

Why We Do It

THERE IS NO FLAG LARGE ENOUGH TO COVER THE SHAME OF KILLING INNOCENT PEOPLE

~ *Howard Zinn*

Over the last century, society has realigned its moral compass to address social justice issues such as suffrage, civil rights, labor, the environment and homosexuality. Each movement has brought us closer to a more inclusive democracy where individual rights are recognized and honored and accepted in mainstream society

Once again, we stand at the crossroads of transformation and apathy. Transformation requires vision, passion, courage, commitment and endurance to succeed. The first step is to elevate awareness of the issue by providing the public and policy makers with a clear definition of the issues supported by empirical data and personal accounts detailing the disease process and recovery. Recent research in Neuroscience has proven that Addiction is a biopsychosocial disorder that often results in a chronic brain disease which should logically preclude the moralization and criminalization of persons with substance use disorders in the future. We at Chooper's believe that the perception of addiction and the treatment of those afflicted has evolved into a critical human rights issue in many countries including the United States. The current archaic, prohibitionistic and often draconian policies rooted in moralism must be replaced with policies and practices that reflect humanistic values.

- We also believe that substance use/abuse is a manifestation of a underlying systemic social disorder characterized by economic and racial inequality and the erosion of informal social institutions and communities.
- We believe that the myth of mental illness and addiction was

scribed over a century ago and that there exists a great divide between current bio-psycho-social knowledge and the language used today.

- We believe this archaic language impacts societal perception, perpetuates polarization and discrimination of the afflicted and violates human rights.
- We believe that the economic interests of corporate America influence, and in many cases, dictate healthcare and criminal justice policy and inhibit or preclude social change.
- We believe that every human being has “unalienable Rights” to equal access to quality treatment and to recovery.