



**harm reduction**  
COALITION

# **Undoing Stigma: Harm Reduction in Action**

Daniel Raymond

[raymond@harmreduction.org](mailto:raymond@harmreduction.org)

[www.harmreduction.org](http://www.harmreduction.org)

“Why don’t we widely embrace [opioid addiction medications](#), despite decades-old research supporting them? Stigma. Why do we [resort to the criminal justice system](#) to deal with addiction, even as that’s proven ineffective? Stigma. Why do we close down [needle exchange programs](#) that are proven to save lives? Stigma. What is the one thing Vermont had to overcome to [build up its addiction treatment system](#)? Stigma. Why won’t Congress approve the money [experts agree is needed to address the crisis](#)? You get the idea.”

German Lopez, Vox, 12/18/17

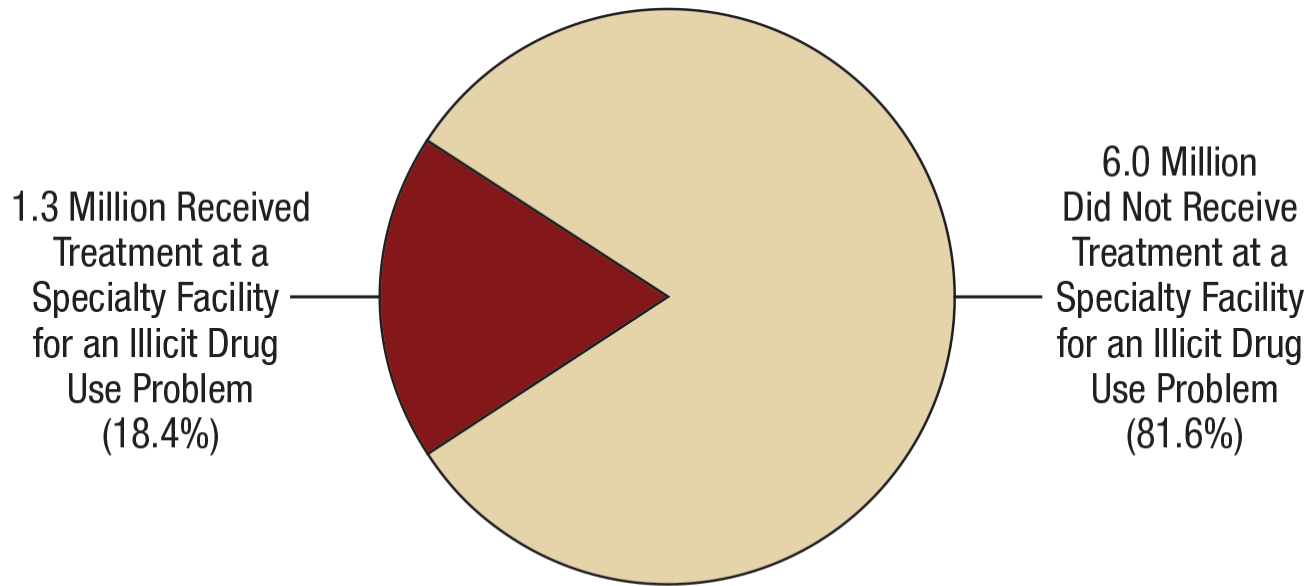
<https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2017/12/18/16635910/opioid-epidemic-lessons>

# Phases of opioid stigma:

1. Fear & confusion
2. Compassion & hope
3. Frustration & anger

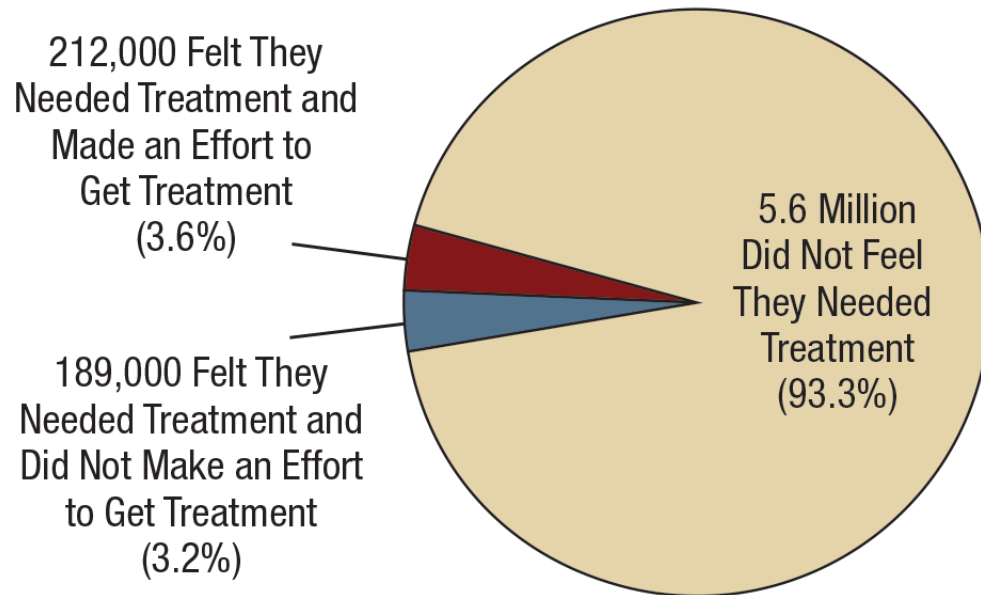
“Collective trauma is trauma that happens to large groups of individuals and can be transmitted transgenerationally and across communities. War, genocide, slavery, terrorism, and natural disasters can cause collective trauma, which can be further defined as historical, ancestral, or cultural. Some of the symptoms of collective trauma include rage, depression, denial, survivor guilt....”

Healing Collective Trauma,  
<http://www.healingcollectivetrauma.com/>



**7.3 Million Adults Needed Illicit Drug Use Treatment**

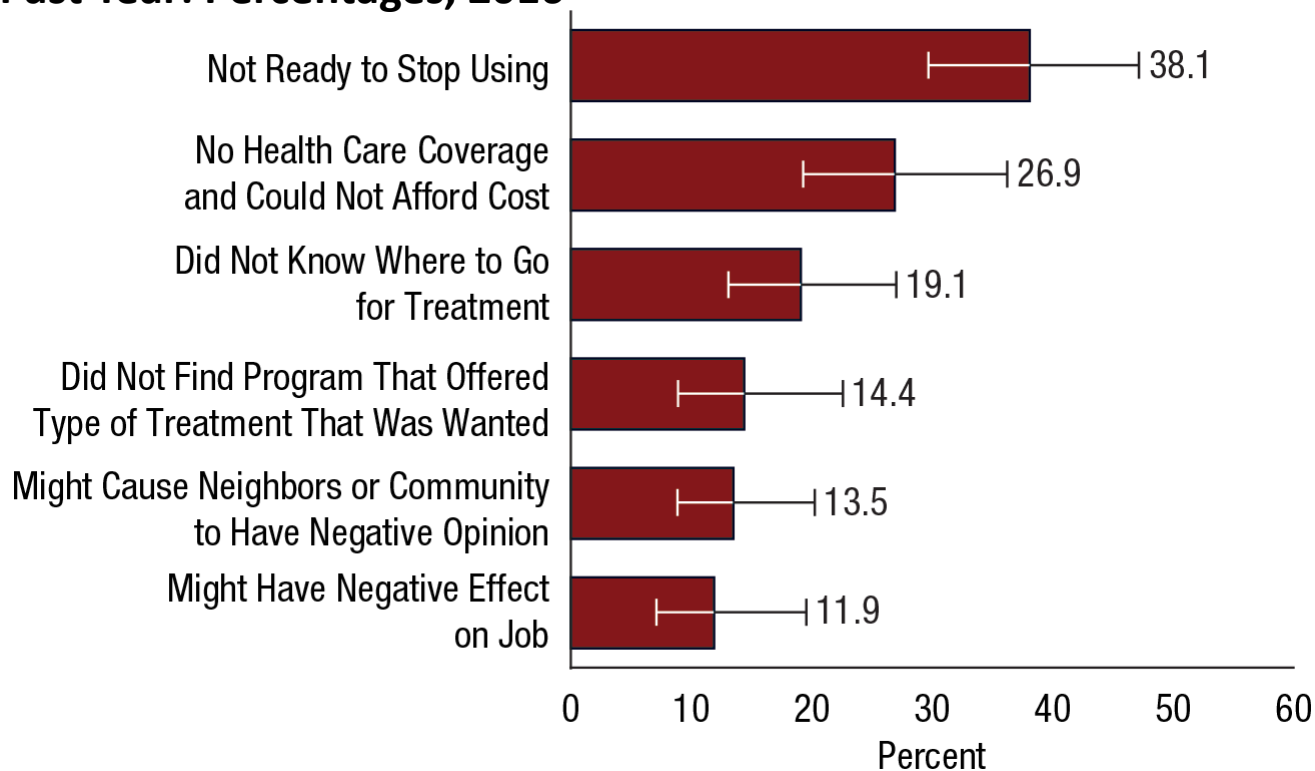
Receipt of Services for Substance Use and Mental Health Issues among Adults: Results from the 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, NSDUH Data Review, SAMHSA, September 2017



### 6.0 Million Adults Needed but Did Not Receive Illicit Drug Use Treatment

Receipt of Services for Substance Use and Mental Health Issues among Adults: Results from the 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, NSDUH Data Review, SAMHSA, September 2017

## Reasons for Not Receiving Substance Use Treatment in the Past Year among Adults Aged 18 or Older Who Felt They Needed Treatment in the Past Year: Percentages, 2016



Receipt of Services for Substance Use and Mental Health Issues among Adults: Results from the 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, NSDUH Data Review, SAMHSA, September 2017

80% solutions:

Stigma threatens safety  
and survival.

Support builds internal  
motivation for change.



# Anchors in the Storm

- Harm reduction programs:  
pathways to responsibility
- Medication-assisted treatment:  
balancing out the biological playing  
field
- Community-based naloxone:  
restoring hope

# Paths forward

- Connection trumps coercion
- Safety, stability, support
- Reassemble the toolbox
- Resilience is a verb
- Ready ourselves for prodigal sons and daughters