

The Well



## From ACEs to ASSETS

David Higham – CEO The Well Communities

# LERO Beginnings

- Set up November 2012 as a Social club for People of Live Experience (POLE)
- LERO, grassroots peer-to-peer organisation, organised and managed by people from the community they serve
- Done by, not done to
- Experts on tap, not on top
- Fully committed to ABCD principles and co-production
- Hub & Spoke model of recovery





# Addiction through the eye of the media

Google search







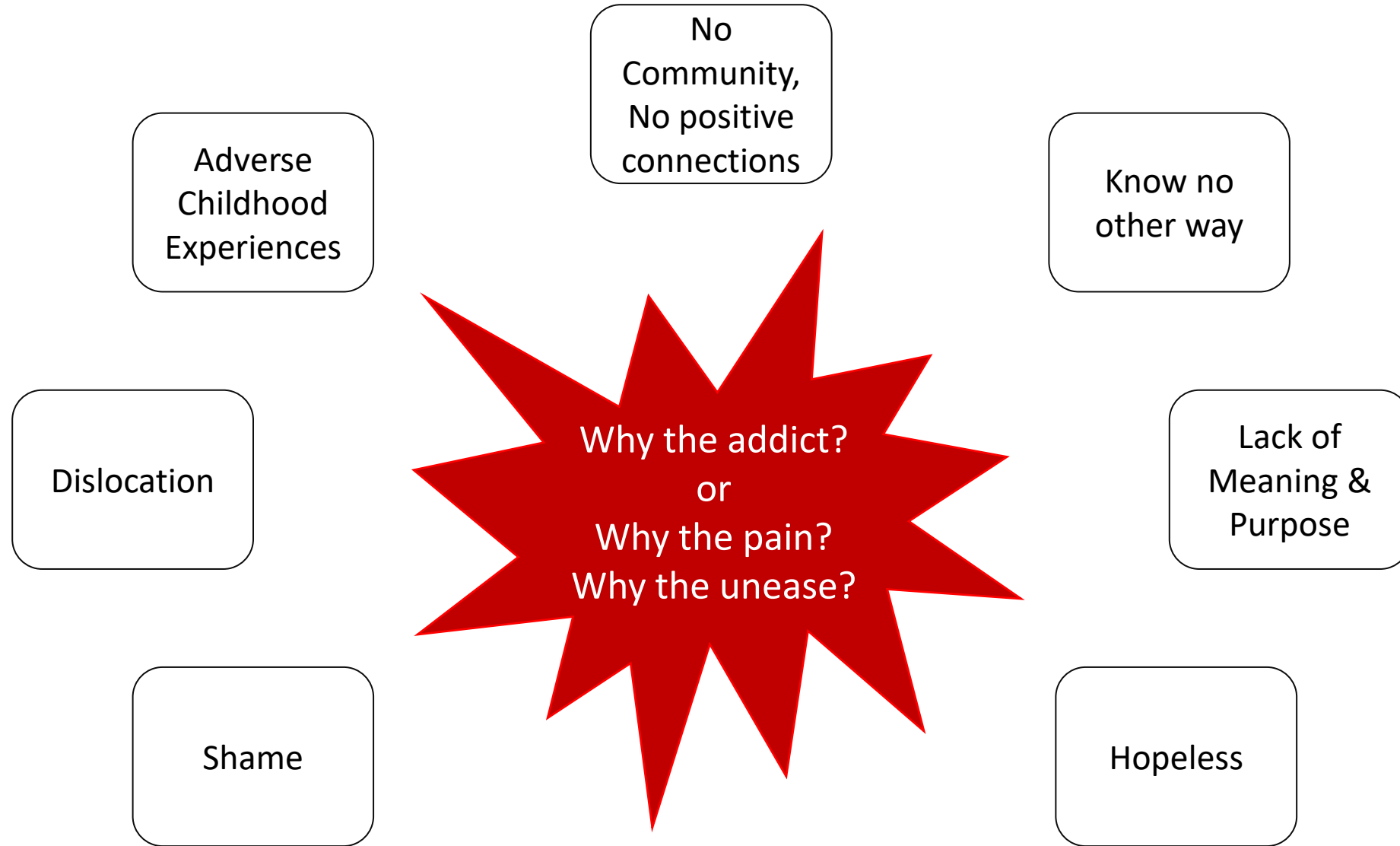




What do we see Problems,  
Solutions or Assets







# Members of the Well & ACES

In a sample of Well staff & Peers it was found that an average of 8 of the 10 ACES had been experienced alongside other adverse experiences such as deprivation.

- GK – 6 x distinct Adverse Experiences in 1 Year 120 + incidents
- DH – 8 x distinct ACES and in 1 Year 200+ incidents
- GP – 8 x distinct Adverse Experiences in 1 Year 200+ incidents
- KH – 10 x Distinct ACEs and in 1 year 500+ incidents

30 years in addiction  
Crack & Alcohol





- GP 200+ incidents
- 7 years in recovery & helping others
- Business Lead TWC
- Awarding from PCC for work in the community.

15 years in addiction  
Heroin & Alcohol





- KH Director of Services 500+ incidents
- 16 years in recovery
- Director of operations TWC
- MBE for work at The Well Communities
- Advisor in parliament on drug policy

25 years in addiction  
Heroin, Crack,  
Benzos & Alcohol





- DH 200+ incidents Founder an CEO
- 17 years in recovery
- Meeting with King Charles
- Author of Rat Hell to Rat Park
- National awards:
- 3<sup>rd</sup> sec leader
- Unsung Hero
- Ambassador of the year Barrow
- Advisor in Parliament Drug Policy





How do we create environments for people to recover?



# Rat Hell and Rat Park

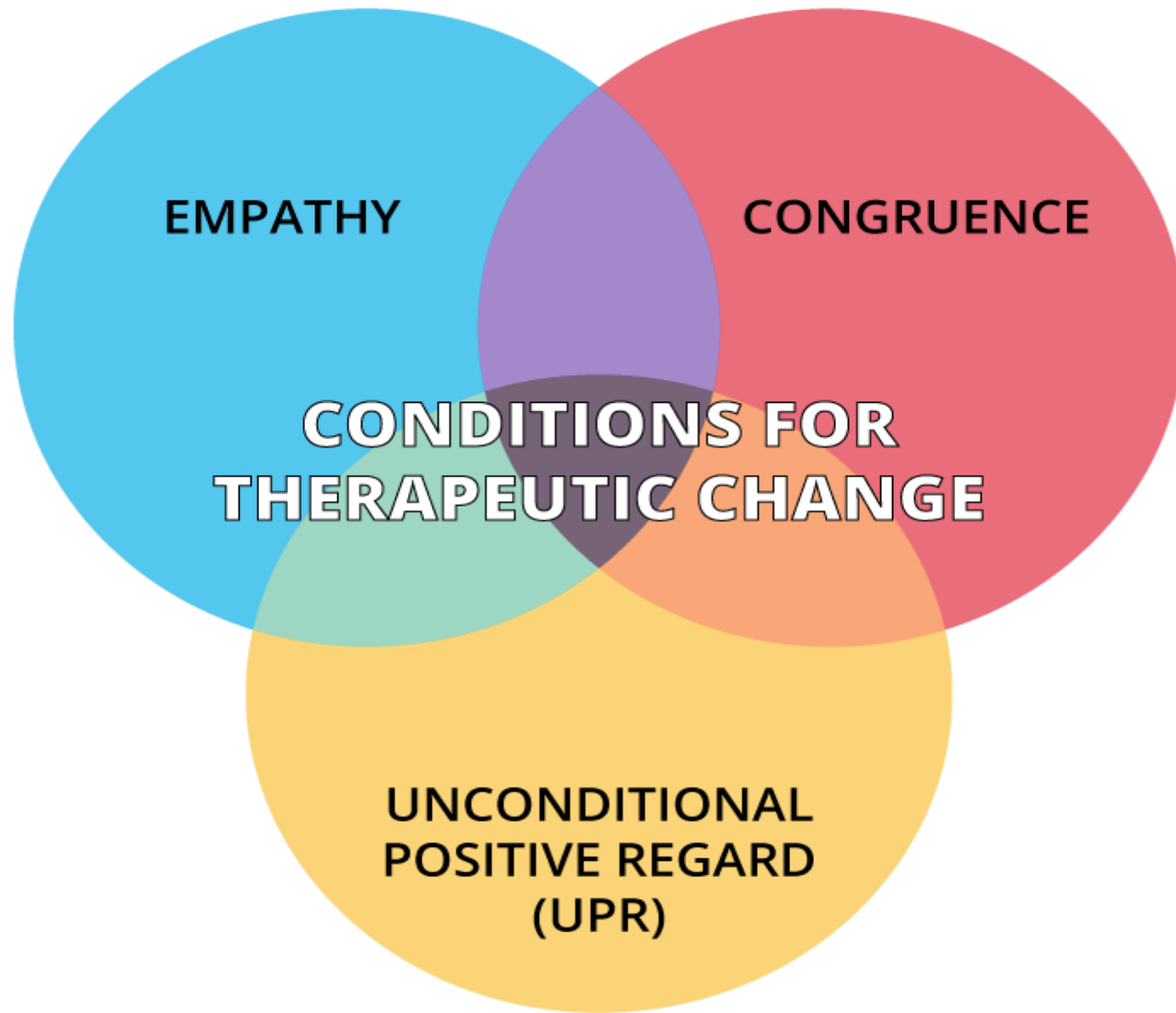
Bruce Alexander

Rat Hell



Rat Park

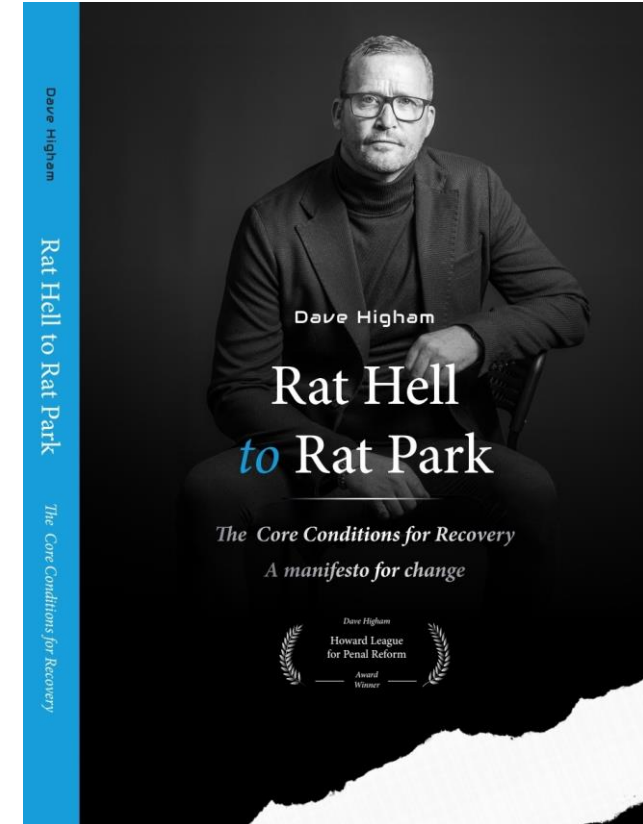




# Core Conditions for Recovery

Developed by the people we serve (bottom up)

1. Lived Experience
2. Connection
3. Meaning & Purpose
4. Community
5. Trauma-Safe Environment (TSE)
6. Hope



Dave Higham  
Book: Rat Hell to Rat Park  
Core Condition's for Recovery  
Manifesto for Change


# Lived Experience

Lived experience is at the core of mental illness. No one truly understands what happens within a psychiatric problem except the person who experienced it (Mark D. Rego, MD).

- LE is the first seeds of hope
- People identifying with People Of Lived Experience (POLE)
- POLE get a sense of belonging with other POLEs
- Partnerships with LEROs or/and LE integrated into the work force
- Shared learning and role modelling
- People with their own lived experience do not have the same power imbalances commonly found in service provider user relationships


# Connection

We invite compassion into our lives when we act compassionately toward ourselves and others, and we feel connected in our lives when we reach out and connect. (Brene Brown: The Gifts of Imperfection)

- Relationships and connections we make are the building blocks to healthy partnerships, communities, and individuals
  - The need for real authentic connections in order to feel safe
  - The need to be around people to be seen, heard & valued
  - Authentic relationships within the team – Honesty, Compassion, Openminded & Supportiveness
  - The need to be one team, not a ME attitude but a WE
- 


# Meaning & Purpose

Enabling people to find meaning and purpose through a sense of belonging, enhancing their wellbeing in a way that supports them to become the best version of themselves.

- Relationships & Family
  - Feeling valued, wanted & needed
  - Work, Hobbies & Sports
  - Sense of direction having goals
  - Our recovery begins to give us M&P we want to better ourselves
  - We help people move beyond just stopping DoA but to reach great heights
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# Community


The individual, family and community are not separate; they are one. To injure one is to injure all; to heal one is to heal all (William White)

- We can't build a community around a service, we have to build a service around a community
  - Developing a recovery community is fundamentally about resourcing and supporting diverse communities to address their own needs
  - The community has the ability to heal itself and sustain peoples wellbeing
  - We have become consumers and clients, not citizens and neighbours
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# Trauma Safe Environment

We consciously create a safe, trusting and non-judgmental environment, promoting a culture of mutual respect and unity (Dave Higham).

- We recognise and except that people have survived multiple ACTs but will view the world and ME as a dangerous, frightening place
  - TSE in our community and within our work place
  - None judgemental with our members and within our own staff team?
  - Unconditional positive regard, Empathy & Congruence (bring yourself)
  - Trust, Honesty & Respect
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# Hope

Hope is created and generated by having lived experience at all levels of the organisation, at all stages of recovery.

- If people don't have HOPE they are hopeless
  - Organisationally believe people can and do recovery/change
  - The individual believes they can change
  - Instil the belief in people the possibility of recovery
  - Having dreams and aspirations
  - Stop saying abstinent is too high a bar to reach
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# Through this model:

1000s of people supported since we began

392 people stayed in our accommodation

4,000 members are apart of our community

68% stay drug & alcohol free

60% of our workforce are the people that used our service

52% of offenders do not re-offend





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**Copy of the Book:**  
[book@thewell2.co.uk](mailto:book@thewell2.co.uk)

**Amazon: Rat to Rat Park Dave Higham**

**Website: [davehigham.org](http://davehigham.org)**

[Dave Higham | To deliver it, you've got to live it.](#)