

## **When *'It's Got to Be Paris'***

### **Abstract**

The Key aim of this study was to capture the researchers experiences of working with clients with problem substance use (PSU). The researcher, who works in this field as a Person-Centred and Experiential Psychotherapist (PCEP) in training, achieved this by looking inward at her personal history, at her therapeutic relationships with clients in this field in general terms, and at theories around 'addiction' in terms of definition, cause and treatment. She also focused a keen lens on how individuals and/or specific groups can 'fall through the cracks' in mental health provision policy, particularly for problem substance users (PS users). By reviewing relevant literature and related areas of mental healthcare research and PCE theory, and by means of interviews where the author was questioned about her experiences and perspectives, the author then contextualised, analysed, compared and drew conclusions from this data.

The data indicated that talk therapy, such as the PCE psychotherapy, and a collaborative co-created program of help including a multidisciplinary approach, can be facilitative in helping clients with problem substance use issues become more integrated and make lasting positive behaviour changes. The author intimated that present policy may not be correct in its assumptions regarding PSU's as a group, and that there is clear direction in literature/research that demonstrates this but is not being acted upon, for multiple reasons including financial constraints.

The qualitative methodology utilised to explore this area was autoethnographic, where the author used their immersion in the subject to examine the topic, supported by literature, which added to the rigour of the research endeavour.

### **Introduction, Method and Methodology**

*It is surely time for us to take back our view of ourselves as compassionate and connected human beings and to develop a new, integrated and dynamic world in which the values of empathy, compassion, co-operation and community are not seen as luxuries or incidental to human progress of happiness, but as actually driving our psyches and our evolution' (Tweedy, 2017, p.37).*

Tweedy's message is a timely and impassioned plea to both those in a position to be able to implement such changes in policy, and those of us who recognise the desperate need for new approaches to communal responsibility and commitment, where what is best in humankind can be in evidence by the way we treat those in the greatest need of support. What feels important is that this kind of message reaches those that have the will and the power to make policy decisions, rather than purely preaching to the converted. In this study, I examined these 'luxurious' ideas of being connected and compassionate human beings, and how these qualities can be an integral part of the recovery for people in distress, including those PS users, a study that has grown directly from working in this field.

I needed to step out from behind the cordon that is usually set around research that keeps it contained within a world that is often impenetrable by the majority, even though some findings could impact the sociocultural, political, or environmental well-being of many. I have not had enough experience in the field of research to know whether the 'exclusivity' of this kind of exploration is