

Drug Policy Alliance

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://drugpolicy.org/resource/first-all-how-we-cope>

Campaign and Advocacy

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We've discovered and created a myriad of remedies for the ills we experience over the course of human life, but are we utilizing the best evidence, treatment and policies that help individuals and communities heal and thrive?

Even drugs that aren't legal for recreational use have coping benefits we've long known that psychedelics are an effective treatment for PTSD, and managed use of ketamine and cannabis can help with depression.

Yet drug consumption often leads to criminalization, and the increasing practice of criminalizing drug consumption coupled with a decrease in access to mental health resources has left us with a deep and problematic irony in the U.S. the criminal justice system is currently our leading mental health service provider.

So are the criminal penalties that we attach to drug use fair? Are our treatment and rehabilitative services as robust and effective as they could be? And how does our sense of compassion vary depending on the way a person copes?

In this episode, we'll explore policies that make coping and healing easier and effective, specifically harm reduction-based approaches such as safe consumption sites and medication-assisted therapy (MAT).

Hosted by [Sasha Simon](#), Safety First Senior Program Manager at the Drug Policy Alliance, **First of All** aims to clear away all the junk science and stigma related to substance use, putting science, dignity and respect first. In this series, Simon brings key components of a harm reduction-approach to drug education to life online so viewers can discover innovative ways to learn about drugs that could save their lives or those of the people they love.

[Watch more First of All episodes.](#)

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Get tips for covering the war on drugs and download DPA staff photos, logos, marijuana stock photos and b-roll video.

Our new strategic plan takes bold steps to dismantle this war on drugs and our communities. Join us in seeing this vision through.

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**We are
the Drug
Policy
Alliance.**