



# “CRACK”-ING THE MYTH

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A UNIVERSITY OF UTAH HONORS COLLEGE PRAXIS LAB  
ON ADDICTION AND ITS STIGMAS







# WHO WE ARE

This past academic year, our class focused our studies on the stigmas surrounding addiction. Beginning with understanding the neuroscience of drugs and alcohol, to the history of addictions, and actually putting ourselves in someone's place who needs to find treatment we learned the stereotypes and issues our society has placed upon individuals who struggle with substance use disorder. Those stereotypes create further barriers to recovery, barriers that reinforce the already arduous journey. We participated in dialogues and panels that included honest speakers who experience, or have experienced, addiction themselves. We learned about the impact of substance dependence and abuse on their lives and the lives of their loved ones. After immersing our educational experience in understanding the societal barriers to recovery, we brainstormed solutions to positively change the existing language and mindset surrounding those facing addictions. We based our final project around educating our campus community, and the surrounding area of Salt Lake City, about the harmful stigmas that negatively impact people experiencing addiction.



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# EMERGING ISSUES

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According to state statistics, “in 2016, there were 466 opioid-related overdose deaths in Utah” ([drugabuse.gov](http://drugabuse.gov)). When compared nationally, “Utah has ranked top 10 in the nation for overdose deaths over the last 10 years” ([health.utah.gov](http://health.utah.gov)). Hence, the name “opioid epidemic” is appropriate when used to describe the current state of drug use in Utah.

Along with these statistics, one major problem that exists in our society is that nobody talks about drug use. Because this problem is being swept under the rug, people are left misinformed and more vulnerable to abusing substances. However, when people *do* talk about addiction, they often perpetuate stereotypes. For example, many people think of “addicts” as lazy, quick to lie, weak, etc. Many people also believe that addiction only affects those of a particular race, age, gender, etc. In reality, these statements are far from the truth. Drug addiction is a disorder, and everyone is equally at risk of becoming addicted to drugs.

Additionally, these stereotypes can cause those personally struggling with addiction to feel discouraged and continue using drugs in order to deal with this discouragement. They believe their addiction is a result of being weak in character and often think of themselves as terrible people. These stereotypes can also hurt the family members of those struggling with addiction because they feel guilty, confused, and unsure of how to proceed. These family members often neglect taking care of their own mental and physical health, which also causes further stress.

Ultimately, amid these immense problems, the students in our praxis lab have been working hard to find and offer help. One of our main goals is to educate the public about drugs. We’d like to help people feel comfortable talking about drugs in various settings, instead of feeling like the subject is taboo and should therefore be avoided at all costs. We want to reduce the stigma of drug addiction and show people that if they have a question about this topic, they should search for an answer. More specifically, we want people to look up answers online and find reliable sources. Then they can ask questions of those who can give accurate answers.

One way we, as a class, have personally worked on reducing the stigma of addiction is to use first person language. In other words, this means referring to a person before their situation. For example, instead of referring to someone as an addict, we refer to them as a person struggling with addiction. This way, the negative connotations of “addict” are stripped away and instead the individual becomes the main focus.

We also want to prevent the use of stereotypes by educating as many as possible. If we can prevent even one person from shaming those struggling with addiction and instead cause that person to have compassion and empathy, we will have succeeded. Through all of these goals, we hope to create a better society where people who are struggling with addiction can get help and talk about it without feeling humiliated and ashamed.

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# TIMELINE- FIRST SEMESTER



- Introduction
- Discussion of existing understanding of addiction



- Panel discussion with USARA (individuals in recovery)



- Neuroscience basics
- Fundamentals of reward
- Addiction and the brain



- Influence of Individual drugs on brain and behavior (Drug of Abuse Cheat Sheet)



- Discussion/presentation on prevention or harm-reduction strategy and its implementation in Utah



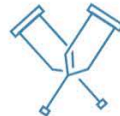
- Examining the broad impact on addiction (family and community)
- 'Dying in Vein'
- Family panel



- Historical concepts of addiction
- Discussion/presentation of drug trends and use



- FALL BREAK



- Discussion of barriers to obtaining adequate treatment
- Project Reconnaissance



- Visit to First Step House



- Introduction of possible second semester proposals



- Drug Court Panel



- Policy Discussion surrounding substance use



- Panel discussion: treatment strategies and controversies



- Finalization of proposal



# TIMELINE- SECOND SEMESTER

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- Narrowing down the project – stigma reduction



- Visited Horizonte – 1st time



- Development of curriculum



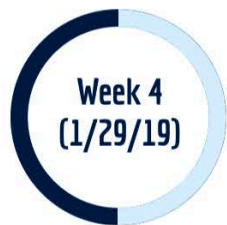
- SPRING BREAK



- Contacted high schools
- Scheduled interviews with USARA for videos



- Visited Horizonte – 2nd time
- Presentation Preparation



- Development of poster



- Collection of drive box and donation to VOA



- Conducted first interview with USARA



- LEAP workshop
- Panel on addiction and its stigmas
- End of drive



- Continuing work on curriculum, poster, video



- Praxis lab wrap-up
- Editing of report
- Symposium practice



- Meeting and picture with Recover@theU



- Praxis Labs symposium
- Visit APA



- Finalization of curriculum and poster
- Start of the drive

# PROJECTS

## VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA DRIVE

One project we undertook for our praxis lab project was a supplies drive. We planned to use the donations from this drive to facilitate high school students putting together care kits for those people in the VoA. The Utah VoA includes a men's adult detoxifying center that "provides an 83 bed, social model residential detoxification center for men 18 and older in need of detoxification and withdrawal management services" (Voaut.org). Once we emailed the VoA and asked for their permission to give them these kits, we got to work collecting the supplies.

We wanted to collect various articles of used clothing and personal hygiene items such as soap, razors, Chapstick and cotton swabs. We decided to put the boxes mainly on campus and then see if we could reach out to off-campus sites to place donation boxes as well. On campus, we decided to place two donation boxes inside the Union, one in the nursing college, one in the library, and one in the Heritage Center. We contacted those who could authorize putting donation boxes in those buildings and eventually received approval to, in fact, put them there. We made sure to decorate the boxes in bright colors so they would catch the eye of those walking past. We also placed posters above them that advertised the supplies drive.

Initially, our praxis lab class was slightly disappointed by the results. After the first week of the drive, not only had there been no donations, but someone had taken a couple bars of soap that we had donated out of a box in the Union. However, we left the boxes out longer and continued to advertise the drive through social media, posters, and word of mouth. Eventually, after approximately one month, we saw amazing results. Almost every box had been half filled with used clothing, extra bars of soap, and other items. We received both female and male clothing, so we plan on asking the VoA about the best way to donate the female clothing because the VoA detox center strictly serves adult men. We also received a couple monetary donations from various people who wanted to donate to the cause. One by one we collected these boxes as they filled up and began the process of sorting the contents.





# Drive Out Addiction

## Supplies Drive

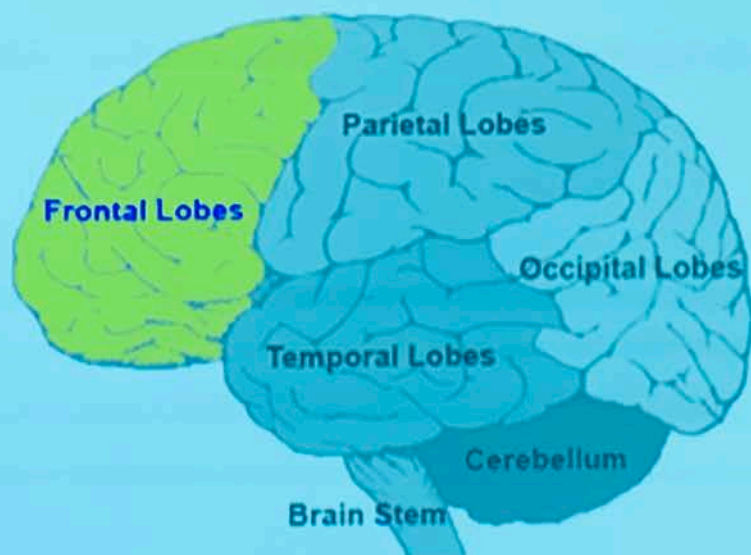


Support people in recovery

March 18th - April 5th

Sponsored by the Honors College Addiction Awareness Praxis Lab

# The Science Behind It



- These two parts of the brain are "at war" during drug addiction
  - Judgement vs. rewards

## HIGH SCHOOL DISCUSSION AND SERVICE

Something that stood out in the first semester of this course is that addiction doesn't discriminate. In meeting and discussing stigma with panelists in long-term recovery and involved in the treatment process, it became apparent that addiction involves people from all walks of life. Meeting any of the panelists, you wouldn't know they struggle with addiction or have had dark experiences in their past involving drug misuse. Moving into the project implementation phase of the course, one goal was to pass this message on to others; we wanted to humanize the issue of addiction and reduce the stigma surrounding this disease.

As far as an education campaign, we wanted to target a population that would benefit from learning about reducing the stigma surrounding addiction. With programs like D.A.R.E. being implemented in junior high schools and high schools, many students are left with little knowledge about the complexities of addiction. This makes it difficult to reduce the stigmatization of addiction; without knowing how substance use disorder affects the brain and how society affects people struggling with it. It is simply easier to believe the stereotypes. Our goal was to start the process of changing how people, specifically high school students, view addiction and people struggling with the disease.





The beginning of the project implementation semester consisted of working out logistics for high school presentations and developing curriculum. Our presentation largely consisted of discussion prompts. For example, we asked “What are some examples of stigma about addiction that you have heard?” In our first class of this course, we discussed our own biases, thinking about how stigma affected our perspectives. Being candid about stigmas that we had helped us approach the class with an open mind, rather than allowing our biases to subtly influence our perception of the information. With this question, and the discussion-based structure, we hoped to engage the students in addressing their own biases and think about the effects that bias and stigma have on peoples’ lives. The presentation also included a video of stories to humanize the issue of addiction. We believed that allowing these people to tell their stories, rather than us sharing them, would be more compelling and impactful for the students. Following the video, the students assembled kits that we then donated to the graduates of the Volunteers of America Detox Center. We decided to build kits because we wanted a hands-on service activity so that the students would leave with more than a lecture-style presentation to remember.

Our first two presentations were at Horizonte Instruction and Training Center. We split up and presented to five classes, engaging the students in small discussions. It was difficult to encourage all students to participate, but overall, the discussions seemed productive. In late April, we plan to present at American Preparatory Academy.





## ***RECOVERY KITS***

We also used part of our \$5,000 budget to buy any more supplies that would be included in the kits. In total, we bought supplies so that every kit would have cotton swabs, moist towelettes, chapstick, a razor, a pair of socks, and other supplies. Each kit would also include a note of encouragement which would be written by a high school student. We decided that the clothing would be donated separately instead of being included in the kits.

In order to prepare for the high school students to make the kits, the students in our honors lab met the day before and organized the various supplies into plastic tubs. We wanted to roughly count out the amount of supplies that will be needed for each class and have one plastic tub per class.

On the day our class was going to Horizonte for the first time, we divided up among the available classes and each group took a tub. Once we were finished with our presentations in the various classes, we laid out all of the kit supplies onto a desk and invited the kids to come up one by one and put one of each of the supplies into a large plastic bag. We also encouraged the kids to take a blank flashcard to write a note of encouragement to include. As expected, some of the high school kids quickly came up and enthusiastically put together multiple kits, while some were very reluctant to come up and build one. However, we were able to finish putting together the kits and we put them back into the tubs.





One reason we wanted the students to put together the kits, instead of just doing it ourselves, is because we wanted to allow the students to feel like they were individually helping those struggling with addiction. Also, we wanted them to do something that would engage them in the reality of the drug use situation in our state. Some high school kids even expressed that they had parents or close family members who had struggled with addiction in the past and they mentioned the significance of little acts of kindness like these care packages.

After the presentations, we went back through the boxes and read all of the notes, making sure that they were all appropriate to be given to the VoA. We were shocked with how many of the written notes were extremely heartfelt and empathetic towards those who would be receiving the care packages. We then took the plastic bags, with all of the supplies in them, and put them in drawstring bags that we designed in order to make it easier for them to be carried. We repeated this process each time we presented to the schools. In total, we went to Horizonte twice and plan on going to American Preparatory Academy twice. We recognize that these kits will not cure an individual's struggles with addiction, but we hope they will let those going through detox in the VoA know that people are thinking of them. We also hope that these kits will cause the kids making them to realize that addiction needs to be combated with empathy and compassion in order for those struggling with it to work toward recovery. In total, we were able to build many kits and plan on donating them by the end of this semester. We also plan on cleaning the clothing that was donated and giving them to the VoA in bags. We are very proud of our efforts and feel that this part of the project was truly a success.





## ***CRACKING THE MYTH OF ADDICTION VIDEO***

As the concept for our final project took shape, the idea of creating a video documentary was a common theme, as was the importance of reducing stigma. Throughout the first semester, we heard from and met with many people in recovery from substance use disorder. We were awe stricken by their bravery in sharing their stories, as well as by their remarkable strength, ambition, and compassion for others struggling with substance use. Many of the people we met are now working as peer recovery coaches in treatment facilities, and several others are completing college degrees to become social workers in the field. Our class universally felt that meeting these speakers was the best and most honest education we had ever received on substance use. We also thought that there was no better way to reduce substance related stigma than to meet and interact with real people whose lives were affected by it.

The profound impact of the stories we heard inspired our class to create a video that could recreate our experience. We knew we wanted to do some sort of education campaign and felt it would be valuable to let students hear about the devastating realities of substance use from those with firsthand experience. It was also our hope that a video could help students develop a sense of empathy for those who have struggled with addiction and recognize their own biases. Many of the same people who spoke to our class graciously returned and agreed to be interviewed on camera. We then compiled hours' worth of clips into a fifteen-minute video. It was a challenge to distill several lifetimes worth of experiences, struggles, and triumphs into such a short collection, but the result is a video bursting with raw emotion.





In the video, speakers simply told their stories. They touched on subjects ranging from peer pressure to prescription drugs. They spoke, repeatedly, about the profoundly negative impact of stigma in their lives. The speakers talked candidly about their experiences with using drugs, explained how they became addicted, and then how they began the recovery process. They shared the most valuable things they learned in recovery and gave advice to students watching the video. Not one of the speakers told students to “just say no;” instead they spoke passionately about the importance of connection and high-quality relationships. Each of our speakers independently hit upon a singular truth—*substance use disorder is not synonymous with a lack of willpower*. It is disease, and it can be brought on by factors like depression and isolation.

When shown in the high schools, the video never failed to spark discussion. Classes that had been reluctant to participate were suddenly forthcoming. Students shared stories about their own experiences with prescription painkillers; several said they had been prescribed opioids after injuries and felt they had come close to losing control themselves. One student even opened up about her father’s recovery process after watching the video. It served as a common point of reference, and it became something we could all understand and discuss. Being able to participate in these discussions with high school students was incredibly rewarding for each of us, and each thoughtful comment we received was a small but gratifying victory.



Join us for a panel dialogue on  
**Addiction and its Stigmas**

When: April 4th 2:30PM

Where: Marriott Library, Gould Auditorium

**“I can overcome  
my past”**

Fight addiction, not people with addiction



RECOVER AT THE U  
THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH



Join us for a panel dialogue on  
**Addiction and its Stigmas**

When: April 4th 2:30PM

Where: Marriott Library, Gould Auditorium

**“I won’t let my past  
steal my present”**

Fight addiction, not people with addiction



RECOVER AT THE U  
THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH



## AWARENESS POSTERS

To reach out to the campus community and inform them about the panel event and our goals, we designed a poster, drawing inspiration from the Micro-aggression posters. The panel serves to educate the public, specifically students, to recognize the stigma that exists. It also was designed to demonstrate ways to alleviate the barriers that stigmas can impose on those who are struggling with substance use disorder. While the poster is designed to advertise for the panel, it also serves other purposes. For example, in the bottom left corner of the poster, we placed a logo of the up and coming program, Recover at the U. While, they are starting to gain momentum in the community, this is one way, we assist with their publicity and promote their efforts to create a safe haven for students and faculty at the University of Utah. In addition, it is also there to shine light on the stigmas surrounding addiction and build a connection with the individuals in a minimalistic yet effective layout. To build a connection between the audience and those who are, or have been, struggling with substance use disorder, we specifically featured different individuals to present on each one. We chose those who are currently in long-term recovery and working with Recover at the U. Our goal was to make the point that this is not just another face on the wall; it is someone who deserves a place in this world, like anyone else. Along with the photographs of the individuals, there are short messages, which reflect what they would like people to know. Behind each of these small statements, is a tremendous amount of meaning that cannot be truly understood unless the same circumstances were to happen to an individual.



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**“I wish it was as  
easy as a choice”**

Fight addiction, not people with addiction



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**Addiction and its Stigmas**

When: April 4th 2:30PM

Where: Marriott Library, Gould Auditorium

**“Labels are for jars,  
not people”**

Fight addiction, not people with addiction



They provide an insight on the impact that stigma can have on a person and the adversities a person may face. With minimal content on the poster, the quotes and the photos become the focus and together, they help convey an underlying truth. Looking specifically at the minor details of the poster, the poster has a bright background, which not only attracts the viewer's attention but hopefully lightens the mood around addiction. Most people would associate the term addiction with negative connotations, such as dirty or dark. To steer away from the existing stigmas, people would then affiliate the topic of addiction with a more open and inviting conversation. Near the bottom of the posters, we included a statement about fighting the addiction rather than fighting the people with addiction. This is a reminder to view addiction as a disorder rather than a fault of the person, thus humanizing the person rather than focusing on the addiction. Lastly, in the bottom right hand corner, there is a QR code, which leads the viewer to our website. On the websites, there are educational supplements, as well as, resources for the public. We hope that through these subtle efforts and details, people will begin to shift their paradigm about individuals struggling with substance use disorder.



## WEBSITE

When the concept of sustainability began to take shape in our project, we explored multiple venues, yet placed our efforts into building a website. A website allows us to exhibit an easily accessible platform which includes multiple sources useful for most topics pertaining to the stigmatization of substance use disorder. Orientation of the website was designed to showcase many of the unique methods our team executed throughout the program's duration, while also including general information.

This website serves an audience of a wide range from those undergoing substance use disorder to those simply interested in gaining a better understanding of stigma revolving around the subject. The home page is the best example of this. It provides an explanation of why stigma regarding substance use disorder is an important topic, a video interview pertaining multiple participants who have overcome substance use disorder, as well as general information about what a praxis lab is, who our team is, and what our project is.

The "what is sigma?" tab describes the importance of stigma reduction around addiction by including several pictures and hypothetical questions. This tab is used to mainly introduce the topic of our project. The "resources" tab connects viewers with multiple clinics and support groups, mainly intended for those undergoing substance use disorder or their family members. We used this page as a medium to connect those in need with established and trusted establishments. The "learn more" tab includes a running PowerPoint presentation our group used in educating high school students at Horizonte High as well as a final copy of our report. Finally, yet arguably most important, is the "what we can do" tab which provides 4 steps in which anyone can execute to decrease stigma. This page includes a list of terms which induce stigma and another list providing alternate vocabulary.

We believe that the website will be a useful tool for anyone undergoing, associated with, or interested in substance use disorder. It provides detailed resources, exercises, definitions, and examples to demonstrate the causes, effects, and resolutions of stigma revolving around substance use disorder. Through continuation of this project, the website will be able to sustain more depth into stigma and hopefully contain data on the effectiveness of our project.



# Kill Stereotypes. Save Lives.

Half of all Americans have a friend or family member who is struggling with addiction. In the United States, it is expected that 1 in every 13 people over the age of 12, or roughly 20 million people, will meet the criteria for having a drug or alcohol addiction this year.

Addiction is not a choice. It is time to deconstruct many of the myths surrounding addiction and explore how to help those struggling with this disease.

Our group is committed to reducing the stigma associated with addiction

## Latest News

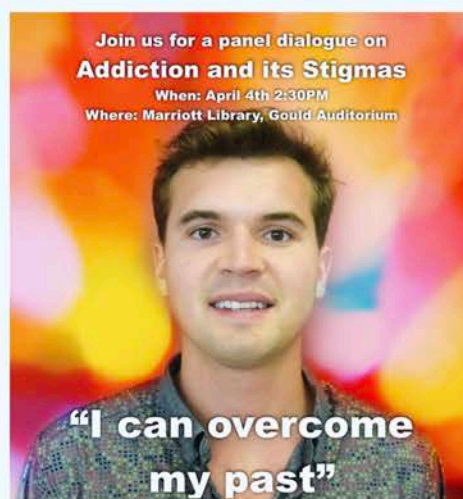
Follow us as we provide educational outreach on the stigma surrounding addictions.



### Help Us Drive Out Addiction

Join us in gathering supplies to help create kits for those recovering from substance use disorders

[learn more >>](#)



### Upcoming Events

Participate in our upcoming panel discussion on April 4th @ 2:30PM at the Marriot Library, Gould Auditorium.

[learn more >>](#)



### Resources

If you or someone you love is struggling with a substance use disorder, here are a list of resources within the Salt Lake City area.

[learn more >>](#)



### WHO WE ARE

We are undergraduate students at the University of Utah, and members of the "Cracking' Open the Myth" Praxis Lab!



### WHAT ARE PRAXIS LABS?

Praxis Labs are special classes offered by the University of Utah, designed to tackle social issues. The "Cracking' Open the Myth" Praxis Lab is focused on the epidemic of substance use disorder, and it highlights the issue of drug use related stigma.



### OUR PROJECT

Our class chose to create a drug education campaign in which high school students learned about stigma, participated in discussion, and assembled hygiene kits for people experiencing homelessness and struggling with substance use disorder.

[See us in action >>](#)





## **PARTNERSHIP WITH RECOVERY@THEU**

After brainstorming and constructing various branches of our project, we realized that while there was potential for great community impact, the project could easily end up as a singular effort to reduce stigma surrounding addiction in Salt Lake City and at the University of Utah. We wanted to create a more long-lasting effect, especially on campus. In shifting our focus to ways of ensuring sustainability of our efforts, we learned about an organization on campus that we could work with to potentially keep the project alive for years to come.

Students for Recover at the University of Utah is a student group that has been working to make campus a more supportive environment for students dealing with substance use disorder or long-term recovery. While addiction is a widespread issue, many universities fail to address substance use beyond establishing a dry campus with a zero-tolerance policy. This group recognizes that without support, it can be extremely difficult to be a student when struggling with addiction. Students for Recovery has created a program on campus called Recover at the U to provide that necessary support. This program is a Collegiate Recovery Community, committed to creating an encouraging environment for students seeking recovery or students currently in recovery from substance use disorder.





Recover at the U holds sober events on campus, providing social support for students in recovery. The program also collaborates with Young People in Recovery to host Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and All Recovery meetings on campus. With their latest grant, the leadership team of Recover at the U has secured a space in the Social Work building on campus as a Collegiate Recovery Community. This will offer students dealing with substance use disorder to have a safe space on campus to de-stress, do homework, and connect with other students with similar challenges. The goal is to encourage academic success while also developing and maintaining healthy habits and skills.





## STIGMAS PANEL

To accomplish our mission of spreading awareness about drug addiction and reducing the stigmas attached to it, college students were also an important population to address besides high school students. As substance abuse is not directly addressed on campus, students going through drug addiction or students who know someone going through it might not be able to reach out for help from a physician or a counselor. We came up with an idea of having a panel dialogue on drug addiction and the associated stigma. For this purpose, we invited people who have either been in recovery or have served people through their journey of recovery so they could share their experiences with the audience. We were able to have three panelists. First, Evan Done, who has been in long-term recovery from a substance use disorder and has more than ten years of social justice advocacy experience. Currently, he is a community outreach and empowerment coordinator at Utah Support Advocates for Recovery Awareness (USARA). Next, we had Chris Bowman, who has also been through recovery and is now a manager of a group on campus called 'Recover at the U.' Then, we had Jerry Buie, one of our instructors for the Praxis Lab and an assistant professor at the College of Social Work with years of counseling experience.





The uniqueness, as well as similarity, of the experiences of our three panelists made the panel engaging and informative. Essentially, the panelists responded to questions asked by one of our team members and if anyone in the audience had questions, they were invited to ask it at any point throughout. The questions were about the stigma of drug addiction, the language to be used while addressing people with substance use disorder, how people suffering from drug addiction may seek care and treatment, resources on campus, and their suggestions on increasing awareness about stigma and drug addiction. We believe that events like these are important to be held on campus so that the college students are aware of drug addiction as a disease and not a choice. In the future, there could be a similar panel on a larger scale with panelists from more diverse areas of expertise, for example, a judge from drug court, or a medical professional who counsels people with substance use disorder.



*"That's the reason it lasts three thousand years. It's an open text that can be read a lot of different ways. If it just said something it would get out of date. The Bible doesn't get out of date."*

—Jacqueline Osherow

individual words — why the author used a specific expression, its connotations in the original language and in translations and the implications that it has on the rest of the text. "It's important [for the students] to realize that they don't have the original," Osherow said. Being well-versed in Biblical Hebrew, she hopes her classes understand that so much can be lost in translation of the text. There are hundreds of English versions of the Hebrew Bible, let alone the countless interpretations in other languages. Osherow's favorite for English study? The King James Version.

Completed in the early 17th century by scholars and members of the Church of England, the King James Version — or King James Bible — is one of the most widely known and utilized translations, despite criticisms of its linguistic style and its mistranslations. Despite the inaccuracies, Osherow posits that the King James Version provides the best translation. "Beauty is a kind of accuracy. And that's something noteworthy. You can't translate something beautiful as something ordinary." That's what she teaches — exploration out of the ordinary.

#### TEACHING THE CLASS

Osherow's current ENGL 3030 class is small, comprised of less than 20 students from various educational paths engaging in intimate

conversation about the text. Osherow places immense value on having the class discussions be shaped by the individual students and their own lenses of the world, saying, "It matters then that those people are in the room, and not anyone else." She shies away from monotonously lecturing on the text to allow students to cover the material and enhance their comprehension. "You learn by having to speak. You learn by having to write. My goal is to bring people to make realizations and express themselves, rather than me saying everything."

While the class has hosted people from many walks of faith, practicing or not, Osherow recognizes that it isn't for everyone. She knows students who have dropped the class or not taken it, no matter where their faith lies. Some take offense in what secularly approaching they prefer to remain sacred. However, Osherow calls for an open perspective for this in-depth, religion-adjacent study of the text. "Literature is written by people. If you have a problem [with that approach], this might not be the class for you."

*"Any great text is valuable in itself. It's worthy of attention," she said. "The more attention you give it, the more it gives back."*

—Jacqueline Osherow

Those currently in her class do come with an open mind, and with surprising interpretations, some that even Osherow herself wouldn't have identified. She describes this phenomenon in reference to the Bamidbar Rabbah, a holy Jewish text, which says, "There are seventy faces to the Torah: Turn it around and around, for everything

art

arts

is in it." Approaching the Bible as a piece of literature is continually so captivating because one can find anything and everything in it, discovering new pieces every time you open the book.

It might sound tedious to pick through passages with a fine-toothed comb to find the sliver of meaning. Why doesn't the text explicitly say what it means? That's the fun part to Osherow. "I was explaining a reading," Osherow said, "and someone raised their hand and asked, 'Why doesn't it just say that?' What I think to be true is that's the reason it lasts three thousand years. It's an open text that can be read a lot of different ways. If it just said something it would get out of date. The Bible doesn't get out of date."

Religion aside, the Bible still remains a text of supreme importance to history, anthropology, politics, ethics and world culture, and it allows us to examine how it has shaped our world and recognize how we can still interpret its messages.

#### POETRY AND PROSE

Osherow's class also devotes a significant portion of time to the Psalms, which she finds particularly interesting as a poet herself. The Psalms aren't written in any specific form, but they are driven by an attention to sound as the words would have been sung. They provide a contrast to the more rigid forms of English poetry, such as Shakespeare's sonnets in iambic pentameter. But the Psalms do provide beautiful parallels and establish internal rhythms that Osherow finds enchanting. They link two traditions that her writings and study follow, both the Hebrew literature and English lyric poems. When asked whether her poetry follows a more rigid structure or more abstract form, Osherow grinned and said, "Whatever works. I'm an opportunist." More serious, she comes back to the beauty she finds in the text when she said, "The Psalms also use whatever works. They set up expectations and give you an opportunity to break them. It's magical, without a compromise."

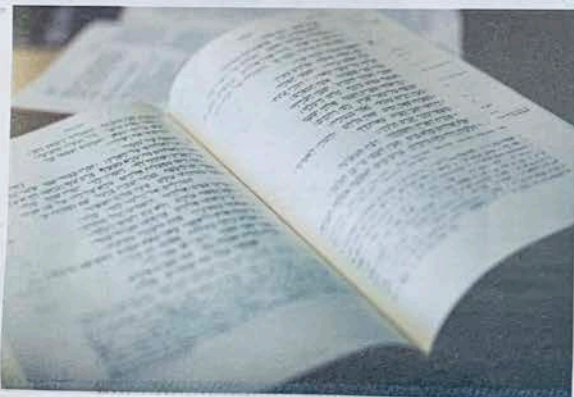
Osherow's eighth poetry book "My Look-alike at the Krishna Temple" was released earlier in March, titled so from a story she tells. She explained, "[This man] says to me, 'There's a woman who looks just like you in Nepal. She worships with my mother in the Krishna Temple. If you stood next to her, she could be your sister.' This idea that I had this double across the world... I tried to imagine other religions and wind up saying something new on my relationship to Judaism." The book, as well as many of her other publications, are available for purchase.

Less poetry is taught now, much to this professor's chagrin, as the body of prose grows and the requirement for classes that center around poetry's aspects shrink. But Osherow continues to write poetry from the roots of her religious identity, and advocates for the importance of literature and discussion in our world today. "Any great text is valuable in itself. It's worthy of attention," she said. "The more attention you give it, the more it gives back."

Osherow hopes to continue teaching this class, as well as more capstone or series courses drawing on her favorite Biblical texts. And despite years of study and devotion to the poetry and prose of it all, Osherow paused and smiled again. "I'm still a novice. And I find it infinitely interesting."

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@iamjustkeating

Hebrew religious text at the Marriott Library.



### Join us for a panel dialogue on Addiction and its Stigmas

When: April 4th 2:30PM

Where: Marriott Library, Gould Auditorium

**"Labels are for jars,  
not people"**

Fight addiction, not people with addiction

RECOVER AT THE U  
THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

Admission: Cash for Help  
Recovery is possible









mid-end April  
Praxis lab presentation

1st presentation  
end of Feb/beginning of March \*

3 high schools  
- 2-3 classes per school

1.15 - groups (outreach + curriculum)

1.22 - Jen? USARA? - good camera + questions - Jerry  
Blue, n... leo lab? (latrea)  
- finalize  
- Jen +

1.29 - Jen? M... sure  
- Nalaox...  
- Jen...  
- meeting... (ation)

**• Outreach •**

1. high schools  
- athletic programs  
- theater

2. Jen Speaks to us <sup>ASAP</sup> nalaoxone kits (story)

3. USARA - video interview to show  
• already made USARA video (1 or 2 people)

4. Video crew (snipet from docu.)

5. Bennion Center - after 1st presentation (March)  
- presentation + curriculum for future volunteers

Why high school mission? - barriers

1. low-income  
2. middle - East High? Olympus? Skyline? Judge? Highland?





# PRAXIS OUTCOMES

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The first semester of our Praxis Lab was educational for every member of the group. Presentations and discussions with care providers, researchers, representatives from the justice system, political leaders, family members of those touched by addiction, and those in long-term recovery all taught us about the complexities of substance use disorder and the people it affects. This was our foundation on which we based the rest of our project.

Our presentations at high schools allowed us to start a conversation about stigma and substance use with local youth. Students seem to lack understanding of what stigma even is and how it relates to addiction. This illustrates the gaps in the current substance use education, as the current model mostly focuses on the “Just say no” strategy rather than recovery, support for those struggling with addiction, and the barriers that prevent people from accessing care. We hope that by presenting these ideas of stigma reduction, the students and teachers at these schools can have even more conversation through a ripple effect.

Through the kits we had the high schoolers make, as well as the drive we hosted on campus, we were able to donate the supply kits, clothing, and toiletries to Volunteers of America. Our hope is that individuals that need kits, including those using the detox center resources, can benefit from the items we supplied.

Additionally, our panel was successful in reaching our goal to engage with our campus community about stigma, addictions, and what we as students can do to start changing the treatment of substance use disorder and recovery here on campus. This, coupled with our group’s efforts to reach out to the University administration has also sparked a conversation about recovery resource support for students. We have set up a meeting with a representative from the Dean of Students Office in order to get a better idea of what policies currently exist regarding substance use disorder and what data the University has gathered about rates of addiction on campus.

Our correspondence with Recover @ the U has helped us implement sustainability into our project. We were inspired to start a student group on campus through the Bennion Center that would create opportunities for volunteers to continue presenting at high schools around the valley, as well as to plan projects and events that relate to substance use disorder and stigma reduction. One event we hope to bring to campus, for instance, is a “Recovery Week” during which events such as a panel, resource tabling, and a poster campaign would bring awareness to stigmas surrounding those struggling with addiction and support those in recovery. A student leader within this group would work in tandem with Recover @ the U to plan such events. Our hope is to contribute to a movement on campus that will lead to a safer and more supportive environment for students who have struggled with substance use disorder. Our goal is that they be allowed to thrive without the debilitating threat of stigma.



# BIOGRAPHIES

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## **Josie Anderson**

I am currently a junior at the University of Utah. I am majoring in Chinese and Animation with a minor in Arts Technology. In my free time, I enjoy reading and playing the piano. I joined this praxis lab because I am passionate about giving individuals struggling with substance use disorders a sense of purpose and worth by helping to eliminate negative stereotypes associated with addiction.



## **Tana Corsetti**

I am currently a junior here at the University of Utah and studying Kinesiology. I am passionate about medicine, global health, and making health care available for all. I joined this praxis lab to learn more about health care and outreach. In my free time I like to study and analyze Grey's Anatomy characters.



## **Gursirat Grewal**

I grew up in the borderland state of Punjab where substance abuse has been a scourge for years now. This Praxis Lab has been a great platform to learn and apply things which can be applicable in Punjab.



## **Franco Jin**

I am a fourth year student studying Biology. In my free time, I love to drink grape juice and enjoy the outdoor sceneries from the indoors, where the sun's harmful UV rays cannot reach me. I wanted to take part in this Praxis Lab because I wanted to learn more about the dynamics surrounding barriers to addiction recovery, a prevalent issue in healthcare.



## **Kellsey Ly**

I am currently a Junior and a Biology major, studying at the University of Utah. I love to spend my free time camping and hiking in Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons and also spend time with my family. I joined this project because I wanted to educate myself about an important issue at hand and join the effort to hopefully impact the community.





### **Annika Machado**

I am a sophomore studying Nursing, scheduled to enter the program next Spring. I enjoy reading, hiking through the warm months, and playing with my cat. I chose to join this Praxis Lab because of my interest in populations that are marginalized and stigmatized within the healthcare system, including those struggling with substance abuse.



### **Kasra Rahmati**

I am currently a second year student at the University of Utah studying Health, Society and Policy with plans to attend medical school in the future. I joined this Praxis lab because I was interested in learning more about the complexities of addiction from both a medical and social perspective.



### **Kendall Thiede**

I am a second year Pre-Med student majoring in Health, Society and Policy. I enjoy skiing, rock-climbing, reading, and watching movies. I decided to join this Praxis Lab because I was interested in changing the mindset surrounding people struggling with addiction so that better health policy can be developed.



### **Rachael Thorpe**

I am a sophomore at the University of Utah, majoring in sociology. I am a dog lover, a sensei, a painter, and a *Grey's Anatomy* fanatic. I have loved learning more about substance use disorder throughout this praxis lab, and I am excited to use the knowledge I have gained in a health care field.



### **Jeanelle Webb**

I am a second-year student at the University of Utah pursuing an honors bachelor of science in nursing. I enjoy volunteering as an interpreter (Spanish speaking), hiking, skiing, and reading. I decided to join this Praxis lab due to my passion for service and the relevance to substance use disorders and its stigmas.



# BIOGRAPHIES

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## **Tiffany Love, PhD**

Dr. Love is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Utah with an extensive background in psychiatric neuroimaging and expertise in the areas of stress and motivation. Primarily, Dr. Love's academic interests focus on understanding the neurobiological processes that underlie sensitivity to pain, reward, and addiction. She has over 17 years of experience utilizing neuroimaging to answer important research questions in the domains of addiction, mood, hormonal regulation, reward, and stress. Over the course of her career, Dr. Love has been strongly committed to conducting patient-oriented translational research. Using imaging techniques including functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), arterial spin labeling (ASL), magnetic resonance spectroscopy (MRS), and positron emission tomography (PET), Dr. Love has applied her experience and training towards investigating the neurobiological mechanisms conferring risk for psychiatric disorders and explored the influence of sex and reproductive hormones on neural responses to salient stimuli and their relationship to motivational and behavioral functioning.



## **Jerry Buie, MSW, LCSW**

Jerry has been providing counseling services since 1994 when he graduated from the University of Utah. Jerry's work experience includes working for the Department of Corrections, Intermountain Specialized Abuse Treatment (ISAT) Center, Division of Child and Family Services and Olympus View Hospital. He has written educational classes on Victim Empathy, Anger Management and working with LGBTQ Clients. His diversity of clinical experiences has provided him with an eclectic background. He has presented throughout the State of Utah and nationally on a variety of social work and clinical issues. He currently is an Assistant Professor/Lecturer at the University of Utah School of Social Work. He has been providing therapy to the LGBTQ community since 1996 and has addressed issues such as sexuality, identity, relationships, conflict resolution, spirituality and religion as well as coming out issues. His vast experience also includes working with gender related issues. Jerry is a father as well as husband/partner, educator and community advocate. Integrated into Jerry's practice is his sense of spiritual awareness and understanding that we are all unique and carry great potential.

Academically, Jerry is teaching classes on Social Work and Diversity Issues/ Reflexive Practice, Ethics and Social Work, Human Behavior in the Social Environment, Clinical Practice, Solution Focus Therapy, Cognitive Based Therapy and Substance Abuse Treatment. Jerry has facilitated trainings on Dialogue between issues of Sexual Orientation and Religious Divides, and the exploration of Spirituality as a tool in clinical practice.



# SPECIAL THANKS

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CHRIS BOWMAN  
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JUDGE SKANCHY  
FELIX LOPEZ  
DAMIAN TRUJILLO  
JOHN PAUL DEJORIA  
EVAN DONE  
JAMES THOMPSON  
NICOLE SALAMA  
BLUESETTE OSSANA  
MADDY CARDON  
JORDEN SAXTON  
BRAD DUNDAS  
MATT WALCH