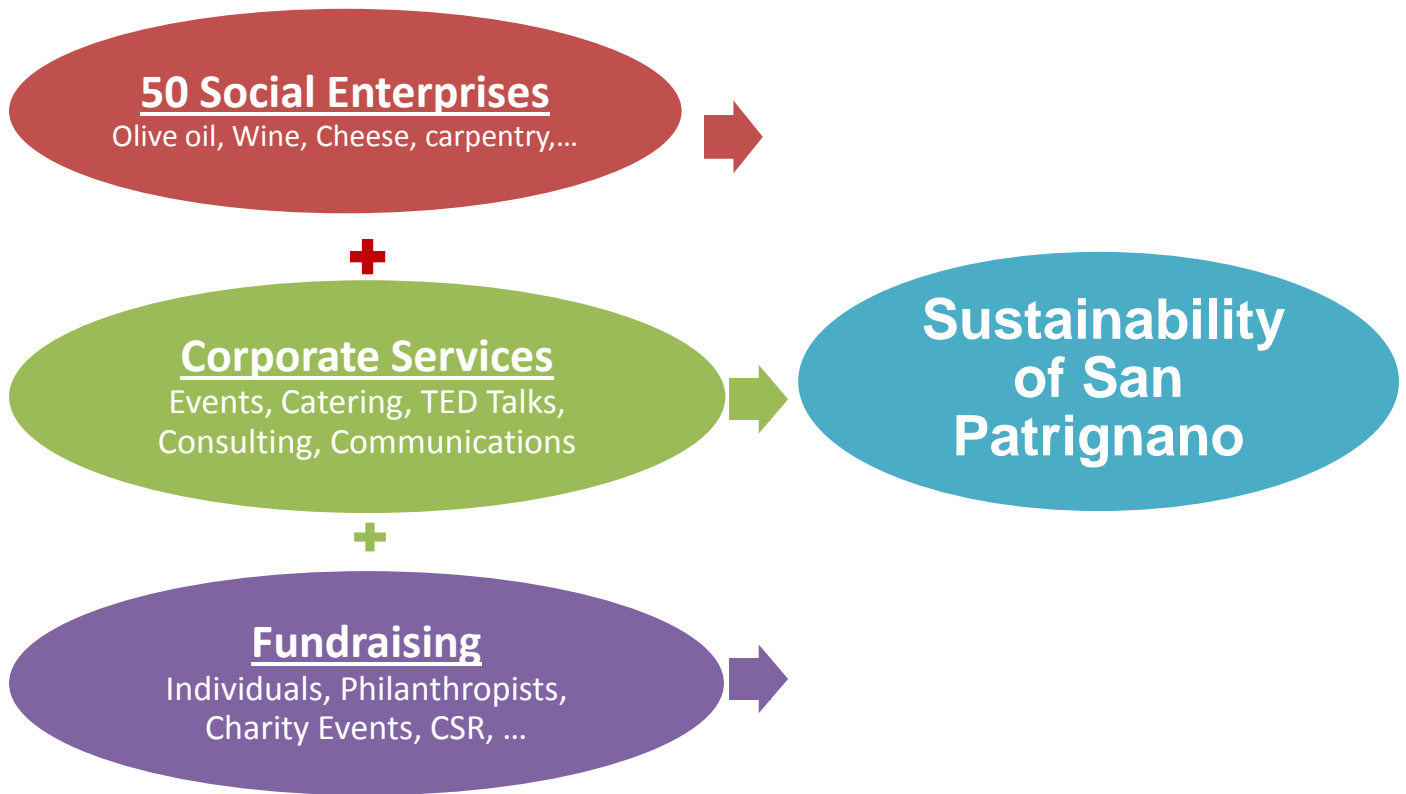
## San Patrignano

### The Mission, the Values, the Mechanics of Operation

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San Patrignano is one of the largest and best recognized Therapeutic Communities, operating since 1978 near the city of Rimini in Italy. Several other facilities have modelled their practices upon this very successful model. SP is a remarkable organization located on 650 acres in the beautiful green hills overlooking Rimini, a beach resort town in central Italy on the Adriatic Sea. They are a recovery community that started in 1979 and now have 1400 recovering addicts and homeless who stay and work at San Patrignano at no cost to themselves for 3 to 4 years. San Patrignano takes no money from the government, but runs a series of social enterprises (or training schools) that cover about 50-60% of the costs of the community; they also receive private donations from some wealthy donors and corporations to cover the balance.

# Strategies for sustainability



Some of their cheese products that they make are being sold in supermarkets across Italy and their printing press has large printing contracts with L'Oréal, Ferrari, and other large Italian and European firms. People with substance use issues come to San Patrignano at no cost to themselves to learn how to change their behaviours so they can live a productive, fulfilling, sober life filled with honesty, accountability and love.



The program is built upon the three main pillars of hard work, brutal feedback, and intensive community life that effectively changes the underlying behaviours that led to the challenges in their lives. One of the remarkable things about San Patrignano is that they take such a holistic approach to help every segment within the drug culture. If you are living on the streets, they welcome you. If you are an addicted teen boy or girl, they have a place for you. If you are a mom who is pregnant or who has kids and struggling with addiction, you can come bring your kids and both will become part of the community. If the addict has HIV, they have a medical centre to help out. All of this at no cost to the participant.



In a study by the University of Bologna, they found that 72% of the people they surveyed who completed their stay at San Patrignano remained drug free 5 years later. Drugfree.org states that only 10% of people who go through traditional rehabilitation programs remain drug free as a comparison.



A person who comes to stay at San Patrignano will be assigned to one of the 20+ business units (called Sectors) and work in that Sector for the first 2 years of their stay. When they arrive, they are assigned a mentor, who is another resident that has been at San Patrignano for over a year. This becomes their full time companion that they live with, room with, and work next to. The mentor helps the new participant cope to following a schedule, working hard all day long, and learning how to become part of the community. They will live in a room with 8-12 other participants, who have a mix of time within the community. These are the same people they will work with, eat with and play with in recreational activities. Once this participant reaches a year into their stay, they now become a mentor to someone new who has just arrived. At two years into their stay, they can request to move to a new sector if there is one that better aligns with their career interests for the future. The participant receives feedback on their behaviours from their mentor, from their dorm leader, from their roommates,



from their co-workers, from their work crew managers, and from their business sector managers.

Men and women are kept completely separate for the first 2 years of their stay so they can focus on themselves. After their first year, students can have their families come visit on a regular basis and after 2 ½ years, they can go home for a home visit, helping them get ready for re-entry into society.

San Patrignano has been around for almost 40 years and have had over 25,000 people complete their 3-4 year program.

## Interview Process

It is fairly consistent for most students to be interviewed over a number of months, from 2 to 8 months before they were accepted. Some people apply directly to SP but 90% come through as a referral from the Family Association. When someone begins with the Family Association, they will be oriented about what SP is and how it operates. They will be given a list of rules to follow, including no drug use, cutting off contact with old friends, staying off phones and social networks with those friends and living at home. SP will check to see if the candidate is doing those things the next time they interview them and this gives them an indication of how serious they are about coming and accepting the rules of the community. Eventually, they accept most people that stick through the interview process, as those who aren't really serious weed themselves out or the Family Association has screened them out as not qualified.



## Sectors

The power in SP of keeping a tight-knit community lies in the sector organization. Each business unit or service unit is called a sector. Each sector has between 30 students in the smallest sector up to about 100 students in the biggest one. The participants at SP are assigned to a sector and don't change for at least 2 years and some stay in the same sector their whole stay at SP. They are now allowing students to express a desire to move to another sector at the end of their 2nd year so they can be better trained in an area of their interest. The sector has a manager and for most sectors, that manager is a 20-30 year veteran of SP. Each sector deals with things a



little differently as far as timing of privileges and consequences. In one sector, you can go home at 2 years and 10 months on your first visit. In the Winery Sector, you can't go home until near the end of your 4th year. Each sector has a little different view of men/women relationships and when those can happen. Each sector seems to deal with feedback and consequences a little differently.

There are different communities within SP and each one has the same basic principles, but the sectors are given some latitude and ability to run the model the way the sector leader interprets the model, within certain limitations.

Another interesting aspect is that in several cases, while the sector is always run by a SP graduate, SP has augmented their industry expertise and technical knowledge by bringing in experts from the outside who is not a graduate from SP. The Printing Sector had by two outside guys working there who had 20 years in the printing business before coming to SP. They are not the Sector Manager, but they do guide and manage a lot of the day-to-day operations of the printing operations and keep all of the machines running. Now the two of them have been here 10 years and they know very well how to manage and handle any resident issue they have to deal with in the correct way.

## **Organizational Structure**

Each sector is run by a Sector Manager. There are crew bosses who during the day report to the Sector Manager. These sometimes seem to also correlate to the Room Manager, who oversees a room of 6-12 guys, all who work in the sector, but sometimes is someone who has more than 3 years. A sector manager might have 4-8 room managers reporting to him. The Room Manager is more than a dorm head – he is more like a group leader. Besides making sure that the room is clean and orderly, he is also watching out for behavioural problems, for people in a bad place mentally or emotionally, and works to resolve issues between roommates / co-workers. Then there are the mentors, who report to the Room Manager.

When you first come to SP, you are assigned a mentor who stays by your side from morning to night, never leaving your side. The mentor will help you learn the ropes, talk you down off the ledge, give you corrections if you are misbehaving and be there to support and encourage you. If there is a problem, the mentor will take



it to the room manager, and if he can't deal with it, he might take it to the council of other room managers, and if they can't deal with it, they will take it to the sector manager. If it involves someone from another sector, that sector manager will get involved as well. If it involves something that puts their stay at jeopardy, they get Admissions and the Sector Leader there involved.

While there isn't a formal structure for feedback there are lots of feedback moments during and after the workday. You can get feedback from your mentor. You can get feedback from your room manager. The room manager is just not a dorm head, they also play the role of a group leader, watching out for each member of their room. They will notice if you are keeping to yourself, if you are in a bad mood, if you are lost in your head, or if you are acting out or not taking things seriously. You can get feedback from your roommates in a nightly planning meeting (Such as, "No one wants to be around you when you act that way" or "You didn't do your job and that made more for us"). And you can get feedback from your immediate manager at work or the overall sector manager (behaviour and job performance).



There is a nightly feedback that happens at the end of the day, usually after dinner and before the movie starts. The room manager will get reports from the mentors or from other students in their room during the day about inappropriate behaviour. That room manager will pull the student aside after dinner to have a one-on-one discussion with that person about their behaviour.

The Room Managers will meet together every few weeks. They will discuss the new residents. They will discuss issues to try to keep consistency in how they deal with issues and approach responsibilities. The Room Manager will also meet regularly with the Sector Manager and let them know about issues and they decide if there needs to be any further action about it. Other people can have these one-on-one accountability discussions as well. The consistent and repeated verbal feedback

from mentors, peers, roommates, co-workers, and Section Managers helps the residents change many of their old toxic behaviours.

## Family Visits

Up to 5 family members can come visit for 2-3 days after 1 year. The people who come visit have to be screened and approved by one of the Family Associations, so they screen out the toxic spouse or partner.

Children of the resident can come after the first few months and if they are nearby, in some cases, they allow the children to come as often as every weekend to see their parent. If the people mentoring the student feel that seeing the child would be jeopardize the stay of the student, then it might be much longer than just the first few months. But if they feel the parent is in a good place, they



will let the child come every weekend if that is feasible. SP feels very strongly that the separation between parents and the child is damaging to the child and increases the sense of abandonment that will have life-long consequences for the child. They also believe that it is important for the parent to start learning how to be a parent in a safe, supervised environment and overcome those feelings of guilt so they do not become too permissive with the child when they leave.

The family will stay in a nearby hotel or if they are struggling financially, they may stay on site in one of the housing apartments.

## Home Visits

Home Visits are determined by each sector and each sector allows visits at different times in their stay. The earliest time was 2 years and 10 months and the longest time was 3 years and 6 months. SP calls the Home Visits “A Prova” or the trial or the test. The home visit will last anywhere from 7 to 10 days, depending on how much travel is involved.

The Mentor and Sector Manager spend a lot of time talking with the student about the home visit and what challenges they might face there and how they might deal with them.

*(Resident story) Mateo talked about his home visit. It happened 3.5 years into his stay. His mom had been able to come visit him after the first year and could do so 4 times per year after that. In his first trip home, he went by himself and was there for 3-4 days. He called back to SP every day to check in with his mentor. He said at the end of his visit, he didn't want to go back to SP, but his mentor helped him when Mateo called him via phone calls back to the mentor who was at SP. He said that once he got back to SP, he readjusted quickly and was glad he came back. He says that sometimes people do get in trouble on the home visits. He knows of one occasion where someone used drugs at home and told his mentor about it over the phone and the mentor told him to not to come back.*

## Graduation Rate

Virgilio Albertini, the head of admissions, referred to a new University of Bologna study looking at those who entered in 2014

- 93% of those who entered here, were here 1 year later
- 87% of those who entered here, were here 2 years later

Virgilio estimates that 70% complete the program.



## Scholar Track

Graduate resident Mateo lives on campus but not in the resident dorms. Mateo finished the program 2 years ago. He doesn't pay anything for rent or food, but he also doesn't get a salary for working full-time in Admissions, rather, he gets an allowance each month and free room and board and is considered a volunteer. He has his own scooter. He can leave campus alone after hours. He can date girls outside of Sanpa but he can't bring them back to the facility. He is now in college working on a psychology degree. He works 8 hours a day at SP and then takes online courses at night. He said it is better to do it online than to have to leave Sanpa. He pays a discounted tuition himself (about 1000 euros per year) for his online courses.



SP have 106 students in high school and 31 university students enrolled in 2017 (all online courses through Telmatic University). Monica (Communications, Facilitator for SP) says that some students can start near their end of their 4 years and then go home and finish in their home town, while others stay after graduation and complete their course while remaining part of the community.

## On Campus Housing for Staff

There is housing on campus for about 100 of the staff. Many of them live there with their spouses and a number of them have raised children on campus. One resident has lived on campus for 20 years, met her husband in the program and they have raised two kids, both teenagers now. Most of the staff who live in the housing get the housing free and get a monthly stipend and are considered volunteers, even though they are working full time.

## Botticella – Pre-Admissions Campus

Botticella is the pre-admissions facility of San Patrignano. If SP is unsure about accepting the student, they can send them to Botticella for around 3 weeks up to 1-2 months. Botticella is about 40 minutes by car higher up in the mountains from SP on about 50 acres. The head of Botticella is Marco. Marco completed his stay at SP and now lives and works full-time at Botticella. Here they introduce new residents to community life and what life will be like at SP. Some statistics:



203 people were admitted to Botticella in **2015**

51 left the program (25%)

144 entered SP from Botticella

131 of those people were still at SP end of 2015 (64%)

258 people were admitted to Botticella in **2016**

91 left the program (35%)

195 people entered SP from Botticella

169 of those people were still at SP end of 2016 (65%)

Here are details of the program at Botticella

- Introduction
- Duration – normally 1 month
- If you want to stay, you have to prove that you are going to follow the rules of the community
  - If you don't want to follow the rules, then the community isn't for you

- Assign new student to a mentor from SP. One Mentor will generally work with 2 students, sometimes 1 to 3, sometimes 1 to 1
- Activities they will work on to increase life skills and prepare for community life
  - Learn to take care of house (always in pairs)
  - Gardening and green maintenance
  - Basic Cooking
    - Learn from mentor
    - Learn from Chef over sector

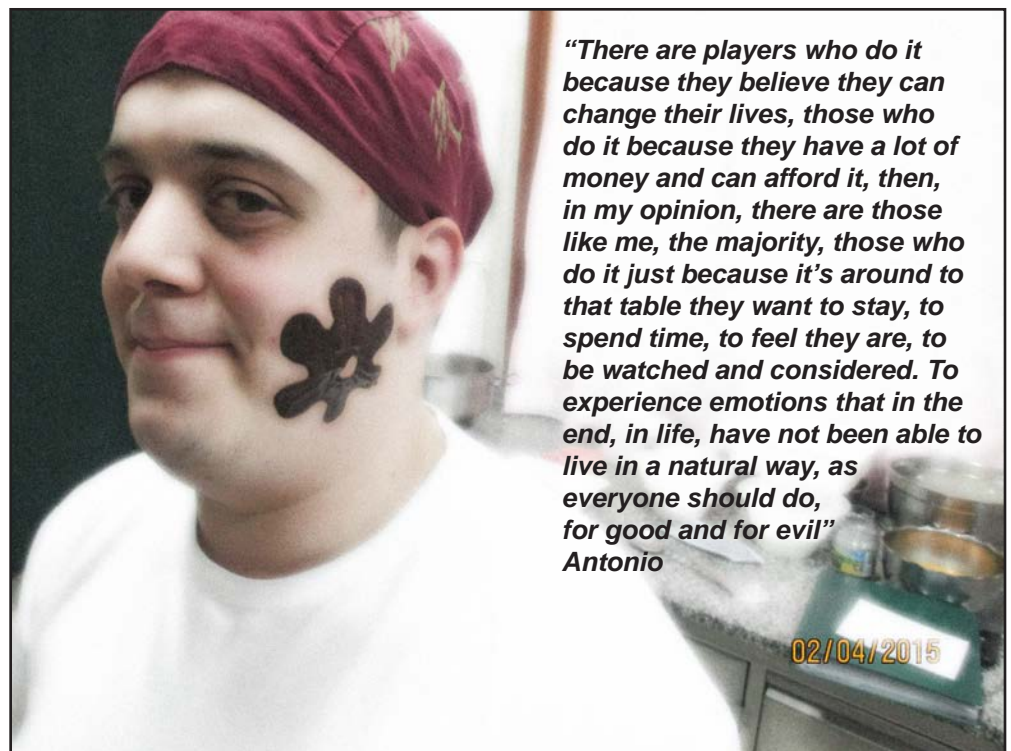


- Preparing lunch and dinner, setting table
- Eat together to create a sense of belonging
- **Focus on quality and precision**
  - **They used a meter stick to set the table settings precisely**
- Assist the SP Cheese Factory in the cheese making process
  - They would turn over cheeses daily in the Cheese cave
- Seasoning in the cellar salami and hams made in the cured meat factory of SP
- Sharing moments together, exchanging opinions
  - Downtime, reading paper with mentor and students and talking about it
- Sharing a room
- Facing difficult moments together
  - You are not alone
  - I am here to support you
- Getting medical support
- Normally have 6 to a room – 3 bunk beds



- Mentor and students together
  - Have bathroom in room
    - If someone takes too long in bathroom, mentor talks to him
  - Library
    - Can check out book out 1 per month
    - If you read too much.....can't read
    - If you do anything too much (sports, music, reading, exercise).... not allowed to do it
  - Goal is to:
    - Introduce to community
    - Help them face that moment of crisis that normally lead to relapse
      - A moment of crisis might be if a guy wants to leave
- \*Ok, you want to go home, let's call your family and you tell them. Family tells you can't come home. The guy understands that there isn't a safe place as an alternative. Family Association preps the family on how to respond on the phone call.

SP has also launched a Gambling Program for Gambling addiction. They started it out as a 3-4 month program, but that wasn't working, so now it was a 16 months or more residential program. There were about 10 people living at Botticella in the Gambling Program.





## SP Thoughts on the Current Medical Approach (Methadone, etc.) to Addiction

*(Antonio's story): Antonio is the head of the Medical Clinic for SP as well as on the Managing Committee for SP. He was resident #8 at SP and went on to get his medical degree. Antonio got his medical degree while a resident at SP.*

*Antonio started treatment as a resident at SP in 1980 when there were only 7 guys. Three months later there was 350 residents. They started building houses without permits and got in trouble with local authorities. They had tents all around the facility of people waiting to get in. There was lots of opposition at the beginning, not only from the local community, but from the political and science community. It was heresy to the rehabilitation industry that a former addict could be most helpful to another addict.*

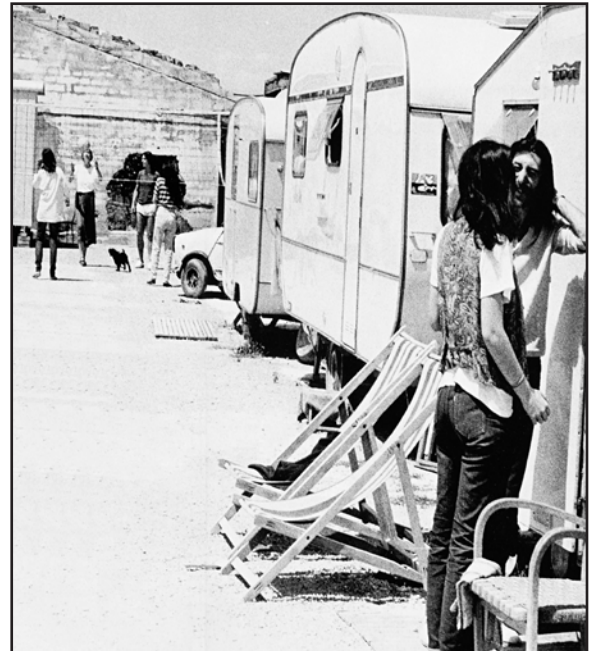
*Current state of medical approach to drug rehabilitation is to treat the "disease" with other addictive medicines. **This is not sufficient.***

*SP was founded in 1979.*

- Addicts were never considered patients*
- Addicts were considered normal people*
- Similar to a hippie commune without the drug*
- Opioid replacement treatment was never used*

*There was concern from officials that it was free of charge. They were concerned that SP would be exploiting people. The founders of SP felt that these people are in trouble and we are just opening our home and we wouldn't charge people to come into our home. They also felt very strongly that not taking money from family or from government then it puts the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the participants and have them take ownership of fixing themselves.*

*This program developed over trial and experience. In the beginning, students were loaned cars to go into town. When they came back drunk and with drugs, they stopped that. At first, they allowed smoking, but they eliminated smok-*



ing 10 years ago (They lost over 800 residents at this decision, over half of their population). At first, they allowed open sexual relations between men and women, but then they realized how broken those relationships were and so they put an end to it.



Antonio believes that addiction tendencies come from emotional instabilities that they suffered in childhood that includes sexual abuse, physical abuse, psychological abuse, neglect all which leads to low self-esteem. The family environment can also have an impact that includes alcohol and drug use by parents, long absences of one of the parents, and other neglect. In the beginning, we thought that we could help everyone with trauma with love and time, but we do not believe that now. That was a mistake. We lost a number of people because they never learned to deal with their trauma. We now believe that people with trauma need professional therapy to deal with the trauma for them to really move on.

### **In a broad stroke, the SP view on Rehabilitation is as follows:**

For addicted people to live without drugs, they need:

- A safe environment
- Time
- A broad spectrum of opportunities and activities to educate themselves in feeling rewarded by natural and social activities
- **Honest feedback from a Peer/Mentor who is succeeding at living without drugs**

The founders built the program based upon providing rewards conjointly with requiring responsibilities.

The basic work is to learn the way to connect reward with:

- Interest
- Responsibility
- Strong commitment
- Perseverance
- Also fatigue and pain

In the scientific dictionary, this translates in a new brain neuro-adaption that leads to a renewed capability.

Rewards through work – All of the activities of the program are fundamental educational instruments because they can give gratification but at the same time demand engagement in progressive responsibilities.

“One of the biggest rewards is when we help someone else. To be a tutor for the new entry addict is really important.”



**Forty Spots of hope in Italy**

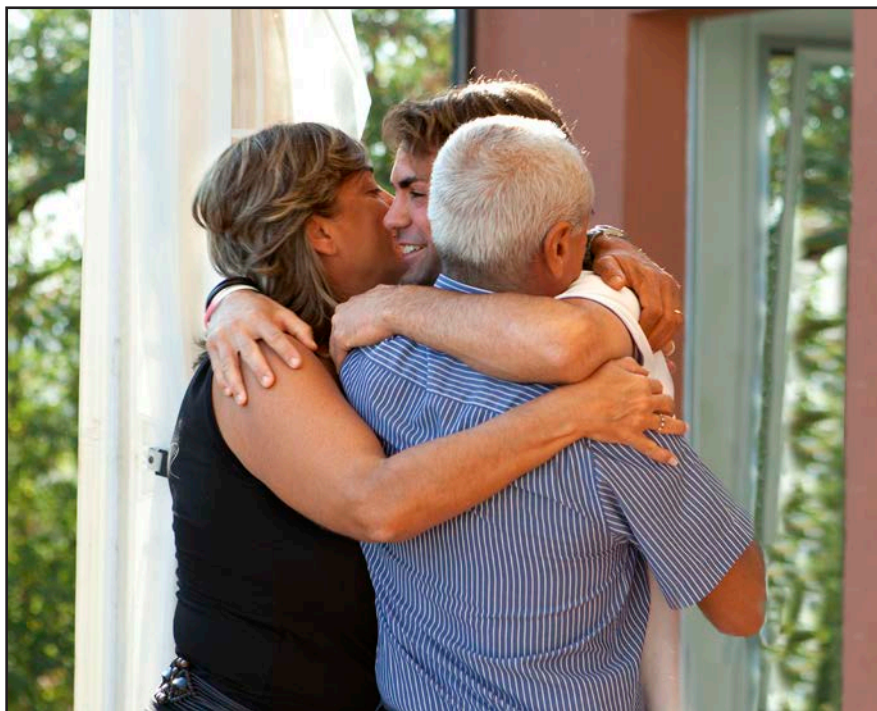
- An Italian and international network
- All using learning from San Patrignano Forty Spots of hope in Italy

**ABROAD:**  
Split - CROATIA (HR)  
London - UNITED KINGDOM (UK)  
Paris - FRANCE (FR)



## Family Associations

SP has 40 Family Associations across Italy and in 3 countries. Family Associations can come to SP can be trained with the admission office for up to 10 days on how to fulfill their responsibilities. Ninety percent of all admissions are referred through the Family Associations. SP requires the families of the students to attend a Family Association every week while their child is at SP, though not all do (The Family Association looks at that and reports it back to SP regarding readiness for family visits). The Family Association will communicate regularly with admissions and talk about each family and to get guidance.



Family Association purposes are:

TO screen and interview prospective candidates

They will screen possible candidates and recommend applicants to SP Admissions

The Screening process can happen over several months.

The Family Association will ask the candidate to “prove” their willingness to join SP by going drug free, cutting off contacts with past associates

They ask the family of candidate to come and participate

They help provide support to the families when student at SP

Weekly meeting – up to 3 hours per week

Self-help group managed by Family Association manager

Talk about parenting mistakes

Talk about what is happening at SP with their kid

Talk about how to work with their kid when he graduates

Prepare the parents for the home visit

Help facilitate graduates re-enter their local community

Find jobs

Find housing

Several major Italian cities have SP transitional housing. The Family Association will check in on the transitional housing and make sure things are proper there.

Do Prevention Initiatives with local schools

Each Family Association has a manager. In the big cities, the manager is a paid staff member who also does work for the sectors (selling products, arranging distribution of resources) and runs the Family Association in that city each week. In other cities, the manager is a volunteer. Graduates of the program will come by and talk to the parents and even some families of the graduates stay involved and guide and counsel new parents.

### **Moms with kids**

Seventy percent of female residents who have children come to SP with their kids. Over the years 250 children have been born while the mom is at SP. They live in special housing where there will be older residents with their kids in the same housing with the new mom. This allows the older mom to observe the new mom and how she is with her kids and model correct behaviours and guide and counsel the mom on how to parent her child.



If the child is still an infant, it will stay in day-care. If the child is older, it will be in onsite pre-school or kindergarten. If the child is older than that, they will bus them to one of several local public elementary schools so the child is integrated into normal life and kids from society. The mom will still have her sector responsibilities. The mom gets off earlier around 4:30pm and will spend the eve-

ning with her child and the other moms in the house, who form their own little community. If the child has a birthday party at a kid's house outside the community, the kid is allowed to go and the mom can go as well, with a companion. Same with school meetings, events, or any issues that a mom would be involved in.

SP has an apartment in Verona where the mom and kids can live and pay a small rent as they re-enter back into the community. SP also has parenting classes for both moms and dads.

## **Youth Programs**

SP has both a teen boy and a teen girl program. This is funded in part by the state, which pays 100 Euros per day for each teen sent here. These are youth sent here by the courts from 14 to 18. These youth do not have the ability to choose to stay or leave. The most common sentence will require that the youth stay in the program until they are 18. Then they can decide if they want to leave or if they want to stay in SP in the normal program. Hannah said that about 50% stay.

Each gender has a separate house that includes dorms (3-4 per room), a common area, workout gym, music place, play station, computer lab, homework area, etc.

Each house has a sector leader who oversees the house. They work closely with the social services on each youth. The staff of the house are all older students in SP who split their time between the sector and the teen house.

The youth will work in a sector with the over 18 students at SP Monday through Wednesday in the morning. In the afternoon and evening, they will be doing school, homework, and recreation. Students at SP will sleep on site, watching over the students.

If someone has problems, eating disorders, etc., they are sent to the Medical Centre to work with a medical professional. They also provide counselling services for other students as well.

If the teen runs, they will run after them. They said that they catch them 95%



of the time and if they don't, they will tell the local authorities who generally catch them and bring them back with 6 months added on their sentencing at SP.

So these youth are working 3 half-days per week with older peers who come from this environment. They are being staffed by older peers who are former addicts as well. Then they have access to medical professionals for some of the more severe problems.

It seems to be a strong alternative to the traditional youth programs. It is a program mostly run by SP students in the middle of the SP campus with access to medical personnel that has work components, socialization, and peer accountability.

### Social Enterprises

## | SanPatrignano: 50 Social Enterprises





Some of the enterprises include a Pizza Restaurant called Spaccio and a Crafts store that are just outside the gates of SP and a high end restaurant called Vite that is overlooking the vineyards of SP. These are run by both graduates of SP as well as students in their Hospitality training course (where they can get a certificate).

They also have a store kiosk within a large supermarket in Milan, where they get space rent free and they sell all their agricultural products there. This is run by graduates of SP.

The vineyards generate the most revenue. The cheese factory has had such success that they are building a new cheese factory and they hope this will greatly close the gap on becoming more sustainable. They are making hard cheeses, but it is their soft cheeses that are being sold in major supermarkets around Italy.

SP invited some of Italy's top designers to design purses and now they are hand-making purses. They are making about 10 purses per day and sell them on average of about 100 euros each.

One thing that has been successful is gift packages of their products that they sell to businesses as Christmas gifts. Last year they generated 700,000 Euros from

## SanPatrignano: 50 Social Enterprises



the sales of these gift baskets. They will also do this during Easter.

They rent out their big dining hall and their auditorium for company events, Ted Talks, conferences, and catering. This is a fairly new venture, but they say it is going very well. When they do an event, the kitchen has to make the food not only for the event, but still feed the residents. They say at these times, they make sack lunches for the residents.



### Success rate

Data from the University of Bologna study in 2017 indicated the following:

- Women graduates have 86% success rate staying clean 5 years later
- Men graduates have 60+% success rate

The study showed that there was an average of 72% success rate of those who have completed the program who remained drug free 5 years after completion. Drugfree.org states that only 10% of rehab patients in the U.S. remain drug free in comparison.

### Team Sports

SP doesn't have any weight training equipment. They discourage solitary exercise and promote team or group recreational activities. SP believes that team sports brings about team spirit, fair play, sacrifice, dedication, loyalty, victory and defeat, and healthy competition. They have soccer, volleyball, and basketball teams and tournaments. They





also have a running team and a surprising number of the sector leaders had run the NY Marathon.

At Botticella, they had a large room filled with Spinning Cycles. They would get the entire group together for a spinning class, and crank up the music to some Euro-Techno music and even had rave-like lights and a DJ stand in front that the Spinning leader could manage while he led the class in spinning. It appeared to be a high intensity work-out all as a group.



SP also actively uses its swimming pool. When it is open in the summer, each sector gets one hour 2-3 days a week to go be at the pool sometime during the day. There is no mixed gender pool time and the pool is blocked off from any outside view.

### **“We Free” School Program**

SP has an extensive school outreach program on Drug Prevention where they regularly have school groups come visit SP as well as having programs out in the community to promote a drug-free lifestyle. They work closely with corporations who sponsor the program and make donations with SP. 10,000 students come and visit SP each year. Another 40,000 students get exposed to their traveling programs.

They use theatre, dance, and shared experiences from







we spend money and pay for the consultation of experts we can “cure” addictions. Families and loved ones spend their family fortunes...if they have them.. desperately trying to help. Employers and Unions ignorantly toss huge sums into the Rehab money pit on short term ineffective programs for employees. Those same employees often either get fired afterwards for continuing on with their addictions, or tragically the employees overdose and pass away....or both! We fail to realize that we are pursuing the wrong approach.

This Therapeutic Recovery model does not rely on “treatment”, rather it relies on meeting the challenges of working, living and achieving together. It relies on work, on schedules, on expectations, on setting and achieving goals, on considering and then making difficult decisions. It relies on the individual, on family, on friendships. It relies on “Community as Method”.

As I said earlier, there is no “one size fits all” program, but here we have a model and variations on that model, which fit and have success with a large number of people. Alternative TC models were found that have slightly different methods and approaches. The TC’s in Utah were comprised of a significantly higher percentage of residents from corrections (SP was about 10 %); the North Carolina facilities had a much broader social spectrum of clients; the TC’s had different social enterprises, some agriculturally based (the Red Barn), some more focused on operating large scale moving companies (TOSA, TROSA), retail outlets (John Volken), fence construction (Habilitat), raising egg laying chickens and baking retail goods (Kristansand, Norway). Some offer their programs at no charge, some prefer that clients put down a deposit to “have skin in the game”. They are all self sustainable models, requiring only start up funding, and in the end will create a tremendous savings by helping replace the very costly and ineffective programs we currently endorse in our country.

We will gain successes and save taxpayer dollars. It is a no brainer so let’s get to work! The good news is that we don’t need to reinvent the wheel. In the Port Alberni Region, we plan to use the Port Alberni Shelter Society and its current infrastructure as a lever to promote and create a Therapeutic Community, building a model with an agricultural base and appropriate social enterprises. We will start out small and grow to an appropriate size. This model can then be successfully replicated, as we are replicating others.



Some thoughts for going forward

## Summary

Looking from an overall perspective at the spectrum of addiction and related social issues, I feel it can be broken down into “choices”. Choices that we as a society can make. Some people say that people with addictions have made choices to get where they are. While this may have some truth in rare circumstances, the reality is that no one actively decides that they **want** to be addicted; that they **want** to be poor; that they **want** to have an injury for which they are overprescribed opiates; that they **want** to get ill; that they **want** to lose their family and loved ones; that they **want** to steal; that they **want** to go to jail; or that they **want** to die at an early age. Quite often they have made a decision to travel down a road that they didn’t know or believe the destination of, and they are just screaming down that Ogre’s river I mentioned earlier grabbing whatever they can.



What we can do is help them make a decision to move to a healthier lifestyle for all of us. That is a decision which we, as a society, have the capability of doing. We can make that move, which involves two simple decisions:

- Decide to treat addiction as a Health issue — not as a Criminal issue
- Decide to build appropriate, long term, economically sustainable Therapeutic Recovery programs

As one of the “Grandfathers of TC’s” George De Leon commented when I thanked him for his presentation in Utah — “I am just happy that people still listen to me”. On that same note, thank you!

A statement I heard while in Portugal resonates here:

“We had an opportunity to put People before Politics. We put People first. We got the criminal justice system out of the way so that the public health system could step in. We invested in our culture. We invested in our Citizens”.

John D.

November 25th, 2019





## Further Reading:

“The Therapeutic Community” by George De Leon

“Stop the Harm” by Dr. Bonnie Henry, Office of the Provincial Health Officer April, 2019  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/reports-publications/special-reports/stopping-the-harm-report.pdf>

Free Heroin, unusual clinic offers chance to be human  
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/health/national-heroin-treatment-program-crosstown-clinic-1.5137551>

Fighting for Space... Travis Lupick  
<https://www.fightingforspace.com/>

An Overdue Debate on Decriminalization... Travis Lubick, Globe and mail June 8, 2019  
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-decriminalization-is-the-overdue-debate-canada-needs-to-have-around/>

W3 Peer Research, Understanding what works and why in Peer - Based and Peer-led Programs:  
Graham Brown, La Trobe University, Australia  
<http://www.w3project.org.au/>

A Quiet Revolution: Drug Decriminalization across the Globe (Eastwood, Fox, Rosman)  
<https://www.release.org.uk/publications/drug-decriminalisation-2016>

The Paradox of Prohibition... Marks, J.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-paradox-of-prohibition-Adapted-from-Marks-J-1993-The-paradox-of-prohibition\\_fig3\\_323101985](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-paradox-of-prohibition-Adapted-from-Marks-J-1993-The-paradox-of-prohibition_fig3_323101985)

For follow up, please feel free to contact me: John Douglas  
jmdouglas56@shaw.ca  
250-735-7177