



Housing Support and Harm Reduction

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May 8, 2025

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MISSION

To educate diverse populations on Harm Reduction principles and practices in order to advance the healing of individuals, families, and communities.

VISION

We envision a world in which everyone can access compassionate, multidimensional care to increase wellness and pursue meaningful life goals.

VALUES

- Authentic Conversations
- Evidence-Based Practices
- Cultural Competency
- Meet People Where They Are
- Person-Centered Care
- Trauma-Informed Care
- Support Multiple Pathways to Recovery
- Advocate for Recovery Oriented Systems of Care



AGENDA

1

**SUBSTANCE USE
DISORDER (SUD)**

2

**PRINCIPLES OF HARM
REDUCTION**

3

HOUSING FIRST

4

HOUSING ISSUES

5

APPLIED HARM REDUCTION

6

Q&A



WHAT IS SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER (SUD)?

SUD is a medical condition characterized by an uncontrolled use of a substance despite harmful consequences. It affects a person's brain and behavior, leading to an inability to control the use of legal or illegal drugs, alcohol, or medications.

"Addiction is the only disease that convinces you that you do not have it"

~Denis Wholey

*moral lapse?
lack of willpower?
deviant behavior?*

*low IQ?
trained into it?
criminal mind?*



WHAT “CAUSES” SUD?

- GENETICS
- RACE/ETHNICITY
- FAMILY/UPBRINGING
- CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENT
- TRAUMA (STRESS)
- MEDICATION MISMANAGEMENT
- MEDICAL COMPLICATIONS (RX, TBI)
- WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT
- SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT
- ECONOMICS
- CRIMINAL JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT
- CO-OCCURRING MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS



WHAT IS HARM REDUCTION?

harm reduction

A pragmatic, humanistic approach to high-risk behaviors, such as drug use and sex work, that focuses on mitigating the harmful consequences of such behaviors rather than eliminating the behaviors themselves.

Harm Reduction and Risky Behaviors, Sarah K.S. Shannon, DOI:
10.1093/OBO/9780195396607-0222

*Compassion for people
who use drugs*

Harm Reduction

Refers to policies, programs and practices that aim to minimize the negative health, social and legal impacts associated with drug use, drug policies and drug laws. Harm reduction is grounded in justice and human rights.

Harm Reduction International, Conference 2023

*Social Justice for institutional
discrimination and racism*

*Harm Reduction is evidence-based, reflecting decades of
medical, behavioral, and social science studies.*



BASICS OF HARM REDUCTION

- COMPASSION FOR PEOPLE WHO USE ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUGS
- A SET OF PRACTICES TO HELP INDIVIDUALS STAY ALIVE UNTIL THEY CAN COMMIT TO A RECOVERY PATH FOR THEMSELVES
- A MEANS OF HELPING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES HEAL DURING TIMES OF INTERNAL STRIFE AND EXTERNALLY AMPLIFIED TRAUMA.
- APPLICATION OF EVIDENCE-BASED MEDICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE PRINCIPLES.
- A SOCIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT TO RECOGNIZE AND COMBAT INSTITUTIONAL/SYSTEMIC RACISM.
- COMMUNITY EDUCATION TO DISPEL STIGMA.

AWARENESS

PRACTICES

EDUCATION

ADVOCACY

EQUITY

[Harm Reduction Coalition, Principles of Harm Reduction](#)



illiterate
bipolar
early recovery
gang member
medical cannabis
stalked
child abuser
HIV positive
schizo-affective
murderer
lung cancer

2 months pregnant
anger management issues
undocumented
PTSD
cocaine
lost house
severe depression
childhood abuse
domestic violence victim
fentanyl + xylazine
autistic
alcoholic

traumatic brain injury
sex worker
bankruptcy
veteran

BE GENTLE WITH OTHERS YOU MEET
REMEMBER, YOU DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO THE FULL PICTURE

WHAT YOU SEE SOMEONES LIFE

*Counter misinformation
and dispel stigma!*



THE CASE FOR HOUSING “FIRST”

"Housing is harm reduction. Without a safe, stable place to live, all other health interventions are undermined."

~Sam Tsemberis, founder of the Housing First model

"Housing itself is the foundation and platform for achieving [health, recovery, and well-being] goals."

~U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness

"Housing is a crucial determinant of health and of particular salience for people living with a substance use disorder (SUD). Lack of affordable housing exacerbates vulnerability to risky substance use, mental health stress, risk of recurrence of use if in recovery from SUD, and environments that are difficult to keep safe and clean."

~Craig Evan Pollack et al., "Leveraging the Affordable Housing Sector to Respond to the Opioid Crisis"





BENEFITS OF HOUSING

- > Less regular illness
- > Focus on physical and mental health
- > Medication management/security
- > Search for employment
- > Work with family (and CPS)
- > Communal living positive in drug court
- > Make friends, share skills
- > Fosters better nutrition
- > Safe space reduces stress
- > Allows for hobbies, reflection, and self-work
- > Proximity to community resources
- > Access to education (especially literacy)





COLLATERAL ISSUES

- > The drugs don't go away
- > Undesirable visitors
- > Resident conflict (inside/outside)
- > Can allow for isolation
- > Criminal justice requirements
- > Hiding contraband
- > Exposure to triggers
- > Theft, bullying, racial conflict
- > Incarceration mentality
- > Ineffective supervision



ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM



**Evergreen
Treatment
Services**



REASONS FOR RULES?

- > URINALYSIS & DRUG TESTING
- > CURFEW/TRACKING
- > POST-INCARCERATION AWARENESS
- > PROBATION REQUIREMENTS
- > DRUG COURT REQUIREMENTS
- > RESTRAINING/NO CONTACT ORDERS
- > DE-ESCALATION & REPORTING
- > RELATIONSHIP MANAGMENT
- > HIPPA/LEGAL/FINANCIAL EXPOSURE



Harm reduction applies to residents, staff, and involved agencies!



HUMANISTIC THEORY

- **SELF-ACTUALIZATION - *ACHIEVE FULL POTENTIAL***
- **FREE WILL - *OWN ACTIONS AND CHOICES***
- **HOLISTIC VIEW - *CONSIDER THE WHOLE PERSON***
- **PERSONAL MEANING & SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE - *VALUE LIVED EXPERIENCE***
- **EMPATHY & UNCONDITIONAL POSITIVE REGARD - *RELATIONSHIPS HELP GROWTH AND HEALING***





HARM REDUCTION IN PRACTICE

- PERSON-CENTERED, TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE
- STAFF WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE, E.G. CPRS
- RESIDENTS AS STAKEHOLDERS
- CONNECT TO RESOURCES IN REAL TIME
- WORK WITH STAKEHOLDER AGENCIES
- EDUCATION IN LIFE SKILLS
- PROVIDE SIMPLE PLEASURES
- OPPORTUNITIES FOR AUTONOMY AND BUILDING TRUST



UPCOMING COURSES

SUPPORTING PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS: A HARM REDUCTION PATHWAY



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING IN SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER



Open Registration

Full-day Overview

May 15, 9 am-4 pm

pop-up special \$40 per person

June 5, 9 am-4 pm

\$100 per person

3-day Comprehensive

June 11-13, 9 am-4 pm

\$300 per person

all Central time

CEUs

2-hour: 2 CEU

Full-day: 6 CEU (2 in ethics)

3-day: 18 CEU (6 in ethics)

*CEUs pre-approved for all seven
Minnesota Certification Board
credential categories!*

via Zoom

Training in a facilitated workgroup setting that values critical thinking and the group wisdom of participants.

*In-person trainer available
for custom bookings.*

Curriculum

- **Nationally recognized**
- **Multidisciplinary**
- **Evidence-based**

Developed and trained by passionate advocates with lived and professional experience in SUD and its community and greater social impacts.

THANK YOU!

Bill Houston

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WILDER
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May 8, 2025

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