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Fentanyl pandemic: A street level view from the worst drug infested ghetto in North America

The purpose of this presentation is to give the conference attendees some insight into how impactful the current fentanyl crisis is, and how they might prepare in future, for how it will impact them. Because Vancouver, BC's downtown eastside is the most drug-addled (and poorest) district, in North America, the impact of shifts in the drug scene has always been felt here first and most severely. Consequently, this district, the city of Vancouver, the Province of British Columbia and the Canadian government, has been both overwhelmed and quite devastated. Communities and addiction experts around the world would benefit from understanding how wide spread the crisis is here and the enormous impact it has had on the death rate due to overdoses (a 400% increase in one year. An overwhelmed emergency demand for First Responders who are unable to cope up with the proportional rise in number of emergencies (commonly up to 50 OD calls per day in a 12 block area. The therapeutic centres as well are unable to cope with this new drastic increase and changed situation with high rise demand for treatment and detoxification (no testing available for drugs like carfentanyl and W-18). The prevention services such as safe-infection sites, have had to improvise and set up tents in back alleys and parks in order to try to ensure the survival of the people who are using drugs, without knowing if they are laced with the powerful opioids we are recognizing being mixed in with other drugs today. Despite significant attempts to scramble, to try to address this crisis, they have, so far, had little success at stemming the devastation of this latest change. The presentation will also show that there is no safe street drugs anymore, and that this new trend is ushering in a major shift on the streets, which will impact all services and all levels of government, in the same way that the resurgence crystal meth did 25 years ago.

Biography

Pierre Joseph Morais is a Certified Clinical Counsellor specializing in Addictions who holds a Master's in Counselling Psychology. He is the Founder of The Scared Straight Tour and of Morais & Associates. His work in Vancouver's downtown eastside, as well as his own recovery 30 years ago from an addiction which almost cost him his life, has given him some very refined and profound insights into addiction and trends in the drug scene that makes him a highly sought after speaker. His programs have been the subject of numerous TV and radio news cast and he has appeared on national television, talking about his views on legalizing marijuana.

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