



Harm Reduction

In our communities, in our hospitals

AARM Conference
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Overview

- Defining Harm Reduction
- Exploring our values
- PLC Harm Reduction Initiatives
- Support for Harm Reduction
- Harm Reduction in practice
- Benefits of including a harm reduction approach for substance use
- Tanya's story

Defining Harm Reduction

“ Harm reduction refers to policies, programmes and practices that aim to reduce the harms associated with the use of psychoactive drugs in people unable or unwilling to stop. The defining features are the focus on the prevention of harm, rather than on the prevention of drug use itself, and the focus on people who continue to use drugs. ”



Defining Harm Reduction

—————
I DON'T PROMOTE DRUG USE.
I DON'T PROMOTE CAR
ACCIDENTS EITHER, BUT I STILL
THINK SEATBELTS ARE A GOOD IDEA.

—————
Harm Reduction - practicing common sense since the 1980's.

**WE SHOULD BAN
LIFE JACKETS
& OTHER FLOTATION DEVICES**

care2
<http://bit.ly/ban-floaties>

THEY ONLY ENCOURAGE RISKY BEHAVIOR. THE ONLY
100% EFFECTIVE WAY TO PREVENT DROWNING IS
TOTAL ABSTINENCE FROM GOING IN THE WATER.

and if you do, by chance, find yourself struggling with drowning, then no life-saving or
otherwise procedure or act should be allowed to be administered. you got yourself into this
mess, you have to live with the consequences.
YOU SHOULD SEE DROWNING AS A GIFT.

ALSO, IF YOU WERE FORCIBLY **PUSHED** INTO THE WATER, **DON'T WORRY**. IF IT WAS A LEGITIMATE
PUSHING, YOUR BODY WILL FIND A WAY TO SHUT OUT ALL THE WATER AND SURVIVE THE DROWNING.

original source: <http://breanieswordvomil.tumblr.com/>

Defining Harm Reduction

Helmets

Life Jackets

Parachutes

What are some examples
of harm reduction-based
interventions?

Immunizations

Birth control

Condoms

Seatbelts

Defining Harm Reduction

- Why do people use substances?
- How would you define *harm reduction*?
- Have you ever used a harm reduction approach in your own practice? If so, when?

Principles of Harm Reduction

- Evidence based and cost effective
- Incremental
- Dignity and Compassion
- Pragmatism
- Focus on outcomes (not activities)
- Prioritization of health goals



Exploring our values

???

AGREE



DISAGREE



Values of Harm Reduction

- Promote safe, compassionate, competent and ethical services
- Promote health and well-being
- Promote and respect informed decision making and client autonomy
- Preserve dignity
- Maintain privacy and confidentiality
- Promote justice
- Accountability

Common Concerns

- Enables drug use and entrenches addictive behaviour
- Encourages drug use among non-drug users
- Drains resources from treatment services
- Increases disorder and threatens public health and safety

Support for Harm Reduction

AHS policy:

“Alberta Health Services recognizes the value of harm reduction as an important component in the continuum of care required to effectively serve individuals that use psychoactive substances.

Alberta Health Services may directly, or in partnership with community agencies, provide a range of harm reduction programs and services that assist individuals, families and communities to reduce the risk and adverse consequences of psychoactive substance use.” (2013)

Support for Harm Reduction

“The CNA and CANAC recognize harm reduction as a pragmatic **public health approach** aimed at **reducing the adverse health, social and economic consequences** of at-risk activities...

(CAN and CANAC Joint Statement on Harm Reduction)

“The **CMA fully endorses harm reduction strategies and tools**, including supervised injection sites...CMA’s position is that addiction should be recognized and treated as a serious medical condition.”

(Review of the Controlled Dugs and Substances Act, Canadian Medical Association, March 2014)

“The **WHO strongly supports harm reduction as an evidence-based approach** to HIV prevention, treatment and care for people who inject drugs.”

(Evidence for Action Technical Papers: Effectiveness of Sterile Needle and Exchange Programming in Reducing HIV/AIDS in Injecting Drug Users)

About Safeworks

- Outreach based, mobile services
- Harm reduction supply distribution
- STI testing, treatment and follow up
- Immunizations
- Referrals, counselling, education and support



Harm Reduction Community Practice

- Harm reduction supply distribution (aka needle exchange programs)
- Naloxone Kits
- Supervised consumption services
- Outreached based services



What we see at the PLC

- Endocarditis, cellulitis, sepsis
- Withdrawal treatment
- Formed patients
- Patients leaving AMA
- High costs
- Difficult patients
- Overdoses



Harm Reduction Acute Care Practice

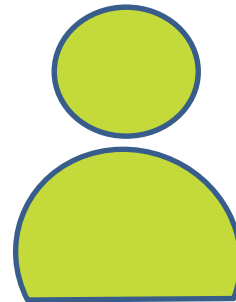


- Address immediate and long term needs
- Assure pain is properly managed
- Trauma-informed care
- Connection to addiction and mental health resources
- Proper discharge planning and linkage to community

Hospital Benefits

Connection to
care and services

Less leaving
AMA



Empowerment

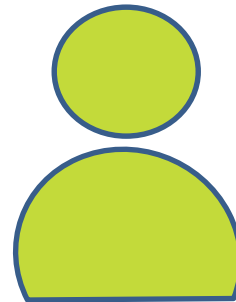
Trust and respect
with service
providers

Decreased
security
interactions

Individual Benefits

Connection to
care and services

HIV and Hep C
prevention



Empowerment

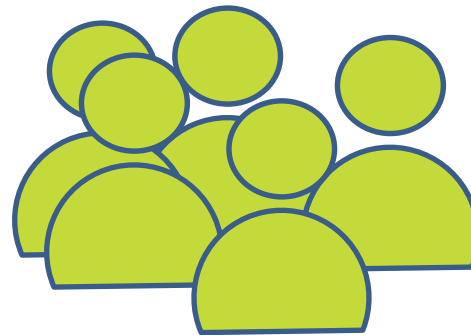
Trust and respect
with service
providers

Decreased
emergency
room visits

Community Benefits

Decreased stigma
and discrimination

Decreased
crime



Safer
environment

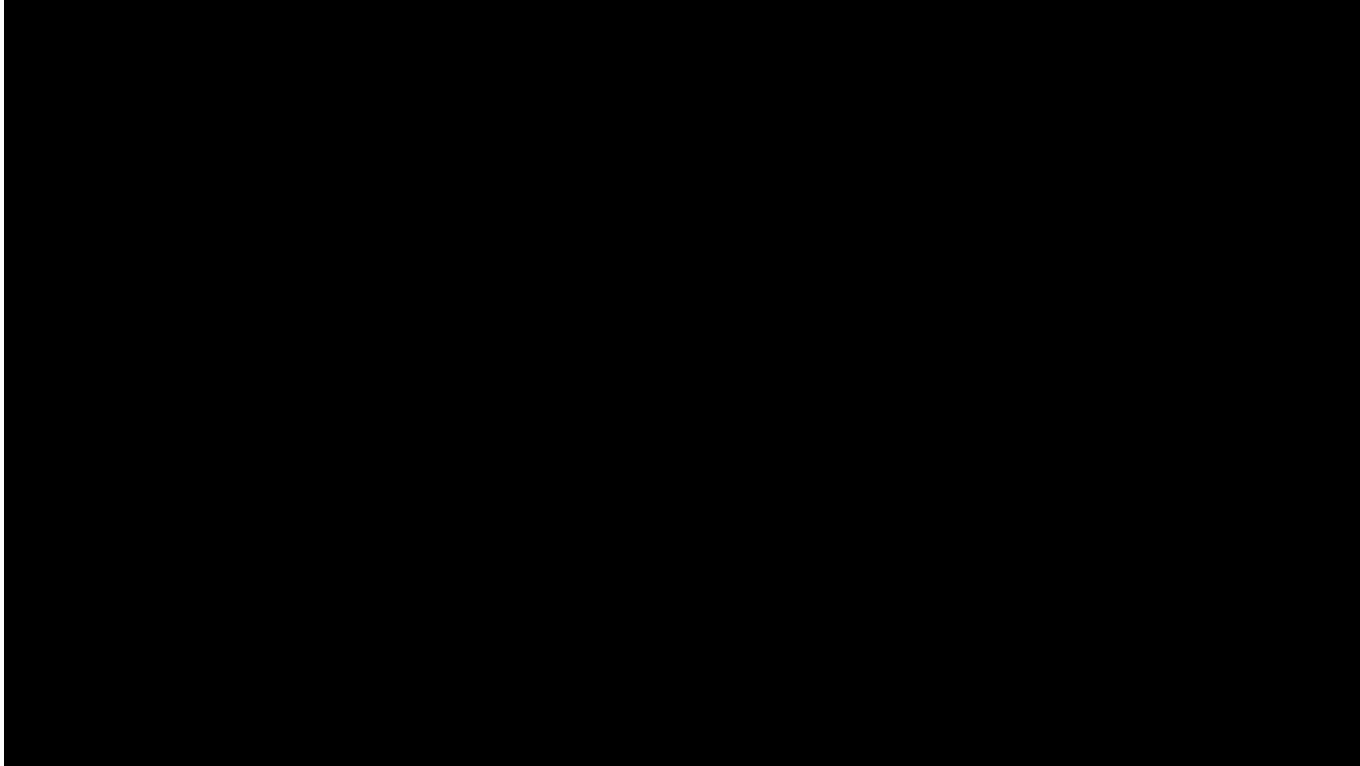
Improved
population health
outcomes

Lower
healthcare
costs

Harm Reduction Practices for all settings

- Be non-judgemental and self-aware
- Be patient with yourself and clients
- Be realistic in your expectations
- Listen well – actively and empathetically
- Create an opportunity for the client to think of themselves as part of a community
- Focus and build on any positive changes and strengths
- Remember: you are witnessing their important events and struggles. Take care of yourself.
- Learn more: trauma informed care, culturally safe care

Tanya's Story



Select References and Resources

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- CATIE: www.catie.ca
- AAWEAR: www.aawear.org
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