

“The Stories We Tell: Pop Culture”

Episode Overview

In this episode, I talk about how pop culture, including movies, television, and social media, shapes public perceptions of drug use and overdose, often reinforcing stereotypes, influencing stigma, and shaping how society responds to substance use.



- Pop culture is a major source of knowledge about drugs, often shaping beliefs more than direct experience of formal education.
- Media portrayals frequently rely on simplified or extreme narratives (e.g., violence, chaos, tragedy), which do not reflect the full reality of substance use.
- These narratives influence stigma, public opinion, and policy and affect public perceptions of individuals as deserving of punishment or help.

TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ Pop culture does not just reflect reality; it actively shapes how we understand drugs and overdose.
- ✓ Media narratives can reinforce stigma, which can discourage treatment-seeking and increase overdose risk.
- ✓ More accurate and humanizing portrayals can shift public attitudes toward empathy and health-based responses.

References & Future Reading

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