

Fighting the War on Drugs: A Call for Empowerment and Education

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The Leadership Scholars Certificate Program is a two-year selective, interdisciplinary certificate program that prepares Rutgers undergraduate women to be informed, innovative, and socially responsible leaders.

Leadership Scholars design and implement social action projects to expand their understanding of issues and problems and to develop leadership skills.

This project gives Scholars the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge they have gained about leadership, advocacy, and social change with the practical and experiential knowledge they have developed about a particular policy issue or problem through the field site placement. It also further develops leadership skills by giving undergraduates the opportunity to *practice* leadership *through* action.

To find out more please visit the Institute for Women's Leadership's website at <http://iwl.rutgers.edu>.

Defining the War on Drugs: *A Mission Statement*

My social action project sought to explore the opioid crisis through research and educating and empowering high school students with information and resources. I analyzed the history of the opioid crisis, key players, and the effects and consequences it has had upon families. I then built activities for students to partake in that addressed the following components: mental health, advocacy, and social justice. I completed my project by providing students with a wide variety of resources pertaining to the crisis.

This project aims to explore the current opioid crisis through activities that will educate students about mental health, advocacy, and social justice. Students will learn about empowerment through analyzing their role in the crisis as powerful youth activists.



Breaking up the Crisis: *4 phases of the SAP*

❖ ESTABLISHING: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE

OPIOID CRISIS

❖ ENGAGING: ASSESSING THE CRISIS THROUGH

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

❖ EXAMINING: COVERING WHAT EFFORTS HAVE

BEEN UNDERTAKEN



Laying Groundwork for Research: *Analyzing the Crisis*

RQ 1:

- ❖ Where does the history of the crisis begin from and how has it evolved over time?

- *The opioid crisis has been ongoing for the past 20 years. Deaths have increased dramatically as an opioid related death occurs every 30 minutes in America. (Hearing before the US Congress)*

RQ 2:

- ❖ How has the crisis affected women across America?

- *Opioid related deaths increased 471 % among women compared to a 218% rate in men between 1999 and 2015. (OWH, 2015)*

RQ: 3

- ❖ What measures address the physical and mental effects?

- *Non Addictive treatment plans & Stigma (Halawi, M., & Lieberman, J. (2018) (Corrigan, P., & Nieweglowski, K. (2018)*



Creating A Crisis: Word Clouding





Fighting the Crisis: *J & J v State of New Jersey*

- ❖ The Defendants : Johnson & Johnson
- ❖ The Plaintiffs : Those Affected by the Crisis
- ❖ The Lobbyists: Wealthy CEOs backing the Pharmaceutical Industry
- ❖ The Marketers: Reporters who have Covered the Crisis





Battling the Crisis: *1 in 5*

Greek definition of someone who has been burned or cut
and must be avoided.



Educate
Yourself
and Others



See the
Person
Not the
Condition



Take
Action



Challenge
Stereotypes

*National Alliance on Mental
Illnesses Steps to Becoming StigmaFree*

It's OK Not to Be OK: On *Seeking Help & Uncovering Masks*

- ❖ Formal Help: Trained counselors and therapy
- ❖ Informal Help: Friends, Family, and Parents
- ❖ Self Advocacy: Healing through our own determination





Discussing Feminist Leadership:

“The elements particular to a feminist leadership construction include a focus on both individual or micro-level and societal or macro-level social justice concerns, a desire to bring marginalized voices to the center of the conversation, and a willingness to take risks as one strives to enact a transformative agenda.”

- Tracy Barton, *“Feminist Leadership: Building Nurturing Academic Communities”*, in *Advancing Women’s Leadership Online Journal*, Vol.21, Fall 2006

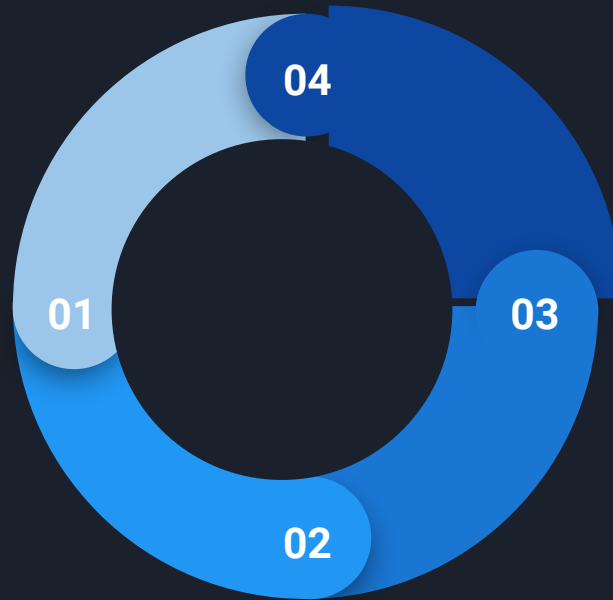
Representing Feminist Leadership:

Educating:

- ❖ Presenting facts on women affected by the crisis

Challenging:

- ❖ Connecting with those in power to relay what changes need to be made in policy



Advocating:

- ❖ Exploring new methods of treating reproductive pain in women

Collaborating:

- ❖ Reaching out to like minded individuals/organizations to build a movement



Understanding the SAP: *Lessons & Insights*

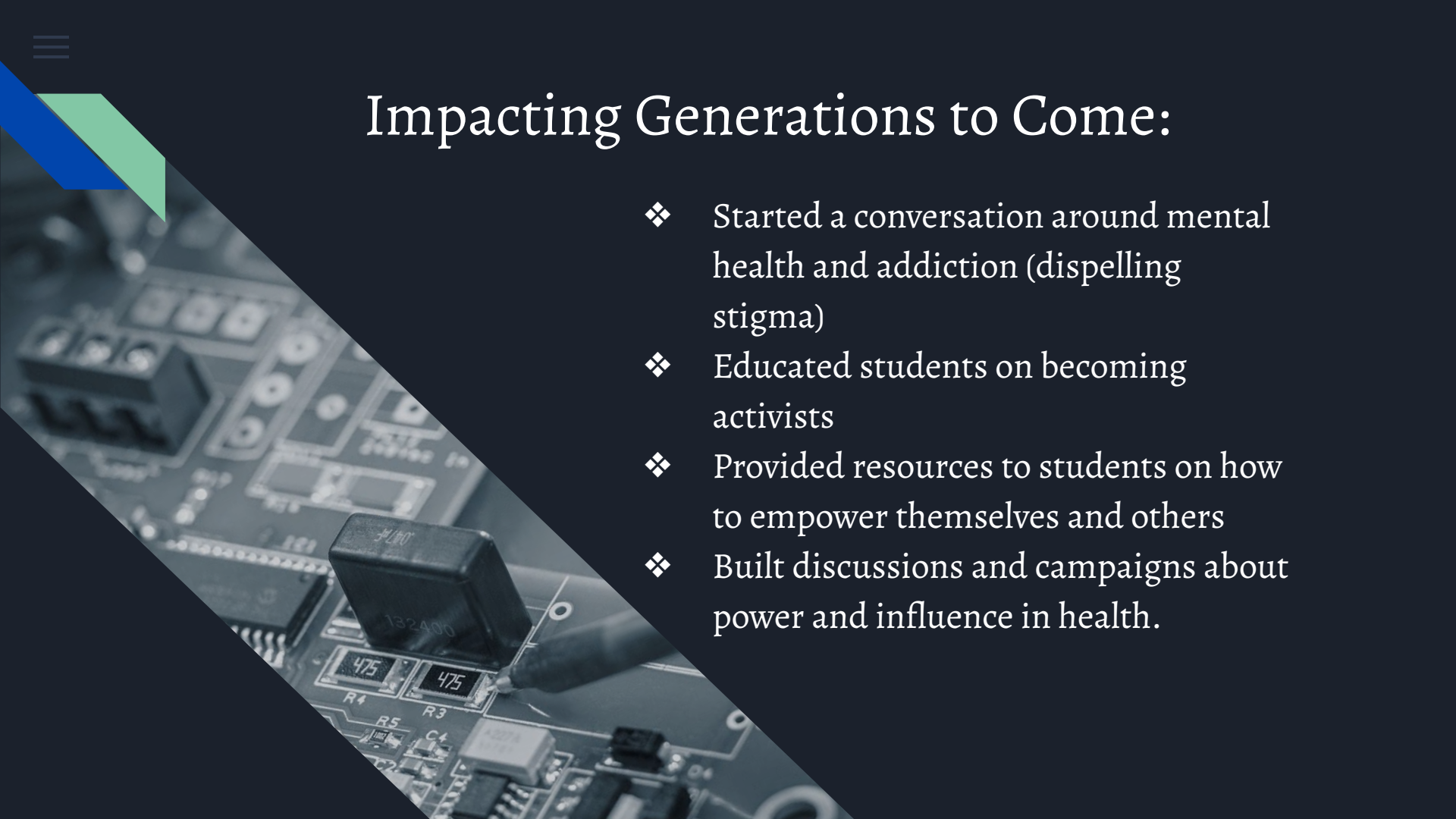
- ❖ The War on Drugs is a complex issue that is ringed with social and economic constructs.
- ❖ Addiction is not limited to a certain individual.
- ❖ The opioid crisis is an epidemic buried in power.



- ❖ Important to ask for help when feeling overwhelmed.
- ❖ Necessary to become an activist even if the issue does not “concern” you.
- ❖ Working with others really makes a difference.




Impacting Generations to Come:


- 
- ❖ Started a conversation around mental health and addiction (dispelling stigma)
 - ❖ Educated students on becoming activists
 - ❖ Provided resources to students on how to empower themselves and others
 - ❖ Built discussions and campaigns about power and influence in health.

Sustainability Factor: *Looking into the Future*

- ❖ Including the voices of those directly affected by the crisis into the mainstream narrative
- ❖ Take the fight further by advocating for victims in the legislature.
- ❖ Work with the Washington Heights Corner Street Project to spread awareness.
- ❖ Build a social media campaign to spark the conversation across the world.



“Many people have a simple understanding of addiction. They think it happens only to dysfunctional people from dysfunctional families, or to hopeless people living on the street. But our addicted population is spread across every segment of society: rich and poor, white and black, male and female, old and young.” -Navy Admiral (Vice Chairman of Joint Chief of Staff)





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