**ON THESE PAGES, please provide notation that shows evidence of your thinking, questioning and connecting WHILE you read (text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world), along with your best attempts at figuring out unknown words in context. Then, complete the Food for Thought section at the end.**

**Photos outing heroin couple spark questions of purpose and privacy**

**Police say they want users to 'think twice' but publication is criticized as 'propaganda tool'**

By Mark Gollom, [CBC News](http://www.cbc.ca/news/cbc-news-online-news-staff-list-1.1294364) Posted: Sep 16, 2016 5:00 AM ET Last Updated: Sep 16, 2016 5:00 AM ET



This photo, released by the East Liverpool, Ohio, Police Department, shows a four-year-old boy sitting in a vehicle behind his grandmother and her boyfriend, who are unconscious after using heroin. CBC News has blurred the boy's face. (East Liverpool Police Department/Associated Press)

The images are stark and startling — two adult heroin users, passed out and slumped over in the front seat of an SUV while a four-year-old boy sits in the back seat, staring straight ahead.

And while the East Liverpool, Ohio police defend the rare and controversial move of releasing those images on their [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/cityofeastliverpool/posts/879927698809767), their tactic has raised questions over how effectively it will deter such behaviour.

"That is a hard-hitting picture and anyone who sees it is affected by it," said David Hammond, an associate professor of public health and health systems at the University of Waterloo. "It makes the abstract image of addiction very concrete."

"The thing it does that's interesting — it talks about the consequence of addiction on others. And that's the tragedy." CBC News has blurred the boy's face.

Hammond wouldn't comment on whether it was appropriate for police to release those images. Yet to be truly effective, images like those need to be accompanied with information for addicts on how to get help, he said.

Police should have also included the address, web link or phone number of addiction treatment services, he said.

**'Hell of a good fire alarm'**

"The phrase people use is, 'You can pull the fire alarm, but you have to help someone get out of the building.' So that's a hell of a good fire alarm in terms of image but you need to provide them with addiction treatment services if you actually hope to help users."

The pictures have gone viral, and comments have flooded onto the [police Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/cityofeastliverpool/posts/879927698809767), for and against the release of the images.

Police said they posted the pictures because they wanted the public to see what officers must deal with every day. They also hoped it would convince "another user to think twice about injecting this poison while having a child in their custody."

Police in the city of 13,000, which borders Pennsylvania and West Virginia, say the images were taken Sept. 7.

An officer watched a vehicle weave and stop. The officer approached and noticed signs the driver was impaired. The officer said the driver indicated he was taking his unconscious passenger to a hospital, and then he became unresponsive. The officer called paramedics, who revived the pair.

The woman, who is the boy's grandmother and was granted custody of the child six weeks ago, is being held on a child endangerment charge. Her boyfriend pleaded guilty to child endangerment and operating a vehicle while intoxicated. The boy has since moved in with other relatives.

Brian Allen, the city's director of public service and safety,[has said the decision to release the picture was made](http://www.businessinsider.com/ohio-police-post-graphic-photos-of-a-couple-overdosing-2016-9) after consultations with the mayor's office, police chief and the city's law director.

**'Propaganda tool'**

But he said he found it "somewhat offensive" that police were using these pictures "as basically a propaganda tool."

In his opinion, the police disseminated the images not because they were newsworthy, but to make a "propaganda point against the use of opiates."

Some of the controversy involved the decision by the police not to blur the boy's face.[Allen has said the city could not legally alter](http://www.people.com/article/ohio-couple-suspected-overdose-facebook-photos-blur-child) the photos as public records.

Silverglate said he believed showing the boy's face was in "extremely bad taste" and a violation of his privacy.

"There is zero public interest in seeing the face of the child but very strong interest in learning what the [adults] have done."

"This kind of idea that you can scare people out of doing some dumb stuff has not been proven to be particularly effective over the years," he said.

People who are struggling with an addiction, getting sick and anxious about not using drugs, often won't think clearly, he said.

"The whole obsession is, 'I need to get my fix' and then people do stupid stuff."

Provocative advertising or messaging is often used in an attempt to curb drug-related behaviour. For example, in 1987, Partnership for a Drug-Free America launched the popular "This is your brain on drugs" commercial, with an egg in a frying pan meant to represent the effects of drugs. Anti-smoking campaigns have also sought to show the harmful effects of tobacco.

**'Tells an entire story'**

"In terms of engagement, the old expression is a picture says 1,000 words. Well, the right picture can convey a complete story," said branding expert Tony Chapman. "In this case, this thing tells an entire story."

Chapman predicted the pictures will be used by groups lobbying for safe injection sites and advocates for stronger drug control.

The photos create immediate empathy for the child and disgust for the adults, he said. In a world of social media, they can be amplified "millions upon millions" of times.

"You drop this one pic into social media and this thing could ripple for years to come. It just has an explosive quality to it again because it just strikes a very powerful emotional core."

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT:**

**The photo in this week’s article is called “somewhat offensive” in being used as a “propaganda tool”. In YOUR evaluation, just how far should law or drug enforcement agencies go with their use of “propaganda tools”? Should anything be off limits when trying to send serious yet effective messages to the public? If yes, please explain where you believe the limits should be, and why. If no, explain just how far you believe these agencies should go (do you have any examples of other potentially effective strategies?), and why. (Evaluating)**