



HOLLYWOOD & ENTERTAINMENT

# Harm Reduction And Comedy Is The Theme Of ‘Murf Meyer Is Self-Medicating’

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You may not be a former heroin addict like mustachioed wild man Murf Meyer, but chances are you’ve probably used drugs in the past and are likely using them now. Coffee, alcohol, cigarettes, and believe it or not even [sugar](#) meet the clinical definition of a [drug](#) which is: “any substance that causes a change in an organism’s physiology or psychology when consumed.” So there you have it. The next time you say, “I just need a coffee to get through my day,” you know what you’re really saying, and that’s okay. You’re also practicing harm reduction which coincidentally is what the new podcast from Murf Meyer called [Murf Meyer is Self-Medicating](#) is all about.

“So who is Murf Meyer anyway?”, you might be asking yourself to which I would respond, “hold on, that’s what his entire origin story first episode (out today), [‘Episode 0 - It Takes a Village’](#) is all about.

Seriously, that’s the whole first episode. It’s a matter of fact, freewheeling, whimsical, monologue of an origin story of how he grew up in the coal country of rural Pennsylvania, a deeply unhappy place that tends to produce people that do drugs and alcohol, and how he became a substance user starting at age 10 till his current age of 39.

The bottom line is, he got clean for a while with help from his friends and moved to New York where he started taking classes and performing at UCB. He quickly became a regular on *The Chris Gethard Show* when it was on NYC public access from 2011 to 2015, and then again on cable for three more years. He learned a lot from Chris who is [well known](#) for mining his own personal neurosis for humor, and began to develop his own style of truth-telling and told me in describing Chris that the “tension in the darkness is cathartic.”

A born extrovert and storyteller, I like to describe Murf as kind of being like John Belushi by way of Tom Waits fusing the best elements of both of them. Fun fact: he tells me Matt is his real name and Murf happened when he was a kid and dyed his hair blue and someone said, “what do you get when you combine Matt and a Smurf?”

But back to the harm reduction stuff, for Murf, harm reduction is kinda like a science lab of seeing what works and what doesn't. He will gladly tell you he is no expert and his new podcast will build on the work he was doing with his recent live streams where he had guests and experts on to be honest about their experiences, remove the stigma that comes from being an admitted drug user, and point people to help where they can get actual treatment. “Harm reduction,” he says, “is a set of strategies designed to minimize the harmful consequences of drug use.”

“What do you think about micro-dosing?”, I asked him. “I’ve been hearing about it, but I’m more of a macro-dose kind of guy,” he allowed with a laugh. “Everybody knows somebody that needs help,” he reminded me, “It might be your brother, sister, mother, daughter or whoever it is and maybe they can watch my show, have

a laugh and use it as an icebreaker (to talk about harm reduction).”

He says he’s been working on the material for about two years and it started off as a one-man show, and due to COVID-19, became a podcast. You can see this style in a pitch meeting to investors at the Laughter Lab from 2019.

He was hoping to take his show live to states that are being hit the hardest by the opioid epidemic and do it right inside drug treatment facilities to get them to laugh and hopefully see some light at the end of the tunnel.

He had to quit heroin cold turkey, but realizes that’s not for everyone and describes harm reduction as an umbrella that’s inclusive for everyone to take recovery or moderation or abstinence at their own pace.

“We all go through things,” he says, “and I’m not trying to be preachy or tell people there’s only one way, just that ‘this is what I did and maybe you can learn from it.’”

He’s very happy to point people to other ways to get help like Next Distro, a company that does a syringe needle exchange program, sending clean needles and Narcan kits, which helps with overdose. Another thing he’s found very helpful for lifting stigma is mailing someone you care about an overdose prevention kit instead of confronting them, so people know that you actually care about them.

This is still very much a personal issue for Murf who has lost friends to overdose and reminded me that America had over 70,000 overdoses in 2019 because, “we love being first no matter what.”

Future episodes of the show will run on Wednesday and Friday, where he will share more of his personal experiences and talk to experts and people from all walks of life about their experiences.

The [whole team](#) behind him is dedicated to the Harm Reduction movement and if his podcast is anything like his presentations, then we're in for some "aww shucks" crushing honesty with a lot of laughter, storytelling, and maybe even some tears.

I can't wait.



**Joshua Dudley**