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### Functions of Substance Abuse

- × Sense of control
- × Re-connection to people
- × Sooth pain
- × Relax



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## Substance Abuse & Trauma

The question isn't:

Why the substance abuse?

The questions is:

Why the pain?

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*Absolutely anything can become an addiction. It's not the external behaviors - it's our relationship to it.*

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## Risks of Substance Abuse

- × More likely to be blamed by others – decrease in personal & professional support
- × Compromised cognitive functioning which impairs safety planning & crisis response.
- × Not seen as credible or reliable

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## Limitations of 'Sobriety First'

- × May be unwilling to trade substance for safety.
- × Many substance abuse agencies don't have Sexual Assault training.
- × People who cause harm may actively sabotage sobriety.




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## Treatment Options

- × **Abstinence** –  
What social issues stress abstinence?
- × **Harm Reduction** –  
What is harm reduction?




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## Why are we reluctant to serve these survivors?

Untrained to deal with addiction

Fear of medical crisis

Fear that "drug deals" will disrupt group living



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## Impact of screening out admitted users

### Force

Forces individuals to lie for safety.

### Compromise

Compromises safety for not taking their needs into account.

### Blame

Blames the survivor.

### Provide

Provides a person who causes harm with another tool.

### Violate

Violates our policies of being trauma-informed and survivor-centered.



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## Advocates are not

Substance abuse counselors

Rescuers

Judgmental



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Harm  
Less  
Affirm  
More




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