

Harm reduction is not a concept unique to drug use... other examples include:

- Wearing a seat belt while driving
- Lifeguards at public swimming pools
- One use needles for tattoos and piercings

Quick Stats

- Vancouver safe injection site, Insite, has had 4,922 overdose intervention and no deaths since its opening in 2003¹
- After the opening of Insite, fatal overdoses declined 35% in the surrounding area²
- After shifting to a public health focus, Portugal reported a decline in new cases of Aids: from 568 in 2001 to 38 in 2012³

Resources

(1) supervisedinjection.vch.ca/research/supporting-research

(2) Marshall, B. D., Milloy, M., Wood, E., Montaner, J. S., & Kerr, T. (2011). Reduction in overdose mortality after the opening of North America's first medically supervised safer injecting facility: A retrospective population-based study. *The Lancet*, 377(9775), 1429-1437. doi:10.1016/s0140-6736(10)62353-7

(3) Drug decriminalisation in Portugal: setting the record straight:
<https://www.unodc.org/documents/ungass2016/Contributions/Civil/Transform-Drug-Policy-Foundation/Drug-decriminalisation-in-Portugal.pdf>

(4) <https://dancesafe.org/testing-kit-instructions/> (replace with ours once ready?)

(5) Giglio, R. E., Li, G., & Dimaggio, C. J. (2015). Effectiveness of bystander naloxone administration and overdose education programs: A meta-analysis. *Inj. Epidemiol. Injury Epidemiology*, 2(1). doi:10.1186/s40621-015-0041-8

(6) <http://www.ccsa.ca/Resource%20Library/ccsa-010055-2004.pdf>

(7) www.emcdda.europa.eu/about/partners/reitox-network

(8) <http://www.tripproject.ca/trip/>

(9) <http://www.catie.ca/en/practical-guides/hepc-in-depth/prevention-harm-reduction/harm-reduction>

Alternative Approaches

Harm Reduction

Harm Reduction is about meeting people where they're at... Many, if not most of the harms associated with drug use are avoidable through quite basic services. It is unrealistic to expect an end to the recreational use of psychoactive substances. Harm reduction strategies are meant to keep people who use drugs safe, and reduce the individual and social costs of drug use.



Harm Reduction Strategies

Drug Checking⁴

As the drug market is a black market and therefore unregulated, adulterants are common in drugs. There are a number of reagent tests that are cheap and easily accessible. Reagent tests are a chemical that reacts to form different colours depending on the chemicals in the sample being tested. When people know that they bought something they wouldn't want to take, they are much less likely to take it.

Supervised Injection Sites ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾

These facilities allow injection drug users to administer previously purchased substances under the supervision of medical health professionals and provides clean needles. This can prevent overdose and the spread of infectious diseases like HIV

Naloxone Distribution⁵

An opioid overdose reversal drug, now available in Canada without a prescription.

Needle Exchange⁶

Needle exchange programs allow injection drug users to safely dispose of used needles, and provides sanitary needles. This reduces the spread of infectious diseases and avoids other harms posed by use needles being improperly disposed of.

Public health Alerts⁷

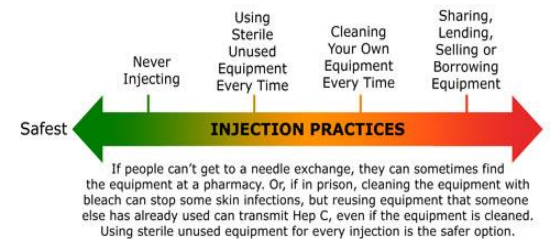
Health service providers and information networks, like REITOX in Europe⁷. communicate knowledge of the presence of dangerous adulterants, or unusually high quality substances. This can prevent additional adverse incidents by informing people who use drugs of dangerous trends in their area.

Information⁸

The simplest harm reduction approach is education. If people are informed about what they put into their body, and how to do so safely, the risk for adverse drug related incidents decreases significantly.

Why Harm Reduction?

Harm reduction strategies are basic services that dramatically lower the social costs of drug use. It maintains the dignity of people who use drugs by providing them the resources required stay safe, healthy, and perhaps most importantly... alive.



Harm reduction strategies ensures the right to life, liberty and security of person to the most vulnerable members of society. Barriers to these services are counterproductive and unnecessarily burdens public health.