



Addiction Solutions Of Nantucket

Discussion Questions for “The Boy Next Door – Breaking the Stigma”

What is a stigma?

Dictionary definition: n. the negative social attitude attached to a characteristic of an individual that may be regarded as a mental, physical, or social deficiency. A stigma implies social disapproval and can lead unfairly to discrimination against and exclusion of the individual.

Why do you think there is a negative stigma against drug and alcohol addiction?

Possible answers:

- Addiction is misunderstood
- Addiction is seen as a weakness rather than an illness. People don't understand that addiction is a medical condition.
- People don't understand addiction, and that it can be treated.

What is addiction?

Possible answers:

- Definition of addiction:
 - 1: a compulsive, chronic, physiological, or psychological need for a habit-forming substance, behavior, or activity having harmful physical, psychological, or social effects and typically causing well-defined symptoms upon withdrawal or abstinence
 - 2: a strong inclination to do, use, or indulge in something repeatedly
- Causes of addiction can be extremely complex and vary by the type of addiction. Understanding how and why addiction occurs can help reduce the stigma surrounding it.
- According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 20.5 million American adults aged 12 and older are battling a substance abuse disorder.
- It is an illness that can be treated.

Where there is help, there is hope.

<http://AddictionSolutionsNantucket.com> email: help@AddictionSolutionsNantucket.com (774) 563-1907

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Why do you think people become addicted?

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How might this negative stigma have hurt Quinn?

Possible answers:

- He could have been reluctant to ask for help.
- He might have tried to fix it himself
- He might have felt alone in his struggle to conquer his addiction
- He might have felt ashamed and “wished it away”

How might this negative stigma hurt Quinn’s friends and family?

Possible answers:

- Perhaps Quinn was hesitant to share his struggles with them, and that can be hurtful.
- Perhaps his friends felt awkward about talking to him about what they noticed for fear that it would offend him or hurt their friendship.
- Perhaps people wanted to help but weren’t sure how.

Why might it be important to remove the stigma against addiction?

Possible answers:

- People who have an addiction are often looked down upon and blamed for their addiction, rather than being seen as people who are ill and in need of medical care. Removing the stigma around addiction is one of the first steps to addressing this growing problem.
- The stigma can easily prevent persons from seeking help from family, friends and even from healthcare providers,
- The stigma surrounding addiction can lead to guilt and shame, causing people to hide their addiction and prevent them from getting the treatment they need.
- Beyond just impeding the provision or seeking of care, stigma may actually enhance or reinstate drug use, playing a key part in the vicious cycle that drives addicted people to continue using drugs.

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- In a recent study, fewer than 1 out of 5 Americans are willing to closely associate with someone suffering with drug addiction.

What might be some ways you can help break the stigma of addiction?

Possible answers

- Become an Expert. Seek out expert information and construct a list of reliable resources on addiction, treatment, and recovery. The more you know about addiction and how hurtful the stigma against it can be, the more you can help people dealing with substance use disorders to recover.
- Spread the Message. Talk about what you have learned.
- Share Quinn's Story. Now that you have seen this video, tell people about it, how it made you feel, and how hurtful the negative stigma of addiction can be.
- Banish Your Bias. If you feel you have had a negative stigma against addiction, change your thoughts to addiction is an illness that can be treated.
- Welcome Recovery. Share compassion with and for those who are working on their recovery.

Consider this quote: "Sometimes the substance use problem is a 'family secret' not known outside the family." How does this continue the negative stigma?

- If someone has a broken leg, would it be a "family secret?"

Other resources:

<https://www.hazeldenbettyford.org/recovery-advocacy/stigma-of-addiction>

<https://www.nm.org/healthbeat/healthy-tips/emotional-health/removing-the-stigma-of-addiction>

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