Insert Title: Challenging Stigma: Best Practices for AOD Services in Media Engagement and Lived and Living Experience Storytelling

Authors:
James Dunne[1][2], Isabelle Volpe[3],

[1] Australian Alcohol and other Drugs Council, [2]Centre for Criminology, The University of Hong Kong, [3] Drug Policy Modelling Program, Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Sydney

Presenter's email: james.dunne@aadc.org.au

Background:

Journalists often seek access to clients, staff and others involved with alcohol and other drug (AOD) services who can share their personal stories of lived and living experience of AOD use, including as friends and family of people who use drugs. Sharing these personal stories has potential to challenge stereotypes, deepen public understanding of AOD use, and empower individuals by platforming their voices in issues that affect them. At the same time, media reporting frequently produces negative, stigmatising portrayals of AOD issues and lives of people who use AOD. For people who choose to share their personal stories, these media engagements can result in unexpected negative and disempowering outcomes such as impacts on personal relationships, employment opportunities, health and wellbeing, as well as increased risk of engagement with law enforcement and criminal justice systems.

Description of Model of Care/Intervention:

The Australian Alcohol and other Drug Council (AADC) and its members established a working group to develop best practices for AOD services when engaging with media organisations. The outcome is a best practice framework which identifies points before, during and after media engagements where a range of actions can be taken to enhance the safety and wellbeing of those sharing their personal stories.

Effectiveness/Acceptability/Implementation:

We considered current approaches and real-world cases and ethical dilemmas experienced by AADC members. In doing so, the Framework fills a knowledge gap as a resource uniquely tailored to address AOD-related stigma and discrimination in the Australian media and AOD sector context.

Conclusion and Next Steps:

By drawing from the extensive experience of AADC members, and situating this expertise in concert with a broader suite of resources, the framework highlights the way AOD services can create a safer environment for personal stories of AOD use to be shared, and contribute to broader efforts to addressing AOD-related stigma and discrimination.

Implications for Practice or Policy (*optional*)**:** This framework acknowledges and supports the role AOD services have as a key access point to people with lived and living experience of AOD use and supports services to maintain their duty of care.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

JD and IV have no interests to declare.