



# Harm Reduction Principles

Michelle Dawson - Precious Illonah



# Zoom Keeping



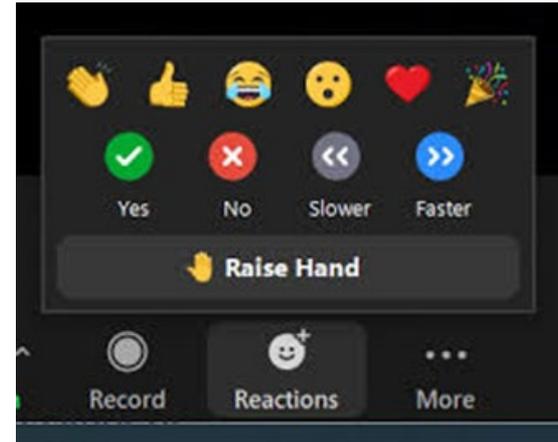
Recording will be available on [targethiv.com/elevate](https://targethiv.com/elevate)



Participation:  
Please use Zoom Reaction Features including Raise Hand



Audio:  
Please mute when not speaking



# Disclaimer

The ELEVATE project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$XX with 100% funded by HRSA/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

The people in the images in this presentation are models and may or may not have HIV.

# Partners



# Facilitators



**Lauren Miller**  
(She/her/Ella)



**Michelle Dawson**  
(She/Her)



**Precious Illonah**  
(She/Her)

# Objectives

By the end of this webinar, you will be able to:

Describe the philosophical basis of harm reduction, the movement's historical roots, and how it currently influences other service areas

Explore their own attitudes about harm reduction

Brainstorm strategies for a “step-down” harm reduction approach for an identified behavioral challenge

Identify next steps to integrate harm reduction approaches into their work



Let's Learn About **You**

# In the chat, tell us... True or False?

Harm reduction encourages people to use substances or engage in risky behavior.

- True
- False

# In the chat, tell us... True or False?

Adopting a harm reduction approach means condoning substance use or risk behavior.

- True
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# In the chat, tell us... True or False?

People with substance use challenges will never have to “own up” to their substance use and quit with a harm reduction approach.

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# In the chat, tell us... True or False?

A harm reduction approach places people at greater risk of harm and danger because of their lifestyle.

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People with substance use challenges cause their own problems and that's why they need to stop using substances.

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A harm reduction approach encourages more crime and danger to the public because it doesn't mandate substance use treatment.

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# In the chat, tell us... True or False?

Harm reduction is a move toward legalization of illicit drugs.

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# In the chat, tell us... True or False?

People with substance use challenges can get over their problems if they want to.

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# In the chat, tell us... True or False?

Abstinence from use is the best intervention for all substance users.

- True
- False

# In the chat, tell us... True or False?

Harm reduction should be condemned.

- True
- False

# Harm Reduction in the News

**Forbes**

Feb 12, 2022, 08:51pm EST | 57,913 views

## Is The Biden Administration Really Funding Crack Pipes? Here's How Such Claims Emerged

BRIEFING ROOM

### White House Releases List of Actions Taken by the Biden-Harris Administration Since January 2021 to Address Addiction and the Overdose Epidemic

JANUARY 18, 2022 - PRESS RELEASES

**Chicago Tribune**

### Misleading 'crack pipes' uproar shows enduring stigma ...

But there's one other thing the harm reduction group Live4Lali hands ... headline: "Biden Admin to Fund Crack Pipe Distribution to Advance..."

1 week ago



**AIDS United** @AIDS\_United · 21m

With drug overdoses at an all-time high, we must work to ensure that there is federal funding for **harm reduction** organizations.

Contact your congressional leaders today and tell them to fund efforts to support people who use drugs.

**Kentucky Harm Reduction Coalition**

**DON'T LET THEM FOOL YOU**

**SAFE SUPPLIES SAVE LIVES**

**STIGMA JEOPARDIZES THEM**

Overdose deaths are so high that the Biden team is embracing ideas once seen as taboo

Updated October 27, 2021 - 5:56 PM ET  
Heard on All Things Considered

**Marco Rubio** @marcorubio · Feb 8

Biden is sending free meth & crack pipes to minority communities in the name of 'racial equity'

There is no end in sight for this lunacy

[mol.im/a/10487091](https://mol.im/a/10487091)

**National Harm Reduction Coalition** @HarmReduction · Feb 24

"The hospital is providing **harm reduction** kits to people who come in to receive medical attention—for any reason—and who say that they use drugs and don't plan to quit."



filtermag.org

San Francisco Hospital Program Offers Harm Reduction to Patients

In some hospitals in the United States, doctors will send people home with prescriptions for opioid use disorder medications like ...

2 10 16



# What is Harm Reduction?

# What is Harm Reduction?

Harm reduction is a set of policies, programs, and practices that aim to reduce harm associated with substance use in people who are unable or unwilling to stop.

The defining features are the focus on the **prevention of harm**, rather than the prevention of substance use itself, and the focus and respect for people who continue to use substances.



\*Paraphrased from the Harm Reduction Coalition and International Harm Reduction Association, <https://harmreduction.org/>

# Harm Reduction



Harm Reduction is a “people first” approach that is grounded in respect for people who continue to use substances.

# Harm Reduction (continued)

The term **harm reduction** refers to:

1. The philosophical and political movement of harm reduction
2. The application of the harm reduction framework broadly in other contexts
3. Harm Reduction Services: A set of specific substance use, infectious disease, and health interventions typically associated with the harm reduction movement

# Harm Reduction in **Everyday Life**



[Dr. Tatarsky: We Engage In Harm Reduction When We Drive & Wear Seat Belt](#)



# Principles of Harm Reduction

# Eight Principles of Harm Reduction

1. Accepts that licit and illicit substance use is part of our world and chooses to work to minimize its harmful effects
2. Understands substance use is complex and encompasses a continuum of behaviors, acknowledging that some ways of consuming substances are safer than others
3. Establishes quality of individual and community life and well-being as the criteria for successful interventions and policies.

# Eight Principles of Harm Reduction (continued)

4. Requires the non-judgmental, non-coercive provision of services and resources to people who use substances and the communities in which they live in order to assist them in reducing attendant harm.
5. Ensures that people who use substances, and those with a history of substance use, routinely have a real voice in the creation of programs and policies designed to serve them.
6. Affirms substance users as the primary agents of reducing the harms of their substance use, and seeks to empower users to share information and support each other.

# Eight Principles of Harm Reduction (continued)

7. Recognizes that the realities of poverty, class, racism, social isolation, past trauma, discrimination, and other social inequities affect both people's vulnerability to and capacity for effectively dealing with substance related harm.
8. Does not attempt to minimize or ignore the real and tragic harm or danger associated with licit and illicit substance use.



# Poll

Which of the following is *not* an example of a harm reduction activity?

- a. Wearing a condom when you have sex
- b. Wearing a helmet when you ride a bicycle
- c. Wearing a seatbelt when you ride in a car
- d. Providing clean syringes (needles) to a person who injects drugs
- e. Wearing masks in public places during outbreaks of respiratory illness
- f. Putting warning labels on cigarette packages

# Terrell's Story



[Terrell: Harm Reduction Saved My Life](#)



# The History of Harm Reduction

# History of Harm Reduction: 1960s

The Black Panther Party's survival programs such as Free Breakfast for children and health clinics



# History of Harm Reduction: 1970s

The Young Lords launched an acupuncture program for heroin users in the South Bronx which helped establish roots in the early days of HIV.



# 1980s

- The grassroots and activist response to the AIDS crisis in the 1980s and beyond
- Policies blocked it was thought to be condoning the use of substances
- **HIV prevention programs:** Syringe exchange programs are the most well-known example of harm reduction for HIV prevention
  - Both people who use substances and people with HIV experience significant stigma, discrimination, and health disparities.
  - The same social determinants that put an individual at risk for HIV also put them at risk for substance misuse

# Harm Reductions **Associations**

Harm Reduction has become intrinsically linked to a variety of specific health and substance use intervention programs, namely:

- Syringe exchange programs
- Overdose prevention/education
- Medication-assisted treatment
- Wound care clinics
- Peer navigation/organizing
- Maintenance support groups

# At The Intersection



AT THE INTERSECTION: Stories of Research,  
Compassion, and HIV Services for People Who Use Drugs

**WHAT IS HARM REDUCTION?**

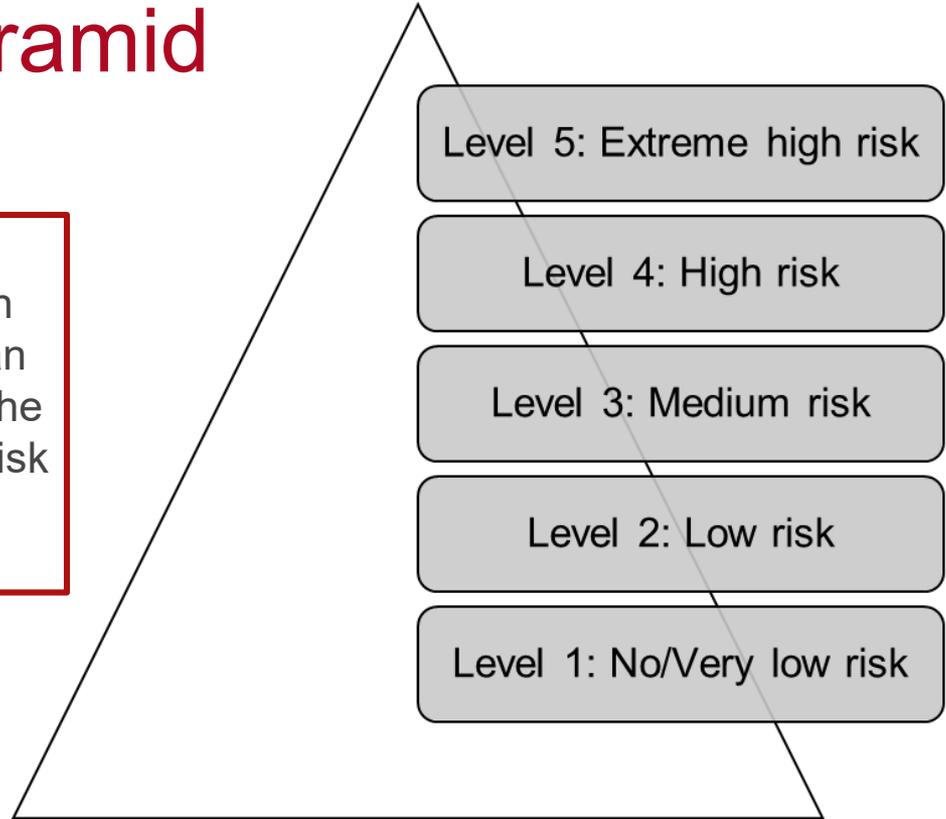
[HHS Overdose Prevention](#)



# The Harm Reduction Pyramid Approach

# Harm Reduction Pyramid

The harm reduction pyramid approach believes that some risks are worse than others, and that individuals can weigh the risks they take to find a way to reduce risk that works for them.



# Using The Reduction Pyramid

**Individuals are encouraged to address what is most risky.**

**Example:** Traffic Deaths

Level 5: Speeding, tailgating, texting, drinking, and no seatbelt

Level 4: Texting, drinking, no seatbelt and tailgating

Level 3: Drinking, no seatbelt and tailgating

Level 2: No seatbelt and tailgating

Level 1: Tailgating

A man with short hair and a beard, wearing a light-colored sweater over a collared shirt, is smiling. He is positioned on the left side of the slide, with a red gradient overlay behind him.

# Let's Review a Harm Reduction Case **Study** **Together**

# Harm Reduction in Action: Ed's Story - Drug Rehab Options

Ed, is a gay male in his early 50s who has been living with AIDS for over 20 years. He has a history of polysubstance abuse (alcohol, marijuana, takes ritalin for ADHD, over a year abstinent from cocaine after being diagnosed with PTSD from being assaulted) and smokes half a pack of cigarettes a day. Ed agreed to participate in therapy sessions to address his depression, anxiety, and later his substance abuse.



# Harm Reduction in Action: Ed's Story - Drug Rehab Options

*Year 1:* Ed agreed to weekly individual therapy and he was open about his lifestyle and substance abuse history. The focus was mainly put on building a sense of self-efficacy and monitoring alcohol intake. Later in his first year, he was able to reach a treatment goal and attributed positive physical and emotional changes to changes in behavior.

*Year 2:* During the second year, Ed relapsed but was able to bounce back. He began working on triggers, cravings and resentments. Meditation was used for stress management, and Ed began using a vaporizer for nicotine and THC. At the end of year two, Ed reached another milestone.

*Year 3:* Ed focused on processing his progress and adjusting to life without alcohol during his third year of therapy. He had control over his life that he had never experienced before.



# Harm Reduction in Practice

# Harm Reduction in Practice



# Key Takeaways:

1. Harm reduction is a set of policies, programs, and practices that aim to reduce the harm associated with substance use in people who are unable or unwilling to stop.
2. The defining features are the focus on the prevention of harm, rather than the prevention of substance use itself, and the focus on and respect for people who continue to use drugs.
3. Harm reduction is a “step-down” approach that respects clients as the experts in their own lives.
4. Harm reduction strategies are used to address a wide variety of issues (e.g. HIV prevention, tobacco use, diabetes).

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# Resources

Boston University Center for Innovation in Social Work & Health.  
Community Health Worker Project - Module 15: Harm Reduction

**NATIONAL**

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**HARM REDUCTION**

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**COALITION**

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A group of diverse people, including a man on the left, a woman in the center, and a man on the right, are clapping and smiling in a meeting room. The room has a wooden ceiling with recessed lighting. A large red banner with the text "Thank You!" is overlaid on the image.

# Thank You!

# Join Us for Our **Next Webinar**

## **Structural Determinants of Health, Their Relationship to Social Determinants of Health, and Their Impact on HIV Prevention, Care, and Treatment**

**Date:** March 29, 2022

**See you there!**



# Get in Touch



Charles Shazor Jr.  
(Pronouns: he, him, his)  
Manager  
The Center to End the Epidemics  
[cshazor@nmac.org](mailto:cshazor@nmac.org)

Lauren Miller  
(Pronouns: she, her, hers)  
Health Equity Program Coordinator  
The Center to End the Epidemics  
[lmiller@nmac.org](mailto:lmiller@nmac.org)



# Q&A