

# ADDRESSING SEXUAL TRAUMA IN SUBSTANCE MISUSE POPULATION

**Making York healthier**  
**Making health fairer**

CEO *Survive* | Mags Godderidge

Director *York In Recovery* |

Mark Green



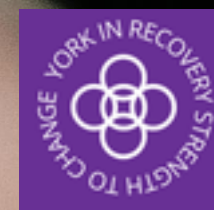
# AGENDA

- Who we are and what we do
- Challenges faced by our communities
- York's health and wellbeing strategy – 10 big goals
- Our proposal
- Questions and answers





# Who we are and what we do





# ***SURVIVE***

Specialist services and trauma-specific interventions in York,  
North Yorks, ERY

- Helpline (Mon-Thurs 10am-12 noon 0808 145 1887)
- Support work
- Counselling
- Trauma therapy
- EMDR psychotherapy (NICE-approved technique for PTSD)

**Any adult survivor of sexual violence**

**Often contact months, years, decades after incident/s**



# ***York in Recovery***

- We are a LERO peer led recovery group
- Peer-support
- Safe space, activities, and connection
  - Activities include: art, pool, quiz, wellbeing workshops, cooking, breakfast sessions, boxing)
- Recovery Cafe sessions – Sun, Tues, Thurs. Fri women only.
  - Conversations can trigger insights into own personal journey and lead to participants seeking professional help
- Allotment - Serenity Garden
- Online support – WhatsApp, Facebook group
- Share you story - poem, blog post, story, or just a rant

**Any adult in recovery or curious about what recovery means for them**

**Often contact months, years, decades since substance misuse started**

# Challenges faced by our communities



Alienated; <sup>HARMFUL</sup> Consuming;  
ALCOHOL; SUICIDAL; Broken;  
<sup>Torment;</sup> Chaos; Stigma; Lonely;  
Sorry; Gambling;  
Alone; cocaine; <sup>DRUGS;</sup>  
Overpowering;  
<sup>Expensive;</sup> Heroin; SAD; <sup>Hell;</sup> <sup>Devil;</sup> The  
<sup>Spent;</sup> <sup>GUILT;</sup> <sup>Devotion;</sup> PAIN;  
SELF-LOATHING; <sup>opiates;</sup> Victim-of-crime;  
<sup>Enslaved;</sup> <sup>Deceitful;</sup>  
Degrading; WORTHLESS; Outcast;  
Rock-bottom Relentless; SELF-HARM;

# ***York in Recovery***

Research suggests 89-94% of substance misuse community have trauma history

PTSD 40% (or higher) in substance misuse population

PTSD not routinely acknowledged / screened for

PTSD *AND* substance misuse associated with:

- Higher addiction severity
- Higher anxiety
- Higher depression

If PTSD not acknowledged and/or treated

- Increased risk of exposure to additional traumatic event/s
- Poorer substance misuse outcomes

*“I was not aware that I even had PTSD – from many things including a sexual assault - until a long period of sobriety”*



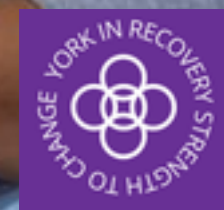
**SUICIDAL BEHAVIOURS**  
psychological distress PTSD *Depression*  
**harmful drinking** **HIGH BMI**  
*Guilt* *Flashbacks* *Nightmares* *Panic attacks*  
**SUICIDE** *Self Harm* **SUICIDAL THOUGHTS**  
Shame **Sexual Trauma** *Anger*  
*insomnia*  
**DRUG DEPENDENCY** *dissociation* *Eating disorders*  
Low Self-esteem **SUBSTANCE MISUSE**  
*irritability* *complex trauma* *chronic pain* *recklessness*  
**Anxiety** *dissociative identity disorder*  
**OBSESSIVE BEHAVIOUR**

# SEXUAL TRAUMA

“The trauma of being raped or sexually assaulted can be **shattering**, leaving you feeling **scared, ashamed, and alone** or plagued by nightmares, **flashbacks**, and other unpleasant memories. The **world doesn't feel** like a **safe** place anymore. You **no longer trust others**. You **don't even trust yourself**. You may **question your judgment**, your **self-worth**, and even your **sanity**. You may **blame yourself** for what happened or believe that you're “dirty” or “damaged goods.” Relationships feel dangerous, **intimacy impossible**. And on top of that, like many rape survivors, you may struggle with **PTSD, anxiety, and depression**”.

Melinda Smith MA, Jeanne Segal PhD

# York's Health and Wellbeing Strategy





# Our 10 big goals at a glance:

**1** OVERARCHING GOAL: Reduce the gap in healthy life expectancy between the richest and poorest communities in York



Reducing anxiety scores and increasing happiness scores by 5%



Bring smoking rates down below 5% for all population groups



Reduce to 15% the proportion of York residents drinking no more than 14 units a week



Reverse the rise in the number of children and adults living with an unhealthy weight



Reduce health inequalities in specific groups



Reduce both the suicide rate and the self-harm rate in the city by 20%



Improve diagnosis gaps in dementia, diabetes and high blood pressure to above the national average, and detect cancer at an earlier stage



Reduce sedentary behaviour, so that 4 in every 5 adults in York are physically active



Reduce the proportion of adults who report feeling lonely from 25% to 20% of our population

# Our 10 big goals at a glance:

**1** OVERARCHING GOAL: Reduce the gap in healthy life expectancy between the richest and poorest communities in York



27.1% **high anxiety** score vs 24.2% nationally



**1 in 3** mental ill-health

**1 in 2** opiate users



over 1 in 5 adults drink **14 units/wk+**

**1,000+** admitted to **hospital** for alcohol-specific conditions 2020/21



nearly 2 in 3 adults **overweight**



4x more likely to **die before 75** if SMI

**worse health outcomes** for those who use substances



**70 died by suicide** (2018-20)

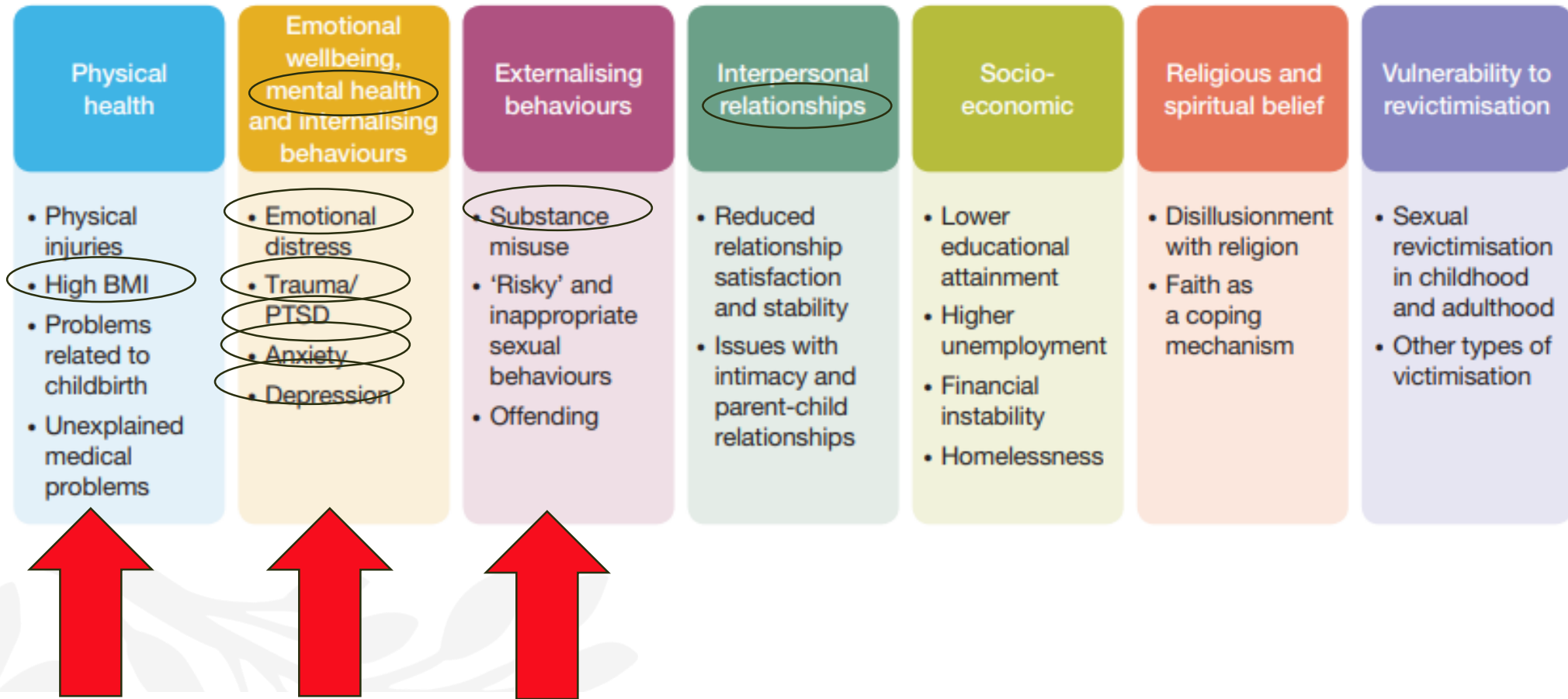
**400+** hospital admissions for **self harm** (2020-21)



**25%** of adult population feel lonely



# #ActOnICSA – 7000+ adult survivors





# Our proposal



# THE PITCH



Reduction in psychological distress (CORE10)

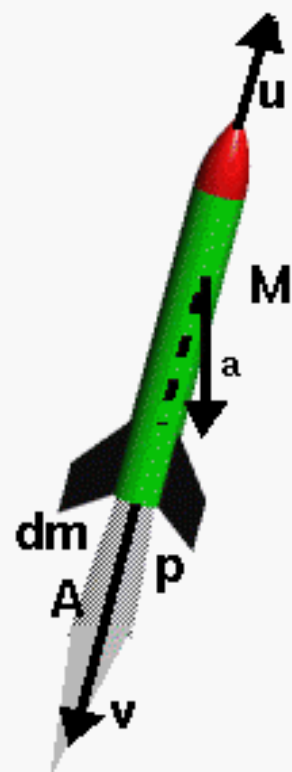
Reduction in trauma symptoms (IER-S trauma scale)

Bespoke feedback surveys

- Improved mental health
- Reduction in anxiety
- Reduction in drinking
- Reduction in drug use
- Continued abstinence/sobriety from alcohol/drugs
- Reduced BMI
- Reduction in suicide
- Reduction in self-harm
- Reduction in suicidal thoughts / behaviours
- Reduction in feeling lonely and isolated
- Reduction in GP / hospital / A&E visits etc etc etc



# Ideal Rocket Equation



$M$  = instantaneous mass of rocket

$u$  = velocity of rocket

$v$  = exhaust velocity

$A$  = exhaust area

$p$  = exhaust pressure

$p_0$  = atmospheric pressure

In time increment  $dt$ , exhausted mass =  $dm$        $dm = \dot{m} dt$

Change in momentum of system =  $M du - dm v$

Force on system =  $(p - p_0) A - M g \cos a$  (neglect drag)

Change in momentum = Impulse = Force  $dt$

$$M du - dm v = [(p - p_0) A - M g \cos a] dt$$

$$M du = [(p - p_0) A + \dot{m} v] dt \quad (\text{neglect weight})$$

$$V_{eq} = \text{equivalent exhaust velocity} = \frac{(p - p_0) A}{\dot{m}} + v$$

$$M du = V_{eq} \dot{m} dt = -V_{eq} dM$$

$$du = -V_{eq} \frac{dM}{M}$$

$$\Delta u = -V_{eq} \ln(M) \Big|_{mf}^{me}$$

$$MR = \text{propellant mass ratio} = \frac{mf}{me}$$

$$\Delta u = V_{eq} \ln \left( \frac{mf}{me} \right) = V_{eq} \ln MR = I_{sp} g_0 \ln MR$$





# THE PITCH



Reduction in psychological distress (CORE10)

Reduction in trauma symptoms (IER-S trauma scale)

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# Survivor voices

When I came into **sobriety** a few years ago, firstly engaging with AA and also York In Recovery, the **support** that I had within those spaces enabled me to give myself the **permission** to not only talk about but **seek help specifically for a sexual assault** and the **devastating** effects and **life altering direction** that a **multiple person sexual assault** with a weapon **over 20 years ago** had had on me.

In 2022 I sought professional help from **Survive** and had multiple sessions with them. During those sessions I felt **able to move through and on from that traumatic event**. It was also in these sessions that the deep realisation occurred that I had also had **other sexual assaults** (including one in a previous relationship) in my past also.

Had these sessions not happened, I am not sure that I would have stepped into the firm emotional sobriety that I now have. It is the **strong combination of support** that I have had, specifically within the **YIR women's groups**, certain AA spaces and **Survive** that I have truly **accepted peace over those traumatic events**.

Female service-user

**ANY QUESTIONS?**

**DO YOU THINK THIS  
IDEA SHOULD GO  
TO ICB?**

