

## **Beyond the Headlines: Understanding and Addressing Emerging Drug Trends**

Grant Hovik, MA

### **Level**

Intermediate

### **Room**

### **Track**

Substance Use Disorder

### **CE**

CPA/BBS/CJER

### **Bio**

**Grant Hovik, MA** received his Master of Arts degree in Clinical Psychology from Columbia University, Teachers College. Grant has worked in the field of substance use disorders through research, training, and technical assistance since 2009. Currently, he is a clinical trainer and health educator for UCLA Integrated Substance Use and Addiction Programs (ISAP) and the Pacific Southwest Addiction Technology Transfer Center (PSATTC), where he conducts a variety of trainings on evidence-based practices for substance use including Motivational Interviewing, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment. Grant is currently the co-director of the Pacific Mental Health Awareness Training (P-MHAT) project at UCLA ISAP, where he leads training and technical assistance activities to address mental health issues that arise in Pacific Islander communities such as suicide, psychosis, and substance use. Grant is also an instructor for UCLA Extension's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling Certification Program where he teaches about the science of substance use and co-occurring mental health disorders.

### **Narrative**

New and evolving drug trends continue to shape the landscape of behavioral health, criminal justice, and community safety. This workshop goes beyond the headlines to unpack what's really happening with emerging substances such as synthetic opioids (including fentanyl and xylazine), synthetic cannabinoids, kratom, high-potency cannabis, methamphetamine, cocaine, and mixed opioid-stimulant use. Participants will learn the latest epidemiological data, learn to recognize key terminology and classes of substances, and understand the acute and long-term effects that matter most in forensic and clinical settings. The session will conclude with practical strategies for strengthening local prevention and treatment responses to these evolving challenges.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Describe the latest science regarding synthetic cannabinoids, opioids, stimulants, benzodiazepines, and drugs that don't fall so neatly into classifications (e.g., kratom)
- Identify two other emerging drugs along with emerging adulterant information (e.g., xylazine and medetomidine)
- Specify two public health strategies to increase access to prevention and treatment

