

**CITIZENS ASSEMBLY ON DRUGS
MALAHIDE CASTLE
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**National GP Co-Ordinator HSE Addiction Service
Former Director, ICGP Substance Misuse Programme**

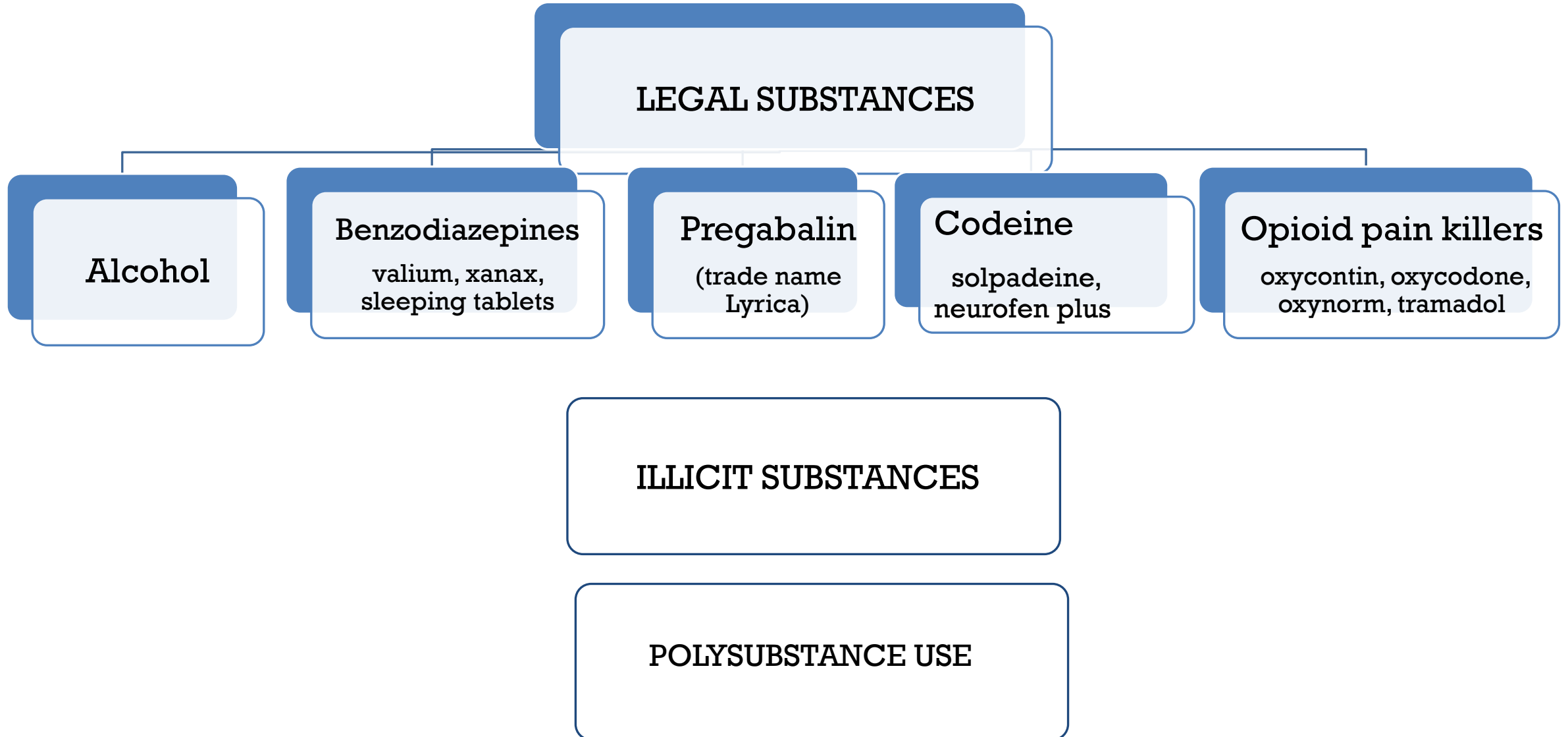
What experience do I have in treating substance users?

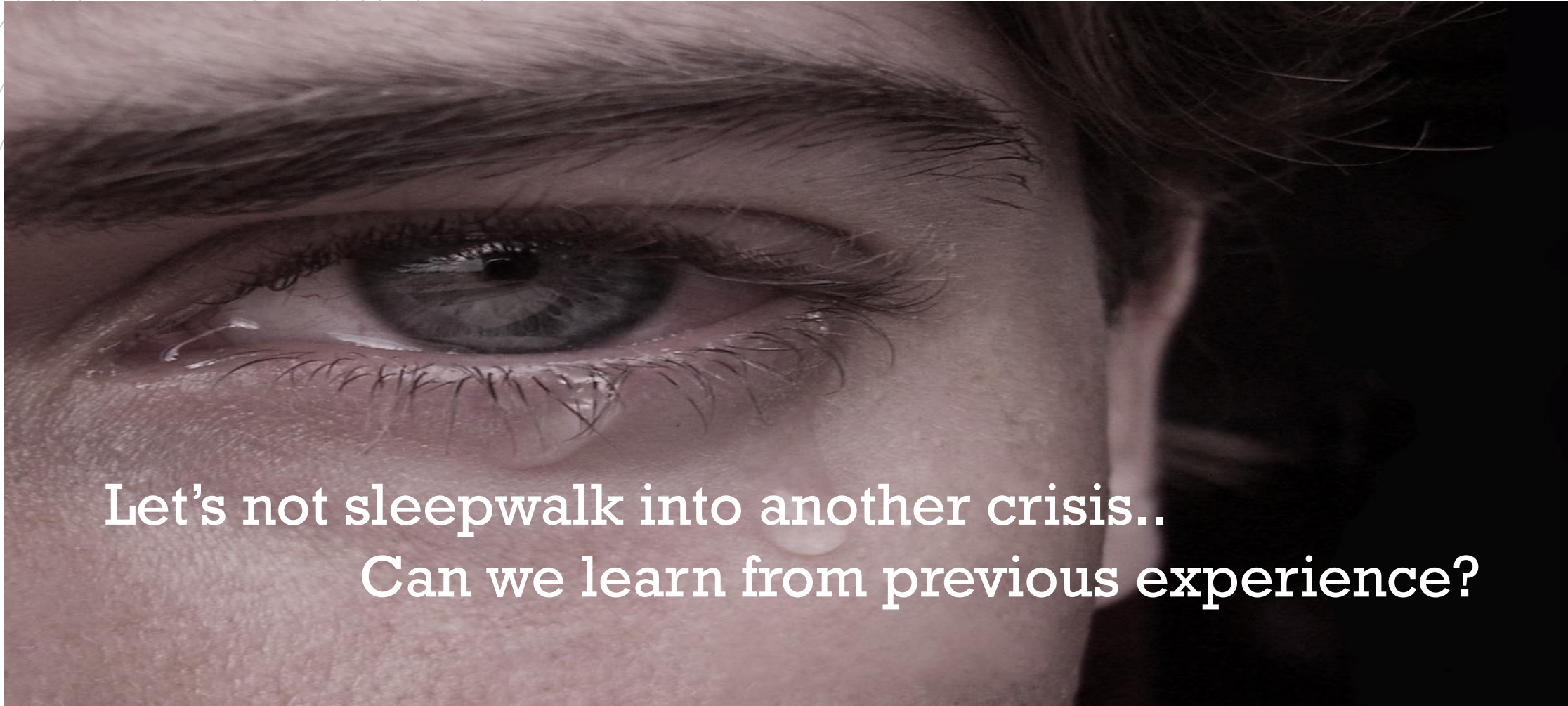
- 30 years of experience working in substance misuse in UK and Ireland
- Support GPs nationally with complex cases
- Responsible for training GPs in substance misuse
- Involved in setting up and delivering the national opiate substitution programme (in excess of 10 thousand people in treatment)
- Medical Director of Practitioner Health which looks after doctors, dentists and pharmacists who may have addiction issues

What do I know about addiction?

- ALL psychoactive substances both legal and illegal have the potential to be abused and to ruin lives
- Substance misuse problems are not confined to deprived areas
- GPs are the first line in trying to manage patients with problems
- There is an increasing normalisation of drug use in the younger population

What type of substance misuse do GPs see?



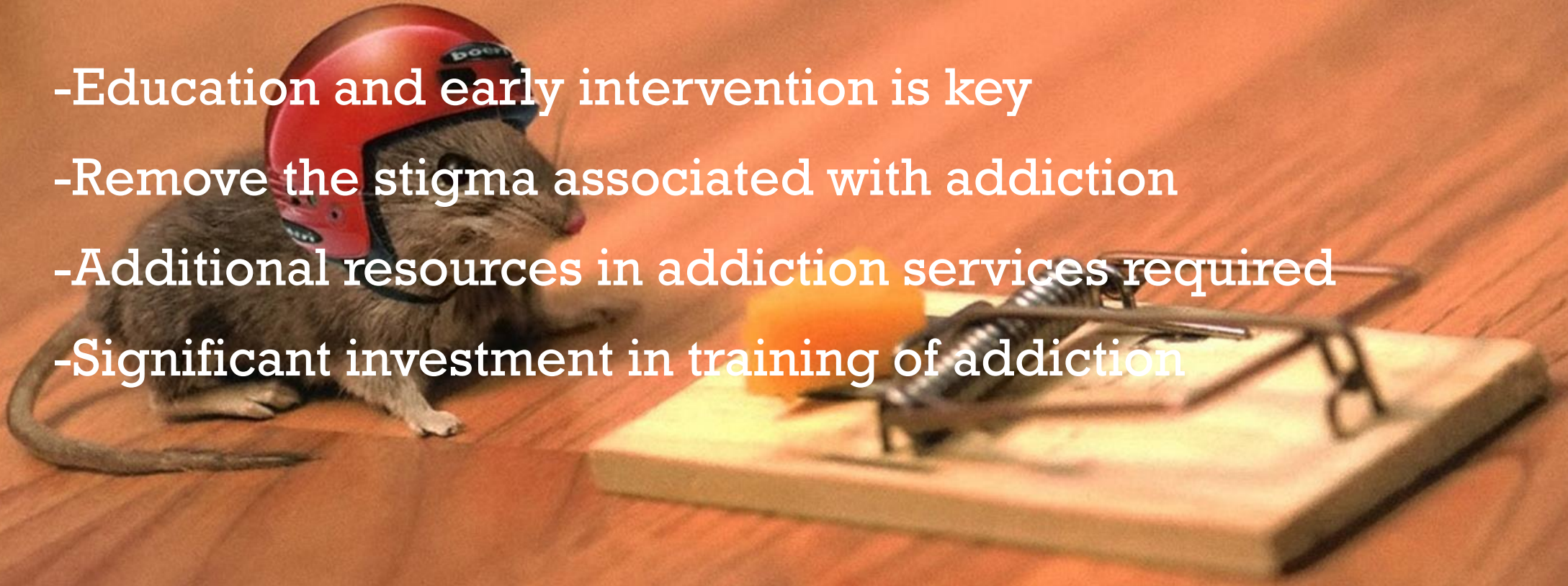


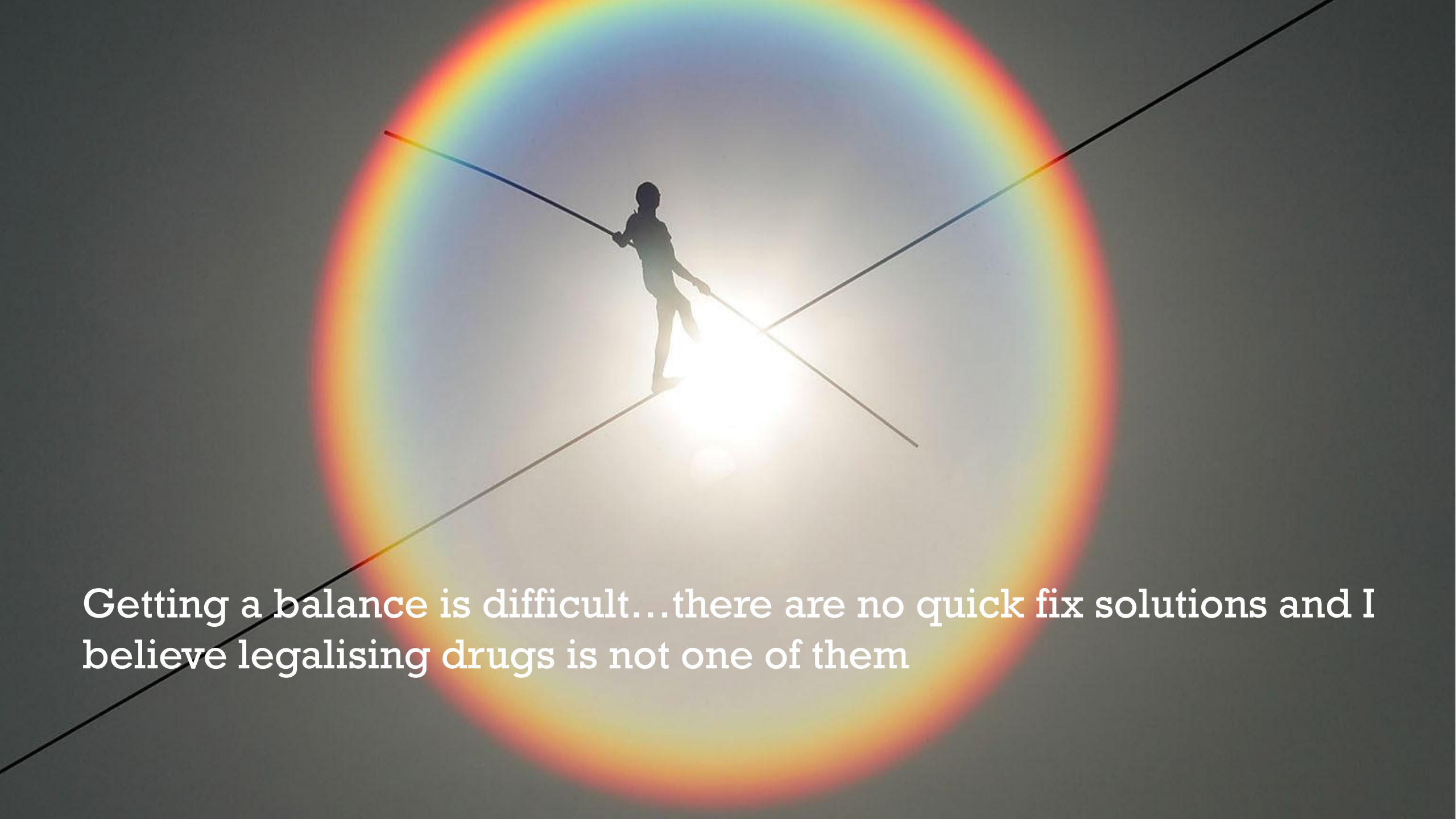
Let's not sleepwalk into another crisis..

Can we learn from previous experience?

Prevention is always better than cure...

- Education and early intervention is key
- Remove the stigma associated with addiction
- Additional resources in addiction services required
- Significant investment in training of addiction





Getting a balance is difficult...there are no quick fix solutions and I believe legalising drugs is not one of them