

Faculty Research Highlighted at Substance Use Disorder Event

BOCA RATON, FL (April 11, 2018) – Three FAU faculty members presented their substance use disorder research during “Beacons of Hope: 360 Degrees of Empowerment,” an event that recently drew about 1,000 people to the Boca Raton campus.

The Phyllis and Harvey Sandler School of Social Work and the Delray Beach Drug Task Force partnered to present the 2018 Substance Use Disorder Talks event. Author and radio show host Patrick John O’Brien emceed the event and other speakers, including nationally known celebrities and sports legends, shared testimonies and information.

Janet Robishaw, Ph.D., professor and chair of Biomedical Science Department, whose work focuses on the science of prevention and why some individuals are more susceptible to opioid addiction, addressed the gathering.

With sophisticated genetic testing, within five years, we should have sufficient knowledge about genetic risk factors to develop an accurate genetic profile to determine if a person is in a high-risk group before a doctor considers prescription opioids, Robishaw said. “We need to stop one size fits all medicine. We have knowledge now. We need to use it,” she said.

Wendy Guastaferro, Ph.D., an associate professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, discussed opioid treatment in jails and prisons. Only 15 percent of the people held in state prisons or jails who need treatment get it, Gustaferrero said. When those in treatment relapse, it should be viewed as an opportunity for intervention – not punishment, she said.

The need for family services by opium addicted pregnant women and mothers was highlighted in a presentation by Heather Howard, Ph.D., an assistant professor in the School of Social Work.

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