

“The Stories We Tell About Drugs and Overdose: Overview”

Episode Overview

In this episode, I introduce listeners to Season 14 of Aced It, and I talk about how stigma shapes the way we understand drugs, overdose, and addiction, and why the stories we tell about these issues matter. I break down what stigma is, how it operates, and how it influences everything from help seeking to overdose risk and responses. I also explore how language and narratives can either reinforce blame and exclusion or promote compassion and effective policy solutions.



- Stigma is a social process involving labeling, stereotyping, and discrimination, and it influences narratives shaping how addiction and overdose are understood and responded to across society.
- Narratives about drugs and overdose influence real-world outcomes, including treatment access, overdose-risk environments, and how loved ones are treated after loss.

TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ Stigma is not just about attitudes. It actively shapes behaviors, policies, and health outcomes related to substance use and overdose.
- ✓ The environments where people use drugs, and their risk of overdose, are influenced by stigma, not just individual choices.
- ✓ Language and narratives matter: how we talk about addiction can either reinforce blame or promote more compassionate, effective responses.

References & Future Reading

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