

# Social Development IS Crime Prevention: Lasting Solutions for Safer Communities | March 12-14, 2008

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## Thematic Session Summary

Session Title: Dealing with Addictions -  
Sometimes Love is Tough

Session #: C6

### **1. Re-Cap the Main Challenges**

Stigmatization in the community – blame and shame  
Huge challenge for anyone with mental health issues  
Competing theories of the “problem” – including psychological, social, holistic and reductionist perspectives  
Competition for funding  
Access to funding for services  
Primary needs complicates addiction progress – housing, food, next fix  
Need for intermediate measures – go beyond addiction, recovery, harm reduction, etc.  
Treatment providers often don’t believe that clients can change and therefore do not really believe in what they do  
Challenge of providing follow-up treatment – if clients do not resources themselves  
Lack of peer support and role models for clients  
Language and cultural barriers to successful treatment programs  
Lack or and inconsistent funding  
U.S Government pressures on Canadian political agenda

### **2. What are the Unique Challenges in Your Community?**

Community education happens at different rates and different communities learn and grow differently  
Professional are often slow to adapt to new information and/or adopt new methods  
Lack of infrastructure and adequate human resources available –public sector generally underpaid in current economic climate  
People in greatest need are often not the stereotypical people society envisions  
Stigma of “addict” or “dealer” can hinder individual’s attempts to change and succeed in society  
Need to integrate the “voice of experience” with “pay equity”  
Need to restructure moral and economic debates (\$1500/month t Tim Horton’s vs. \$5000/weekend in sales)  
Prohibition increases trouble and charges  
Need for more appropriate consequences for illegal activity  
Debate/controversy over best response to first time drug offenders- “tough love” – incarceration? (to teach them?) OR incorporate punishment with treatment and education

**3. *What outcomes would you like to see in your Community?***

Strategic use of punishment/consequences  
End prohibition  
Increase access to help and resources  
Better education and awareness against drug taking  
Identify and address contextual and risk factors  
Increase standards of living, especially for marginalized  
End stigmatization  
Allow different treatment choices to flourish – get away from “one size fits all” thinking  
Encourage open discussion in community about the issues and responses  
Increase social support and advocacy for the addiction community  
Increase compassion

**4. *Who are the stakeholders involved in realizing these outcomes***

Political and public leaders  
Parents  
Voters  
NGO's  
Children and youth  
Media  
Addicts and ex-offenders  
Religious groups

**5. *What strategies would you develop to achieve these outcomes and what resources do you need***

Encourage interaction between community leaders, politicians and addicts and ex-offenders  
Project collaboration between recovering addicts and community stakeholders  
Networking between agencies and care providers and authorities  
End prohibition of drugs  
Divert resources to treatment and prevention

**6. *How is government involved in the success of these strategies?***

Funding of treatment and programs