



“Harm Reduction”



What does “Harm Reduction” mean to you?



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CANADIAN DRUGS AND SUBSTANCES STRATEGY

A COMPREHENSIVE, COLLABORATIVE, COMPASSIONATE
AND EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH TO DRUG POLICY



HR and the Continuum of Addiction Services

What is the composition of a “Harm Reduction Team”?

Acceptance that People Engage in “Risk Behaviors”

- Recognizing that risk taking is part of the universal human experience
- Acknowledging that individual risk tolerance is completely different from person to person
- “Risk behaviours” have both negative and positive effects – people have reasons and are motivated by something to engage in those risks
 - Find a person’s motivation and build from there.
- The most challenging part of the work is coaching/convincing our clients of the POSITIVES of stopping a risk behavior

Targeted and Practical Interventions

- We do not attempt to minimize or ignore the real and tragic harm and danger associated with risk behavior (eg. Sleeping rough)
- The priority is to decrease the negative consequences of risk behavior to the individual and others, rather than stop “risk behavior” all together
- Goal is to maximize health and safety for individual and community

Meeting People Where They are At

- Harm reduction recognizes that people benefit from a variety of different approaches. There is no one prevention or treatment approach that works reliably for everyone.
- Non-coercive, relationship based approach
- Doing with – not for
 - We are not in the business of dictating people's lives, but rather providing advice and options and consequences
- Asking people to meet you, too!

Relentless and Assertive Compassion/Support

- Reduction of “risk behavior” and/or abstinence is not required in order to receive respect, compassion or services.
- Boundaries are a form of compassion, support AND mutual RESPECT
 - I believe you are capable of acting in a certain way
- “Show me, don’t tell me”
 - It can be frustrating when people we are trying to help appear to reject it
 - Trust must be built with time and through actions
 - How are you different from other service providers in the past?



Questions and Discussion