



Photo: Terjo Aaltonen

Potential of social marketing in internet-based interventions



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JÄRJESTÖVERKOSTO

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My background

1. I am Executive director of NGO 'Irti Huumeista' = 'Free From Drugs'. Free From Drugs was founded in 1984 by the parents of people living with drug use disorders. Parents wanted to support those affected by drug use and their families
2. I chair NGOs networks subcommittee which is focusing on drugs. Civil society in Finland is strong. Substance use associations have their own network with over 40 member associations and subcommittee on drugs (Illicit substances). Network operates as an expert on alcohol, tobacco and drug policies and promote evidence-based and neutral discourse, counteracting stigma and negative preconceptions



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Cooperation beats competition

- Finnish substance use NGOs actively coordinate their work; they also support each other in gaining social media visibility
- By joining forces our messages become stronger & are heard more widely - together we can create more 'buzz'
- Social media is a key platform for interacting with media, decision makers, clients, and other stakeholders
- Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, LinkedIn, Youtube – Can make us stronger



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How online platforms are effectively used by Finnish NGOs for social marketing to create social change and for behavioural interventions to support recovery and wellbeing of those affected by drug use?

3 examples from social marketing and interventions:

1. "Don't judge" social media campaign – the NGO network influencing public opinion
2. Facebook Online support groups and peer support for recovery, drug users family members and people for living with grief
3. Support for maintenance therapy and recovery process - KoHo mobile app



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Example 1: "Don't Judge" – Campaign by the NGO network since 2015

#EITUOMITA

"lets stop judging
people who use"

"not all who use drugs
will die to drug use"



**KAIKKI
EIVÄT KUOLE
HUUMEISIIN**



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“Don’t Judge” – Campaign, Aims:

- To give voice for the people using drugs (people using drugs were also actively engaged in the planning)
- To provoke public discussion on the attitudes and stereotypes attached to people using drugs; to highlight the diversity among them and in their personal histories
- To emphasise that all of us make mistakes, and that regardless, all of us deserve acceptance and support from our communities and societies



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Don't Judge – Campaign 2015

- In 2015 the campaign focused on the stories of children and youth. It received extremely positive response***

“I have been lonely for so long that I can remember. In school I was always the first one to try new things out, including substance use. I guess I wanted acceptance. Nowadays it is so easy to order stuff online... If I would be asking your help today, would you help me?”

–Saku 19 years



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“Don’t Judge” – Campaign after 2017

- 5000 members in the FB group, nearly 1500 shares, total reach of FB posts is about 440 000 individuals
- In addition the videos were shared in social media
- *We asked the people using drugs to speak for themselves*
- *Drug use is part of our society, whether we wanted it or not*
- *Have you ever asked a person living with substance use disorder how she/he is doing?*



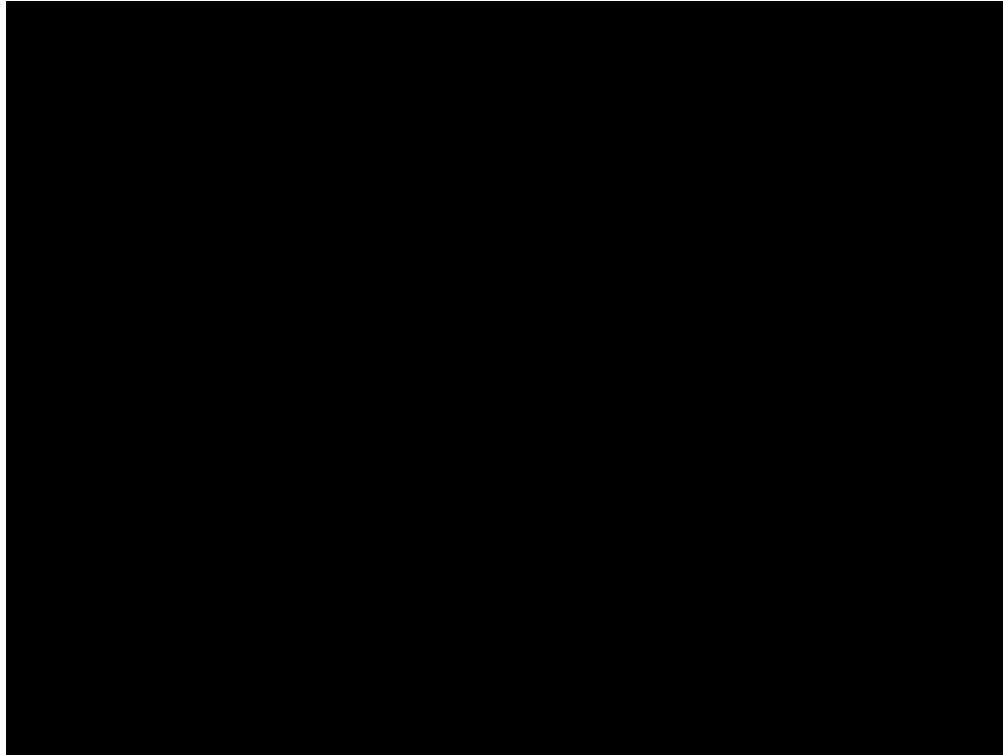
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”Don’t Judge” – Campaign video:



More videos: <https://www.facebook.com/eituomita>



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Example 2: Facebook peer support groups

- Free From Drugs maintains 8 online peer support groups in Facebook.
- The groups are also used for disseminating information geared toward harm reduction
- Example: The Helsinki Police Department was informing the public on very dangerous fentanyl, emerging in street trade in Helsinki, and this info was disseminated in peer groups effectively to users and their families.

ETUSIVU

TIETOJA

KUVAT

ARVOSTELUT



Helsingin poliisilaitos

9. helmik. kello 18.12 • 🌐

Poliisi varoittaa: katukaupassa saattaa liikkua erittäin vaarallista huumausainetta fentanyyliä – yhteys mahdollisesti Helsinginkadun kuolemantapauksiin

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*

Poliisi tiedotti tiistaina, että palomiehet löysivät sammutustehtävän yhteydessä kaksi vainajaa asunnosta Helsinginkadulla Kalliossa. Asiassa ei epäillä henkirikosta,



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8 Facebook peer support groups

- Groups are closed and only people with personal experiences of drugs are accepted as member
- There are separate groups for those in recovery or using drugs and their family members (parents, siblings, spouses) as well as to those who have lost a family member due to drug use
- Professionals, apart from the moderator, are not allowed to become group members
- Social media and group rules offers ways to create safe places for discussing very personal and sensitive topics – but constant attention is required to ensure privacy, trust to it, and overall ethical conduct



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Benefits from Facebook peer support groups



Irti Huumeista ry - Sururyhmä

Suljettu ryhmä
10 kaveria · 54 jäsentä



Irti Huumeista ry - Huumeider

Salainen ryhmä
25 kaveria · 307 jäsentä



Irti Huumeista ry - Toipujat, jo

Suljettu ryhmä
15 kaveria · 51 jäsentä

- Peer support, encouragement and understanding: honest and raw discussions on the loss, coping with it, and on the related emotions – shame, stigma and guilt
- If you can't sleep and you are missing your child, usually you can meet another one who also can't get sleep for the same reason as you in peer support groups
- You can have peer support 24/7



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Grievance group for those who have lost a family member to drug use



Photo used with parent's permission

- The group was set up in the fall of 2017. The group has now almost 60 members. It is the most active group

Mother of a dead child:

” The peer support team gives me the experience that I'm not alone with my pain. I'm not the only one whose dear child made the wrong choices in his life, he started using drugs and died young.”



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Example 3: City of Helsinki created application for supporting people who wish to quit opioid maintenance therapy



- KoHo App was created for those clients in opioid maintenance treatment who wish to quit the therapy for full recovery
- NGOs are now disseminating and using the app
- Users of the application can download it to their phone

The app provides:

- General information on the therapy and recovery process
- A calendar for upcoming appointments with alarm function, a diary for recording recovery process
- Tools for self-monitoring withdrawal symptoms, assessing the risk of relapse, and for monitoring the progress made in recovery process



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Why to be online?

- Online work enables us to offer support for those who would otherwise be hard to reach, and around the clock; it enables to secure anonymity, and lowers the barriers for sensitive topics
- NGOs are a key actor in this work
- NGOs are already utilising the possibilities widely



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*” Via online work we can change peoples lives.
We must remember not everyone is online –
traditional methods are still needed.”*

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