

# Why We Should Provide Treatment Versus Punishing Addicts for Addiction

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Approximately 66% of Americans believe that addicts need treatment and not jail sentencing, according to a study conducted by **Pew Research Center Statistics**. The study shows that the way citizens view addiction is turning over a new leaf. The White House also supports the idea. In 2015, they proposed the **drug mitigation strategy** aimed at setting aside funds for treatment and prevention. The approach notes, “substance abuse is not only a criminal offense but also a public concern.” Past researchers have shown that addiction is both treatable and preventable as any other disease.”

Despite the growing support for the compassionate approach in combating drug addiction, there is a strong need to change how we treat addicts. In most cases, we focus on what meets the eye, judging them as weak and immoral instead of identifying real problem behind their actions.

The following are three wrong approaches we use to punish addicts that need to stop.

## Defining Addiction as Criminal Behavior

Addiction is a health issue, not a criminal one. When we put an addict in jail for minor crimes such as possession, much less for getting a felony for minor crimes, we inhibit their resources toward finding employment and housing in order to lead a successful life.

***Addicts commit crimes because they have no other resources available to treat their addiction, certainly not because addicts themselves are inherently criminal in their behavior. Jail time drains the taxpayer instead of helping addicts recover, and jail is***

**not a good environment to find help.** The funds used for incarceration and criminal activity if used to treat them could save billions. Moreover, it makes them accountable for their actions reducing their chances of going back to drugs.

## Treatment Paradigms

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A popular treatment program is the 12 Steps approach. For some people, it does treat the symptoms of addiction, but it also leads to a false conclusion as to how the illness itself should be approached. The problem with 12 Steps is it forces the addict to relinquish personal responsibility rather than allowing them to understand what the disease entails and learn appropriate measures to deal with it.

## Disallowing Social Benefits

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Most states still implement the Clinton welfare reform that banned drug convicts from getting Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits. Other than being unfair, the policy adversely affects drug users striving to rebuild themselves. The situation gets worse for single parents, young unemployed couples, and those with disabilities. Undoubtedly, the policy increases their problems increasing the chances of falling back to addiction.

Disallowing social benefits is the worst possible solution to drug addiction, assuming we are trying to find the safest way for people to live in a cultured society. Addicts are strong, resourceful, and can likely find a place to sleep in which you and I would not find to be acceptable. However, they still must eat. Proven throughout history is that someone who is hungry will find a way to feed themselves, taking away formal means of finding income does not justify allowing prosecution for someone who finds a way to sustain themselves outside of legislative barriers.

## Stop the Cycle of Addiction – Contact Pathways Real Life Recovery for Treatment in Utah

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The conclusion is that drug addicts are treated unfairly for aspects of their life outside of their control. There is no doubt substance abuse is a problem in society but penalizing the people who suffer such an illness is not the best way to address the problem. **Pathways Real Life Recovery in Utah** is a facility dedicated to digging down to the root of the problem to help addicts. Schedule an appointment with us today!