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What is harm reduction?

Harm reduction is looking at the big picture, to the systems and policies that create harm for people who use drugs, and working to change those systems. Drug policy, criminalization, and the war on drugs have been historically harmful, so dismantling those frameworks is a key part of harm reduction.

Harm reduction is a process of engaging with peers, policy makers, health workers, researchers and activists, to build relationships, listen, and create community-driven social change.

Harm reduction is a practical set of strategies and tools to help people stay safer when engaging in activities that could have risk, like sex and substance use.

Harm reduction...

- Accepts that sex and drugs are part of our world and are primarily fun, pleasurable, and beneficial to most people most of the time
- Works to minimize potential harmful effects of substance use
- Understands substance use as a complex phenomenon that encompasses a continuum of behaviours and acknowledges that some activities and ways of using are safer than others
- Calls for non-judgmental, non-coercive services and resources to support people who use drugs and their communities in reducing harm
- Ensures that people who use drugs are meaningfully involved in the creation of programs and policies designed to serve them
- Recognizes that systems and policies are designed to target and harm specific groups
- Recognizes that the realities of colonization, poverty, class, racism, social isolation, trauma, homophobia, criminalization and other social inequalities affect people's ability to access services and mitigate harms.

HARM REDUCTION IS NO JUDGMENT
HARM REDUCTION IS CHANGING OLD SYSTEMS
HARM REDUCTION IS CLEAN NEEDLES

What are the risks of injury on a discarded needle or other drug use equipment?

There are no documented cases of HIV infection through contact with a needle or syringe discarded in a public place.

Globally, there have been two case reports of hepatitis B (HBV) and three of hepatitis C (HCV) transmission from needle stick injuries in the community, it is extremely rare (Moore, 2020).

If someone gets a needle stick injury, clean the wound thoroughly with soap and water as soon as possible. Do NOT squeeze the area to induce bleeding. Seek medical attention right away.

Moore, Dorothy L. Canadian Paediatric Society, Infectious Diseases and Immunization Committee. Retrieved August 9 2021 from <https://www.cps.ca/en/documents/position/needle-stick-injuries-in-the-community#ref6>

What is the difference between decriminalization and legalization of drugs?

Decriminalization means that an activity no longer qualifies as criminal conduct, but that activity is unregulated and may still be punishable by administrative penalties like fines.

Legalization means the ability to lawfully regulate an activity.

For more information about decriminalization and legalization of drugs please visit The Canadian Drug Policy Coalition: <https://drugpolicy.ca/>

Does harm reduction encourage or enable drug use?

No. People do not use drugs because harm reduction services are available.

Find the research at <https://drugpolicy.ca/resources/evidence/>

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HARM REDUCTION IS CHANGING OLD SYSTEMS
HARM REDUCTION IS KEEPING PEOPLE ALIVE
HARM REDUCTION IS MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE
HARM REDUCTION IS CHECKING PERSONAL BIAS
HARM REDUCTION IS SAFE INJECTION
HARM REDUCTION IS OPENING FOR CHANGE

Where can people with substance use disorder access treatment and services in Manitoba?

For a list of currently available agencies please see the government of Manitoba website for Health, Seniors, and Active Living:
<https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/mh/addictions/adult.html>

Where can people access harm reduction services?

For a list of locations in Manitoba providing harm reduction services visit the Street Connections map:
https://www.streetconnections.ca/service_map.php

What is drug poisoning - why are we using that vs overdose?

"A note on language. An overdose is commonly considered taking too much of a known substance. What we are experiencing now is people not knowing what is in the substances they are consuming, including the strengths. In this text, we use the term drug poisoning instead."

<https://www.momsstoptheharm.com/overdose>

Where can I find statistics on overdose?

City of Winnipeg open data - Narcan administration:
<https://data.winnipeg.ca/Fire-and-Paramedic-Service/Narcan-Administrations/qd6b-q49i/data>

Surveillance of Opioid Misuse and Overdose in Manitoba:
<https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/surveillance/opioid.html>

National statistics: <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/substance-related-harms/opioids-stimulants/maps>

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How do you safely dispose of a needle?

FIND A NEEDLE PICK IT UP

FOLLOW THESE EASY STEPS

**PEER
 WORKING
 GROUP**

M-H-R-N
 MANITOBA
 HARM REDUCTION
 NETWORK



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