



The Evidence (English translation)

Season 1, Episode 6

Topic: CCSA's Issues of Substance conference

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[Announcer] You're listening to The Evidence—knowledge that inspires.

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[Announcer] The Evidence: produced by the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction.

[Sarah] My name is Sarah, I'm at CCSA's Issues of Substance Conference, and I'm joined by Jimmy Langlois. Hello!

[Jimmy Langlois] Hello!

[S] Welcome to the conference.

[JL] Thank you.

[S] So you told me you're from Université Laval.

[JL] That's right.

[S] Do you want to tell us a bit about why you're at this conference?

[JL] I came to present a poster for the intervention project that I did as part of my master's in social work at Université Laval. It's on support during withdrawal for people who are disaffiliating from the formal health care system.

[S] Okay. And what exactly was the objective for this project?

[JL] There were a few objectives. Since it's an intervention project, there were project objectives and intervention objectives. For the project, the goal was to provide an opportunity for change to disaffiliated people who had absolutely no resources to support them during withdrawal or detox. So, the goal was to offer services where there weren't any. As for the intervention, the goal was to help people develop their power to act, their motivation to change, and to help them reach their own intervention objectives.

[S] Okay, interesting. And what were the results of this research project?

[JL] What we can say is basically that people are able to reach their goals when they're provided with adapted services, and we support them and believe in their ability to change.



[S] Okay. And is this your first time attending this particular conference?

[JL] It is my first time at this particular conference.

[S] Okay. Have you enjoyed the experience up until now?

[JL] It's been really great. There were a lot of presentations, a lot of posters, too. We met people from all different backgrounds. We learned quite a bit.

[S] Right. What did you like most?

[JL] What I liked most was the peer engagement. I can't remember the exact names, but yesterday, from the BC Centre of Substance Abuse, is that it? The presentation with peers was really great. And the presentation with peers and the representatives of the hegemonic model of the management of social substance use, the chief of police, the pharmaceutical sector, and who else was there? You weren't there. Hm... Anyway, it was really great.

[S] No, that's good.

[JL] And I found the peer held his own throughout everything. You know, he knew the discourse very well, the discourse around harm reduction that was perhaps the backdrop for the conference, a term that was being thrown around quite casually. Everyone felt like he was practising harm reduction. But the peers were able to reframe the discourse, and I appreciated that.

[S] Okay. It's good that these were fairly positive experiences.

[JL] Yes, very positive.

[S] And I imagine the food helped too, right?

[laughter]

[JL] Well put. Thanks. Yes, the food was really good.

[S] Okay. It's just to get your opinion. We'll take notes on your suggestions.

[JL] The food was good.

[laughter]

[S] Well thank you for taking the time to talk with us.

[JL] Great.

[S] Thanks.

[JL] Thank you.

[3:29]

[S] Could you introduce yourself and tell us a bit about your role and what organization you're from?

[Émilie Godin] Of course. My name is Émilie Godin, I'm a research professional at Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, and that about covers it.

[laughter]

[S] Yes, great, that's already a lot.

[ÉG] Those were the questions.

[S] Could you tell us a bit about the project you brought to the conference?



[ÉG] Sure, so, I came here to present the poster, well, actually, the research project that I did as part of my bachelor's in psychology at Université Laval. It was on—it was an exploratory qualitative study on the barriers faced by the spouses of pathological gamblers when it comes to requesting assistance.

[S] Mm-hmm.

[ÉG] Yes.

[S] And the study's objective was to...?

[ÉG] It was, in part, precisely to clear things up, because we know the barriers to treatment for loved ones are a little more well known, but there is not much in the literature about spouses in particular. So, we wanted to take a look at the reasons why the spouses of pathological gamblers don't consult with a professional or ask for help with the issue.

[S] Have you seen any interesting or unique results come out of your study?

[ÉG] We were able to sort the results into four categories. Of course, we had relatively few participants in the study, given that it's an exploratory study, but so far, we found there were barriers to the actual requests for help, so there were issues—not knowing what resources were available and or how to contact them.

[5:19]

[S] Mm-hmm.

[ÉG] Then there were contextual barriers: wait times, bad experiences prior to the assistance service and problems accessing the services. There were also environmental factors, including distance and schedules. Lastly, there were personal barriers faced by the individuals themselves, that is, their beliefs, the fear of stigma and the way they made the request for help.

[S] Mm-hmm. That's really interesting. Did you find that there were a fair number of people at the conference whose research dealt with gambling?

[ÉG] From what I saw, there weren't many.

[S] Mm-hmm.

[ÉG] Especially since we were coming from Quebec, with many researchers who've worked on gambling, many of whom were from Québec City, from the CIUSSS de la Capitale-Nationale. But apart from that, I didn't, no I didn't see many others.

[S] The concept and subject of gambling, particularly pathological gambling, is still a bit of a new development, especially at CCSA.

[ÉG] Exactly.

[S] Is this your first time attending this conference?

[ÉG] Yes, it's my first time.

[S] And?

[6:35]

[ÉG] I really enjoyed the experience. I find that, other than gambling, which is not very present, there is quite a variety of subjects, a lot of time between sessions for people who present, for questions, so I find it very well organized, and the programming is very diverse. I really appreciate that.



[S] Were there other subjects at the conference, apart from gambling, that were particularly interesting to you?

[ÉG] Well I don't work only on gambling. I'm also currently working on projects on psychoactive substances, so I actually find all substance-related topics interesting, especially those I'm less familiar with. I think it's a great opportunity to learn about areas that I may not deal with as much in my own work, so I do think it's a great opportunity.

[S] Okay, well, thank you so much for your time.

[ÉG] Thank you!

[7:33]

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[S] Hello. Could you start by introducing yourself, telling us about your position and who you came here with?

[Mélanie Perrier] Sure. My name's Mélanie Perrier, I'm an RCMP corporal in the Drug and Organized Crime Awareness Service, and we're based in Quebec.

[S] Okay, and is this your first time at the conference?

[MP] Yes, exactly, it's our first time, and we're very happy to be here. This experience has been extremely positive and enriching for us.

[S] Yes, I see you came with your team too, all prepared, and your lovely booth. We were told about a drug awareness chart. So, is that a project the RCMP is currently working on?

[MP] Yes, it's an awareness tool that we've created, that we just launched a few weeks ago, and it's available in both English and French. It's a poster presenting the different substances that we see on the streets across Canada. I should note that the tool is not available only in Quebec; it's actually available everywhere in Canada. The chart presents different substances, photos, consumption methods, side effects and important messages on the different substances.

[S] Okay, and what triggered the need for this project?

[MP] Well, this poster is actually the second version. We made a first version around 2013–2014, and the goal is really to raise awareness. There's a lot of information available. We're realizing that people often don't really know where to get information, or where to get valid information, which is very important, because on the web, you really find information...

[S] On everything.

[MP] ...everywhere and on everything. We wanted to find an easy way for people to have access to information, so the poster is displayed in all sorts of places, like hospitals, community centres, police stations and even schools. So, people can get information really easily, just by looking at the poster.

[S] And how have people responded to the project?

[MP] Listen, the tool is very, very popular, and not just in Canada, but all over—we're getting requests from around the world.



[S] I'm sure.

[MP] It really seems to address a particular need. I'd also like to mention that in addition to our drug awareness poster, we also have a mobile app called Drugs and New Trends. All the information on the poster is also on our app...

[S] That's great.

[10:59]

[MP] In the digital era, kids all have smartphones in their hands, so we'll also be able to reach that audience through the app, which is free. Both the poster and the app are available for free. And people can access or learn where they can find these tools by visiting our website.

[S] Mm-hmm. Which is...?

[MP] It's www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/qc/drug-and-organized-crime-awareness-service.

[laughter]

[MP] So it's quite long. Actually, I think the best way for people to find it would be to just type in "drug awareness poster" and "RCMP," which will bring them straight to our products.

[S] Yes. Just looking at the chart, it's clear, it's laid out well. I figure this type of awareness tool is also an educational tool, even for those who are just curious or those who might not know as much about the subject as, say, people who work for the RCMP.

[MP] Yes, exactly, that's the goal, right. At the top of the chart, it says "Protect. Inform. Influence." And that really what we're aiming for with these tools, so I think that the poster really meets some needs in that respect.

[S] Mm-hmm. And during the conference, were there—I'm sure there were many people interested in this type of project. But did you have any interesting discussions, or did you meet anyone who...?

[MP] Yes, well, that's what's really great about events, seminars, a conference like this, is that we can—because, you know, there's still stigma associated with the police, and we're talking about harm reduction, but in terms of substance use, of course. So, this lets us open up a dialogue and talk with people about our perspective, and it lets us have very enriching discussions and inform people about what we do, because the many police forces across Canada do indeed promote prevention and awareness. And often, no one really sees it or knows about it, so that's why we're here.

[13:35]

[S] Wonderful, it really opens the door to dialogue...

[MP] Exactly.

[S] ...for a non-judgmental discussion...

[MP] Right.

[S] ...without stigma, that's just honest...

[MP] That's it.

[S] ...and, here are the facts, this is what we know...

[MP] Exactly.

[S] ...and your opinions.



[MP] Precisely.

[S] That's super interesting. Is there a particular event during the conference that stood out to you?

[MP] That stood out? I think that where we are today, with the fentanyl problem, I found—I went to a few sessions where fentanyl was, of course, front and centre, where the issues and overdose cases were addressed, so that really connects with us as police officers, and I think it's good to see all the different organizations and government bodies mobilizing to address this issue. I think it's great to see, and there's good work being done on the matter. And that really motivates us to keep going.

[S] Yes, because it's true that the stories we hear can be a lot to take, they can really have an effect on you. That's why this kind of project helps reach a wider audience.

[MP] Yes, absolutely. I think it's important that everyone do their part. And once everyone's goals are aligned...

[S] Yes.

[MP] ...that leads to good work and good results.

[S] Yes, rather than us versus them.

[MP] Exactly.

[S] Like one group.

[MP] Precisely.

[S] That's very interesting. Thank you so much for your time.

[MP] My pleasure.

[S] That was really cool.

[MP] Great.

[S] Thanks.

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