2023 NACo LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

Paving a Path through the Overdose Epidemic: Enhancing Health and Safety through Harm Reduction

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Sunday, February 12, 2023: 3:30-4:45pm
Greetings!

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Learning Objectives and Goals

By the end of this workshop, attendees will:

• Learn how harm reduction services operate in three counties.

• Evaluate the role of harm reduction in achieving an effective system of care for people with substance use disorders.

• Discuss how county leaders can advance evidence-based policies and the availability of harm reduction services in their home jurisdictions.
Paving a Path through the Overdose Epidemic
The Path that got us here

• Crisis-oriented
• Professionally-directed
• Acute-care approach
• Discrete treatment episodes
• Limited options
Harm Reduction and the Pavers of a New Path

- Evidence-based Care like MOUD/MAT
- ROSC – Recovery Oriented Systems of Care
- TIC – Trauma Informed Care
- Measurement-based Care – Abstinence is overrated as an indicator - doesn’t tell the story
- SBIRT
SUD Treatment Continuum of Care

Enhancing Health
• Promoting optimum physical and mental health and wellbeing through health communications and access to health care services, income and economic security and workplace certainty

Primary Prevention
• Addressing individual and environmental risk factors for substance use through evidence-based programs, policies and strategies

Early Intervention
• Screening and detecting substance use problems at an early stage and providing brief intervention, as needed, and other harm reduction activities

Treatment
• Intervening through medication, counseling and other supportive services to eliminate symptoms and achieve and maintain sobriety, physical, spiritual and mental health and maximum functional ability

Recovery Support
• Removing barriers and providing supports to aid the long-term recovery process. Includes a range of social, educational, legal and other services that facilitate recovery, wellness and improved quality of life

Harm reduction includes **evidence-based practices and services** that result in the reduction of overdose deaths, life-threatening infections related to substance use, and chronic diseases such as HIV and hepatitis, among others.

Harm Reduction is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of PWUD (National Harm Reduction Coalition, 2020; SAMHSA, 2022).
Harm Reduction is...

Health Equity

Health Engagement

Spoiler Alert! It’s also not new to healthcare and wellness.
Addiction Is Not an All or Nothing Issue

Simplified views of addiction can harm public health efforts and increase stigma

• A SUD is a chronic medical condition, characterized by obsessive drug seeking, that causes structural and functional changes in the brain.

• Brain changes impair one’s ability to make rational and consistent choices despite negative consequences.

• A SUD does not eradicate free will; people with SUDs can and do exert self control. However, this control is often opposed by overpowering impulses.
Macro level Harm Reduction Services Offered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer support services</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community outreach</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overdose prevention education</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naloxone distribution</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safer smoking and inhalation education</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fentanyl test strips distribution</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile harm reduction services</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syringe distribution and services</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs-based syringe distribution</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail-based harm reduction supply distribution</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harm reduction vending machines</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Number of respondents*
Macro Level Harm Reduction

• A social justice movement built on practical strategies aimed at *reducing* negative *consequences* of behaviors.
• Focuses on prevention of harm, not prevention of behaviors.
• Aims to “meet people where they are at” AND does not leave them there.
• Does not attempt to minimize or ignore the real harm and danger associated with drug use.
• Supports any positive change and it doesn’t require change.
• Drug Checking Strips
• Syringe Service Programs (SSPs)
• Supervised Consumption Sites (SCSs)
• Sobering Centers & Sedation Observation Programs
Mezzo Level Harm Reduction: Policy Considerations

- Same day buprenorphine starts/Starting medication prior to completion of intake and intake labs.
- “Allowing” patients to do home-initiations with telephone follow up.
- Eliminating counseling requirements prior to medication initiation.
- Evening or off-hours appointment availability/Walk-in availability.
Harm Reduction Strategies for Opioid Use Disorder (OUD)

- **Infection Prevention**
  - Safer injection techniques
  - Clean supplies
  - Sharing of equipment
  - Hygiene

- **Overdose Prevention**
  - Avoid mixing substances
  - Review increased risks of overdose or cardiac event
  - Never use alone
  - Assess potency
Micro Level Harm Reduction

Harm Reduction:
• Is dynamic and not just one thing.
• Is both a philosophy and a skillset.
• Involves the belief that any interaction can be the starting point of someone’s recovery.
• **Seeks to engage a person into treatment at a level they are comfortable pursuing.**
• “Compassionate Pragmatism”
  • Support not Punish – “despite harmful consequences”
  • Authoritarian – “surrender” I know what you need and how you need to do it
  • Prescriptive – Pre-Determined treatment plan
Harm Reduction Impact

NALOXONE ACCESS SAVES LIVES

• Between 1996 and 2014, SSPs across the United States distributed more than 150,000 naloxone kits, resulting in tens of thousands of opioid overdose reversals by community members.

SYRINGE SERVICE PROGRAMS...

• Prevent Overdose, Disease
• Reduce Crime (and litter!)
• Link people to Substance Use Disorder Treatment
• Reduce Substance Use:
  • 4 in 5 SSP participants are interested in reducing or ceasing their substance use
  • twice as likely to reduce the frequency of their substance use and more than three times as likely to stop using substances entirely compared to those who do not

Source: https://www.naco.org/resources/opioid-solutions/approved-strategies
Paving the Path with Resilience

1. **Integration**: A need exists for mental health and SUD treatment organizations to increase their adoption of harm reduction services and to establish partnerships with community-based harm reduction organizations.

2. **Resources**: Challenges include funding, staff capacity, and policies and laws; however, facilitators also exist, including leadership and staff support, peer support workers and people with lived experience, and support from local and state health departments.

3. **Motivation**: An opportunity exists to expand harm reduction-related technical assistance to mental health and SUD treatment organizations, and there is high interest in receiving technical assistance.

4. **Stigma and Discrimination**

National Harm Reduction Technical Assistance Center

Opioid Response Network

Opioid Response Network: TA Requests

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScDa0KaxUDqQ1LGK8yhS6fVmlW_YHjF842poCiu9_crrz3xmw/viewform
Resource:
Harm Reduction Coalition

BUILDING POWER AND EQUITY WITH PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS

through access, advocacy and action

JOIN THE MOVEMENT
STRATEGY BRIEFS

Source: https://www.naco.org/resources/opioid-solutions/approved-strategies
Resources

• National Council Harm Reduction Resources
• Supporting Telehealth and Technology-assisted Services for People Who Use Drugs: A Resource Guide
• Harm Reduction Stakeholder Analysis: A Summary of Findings
• Medication-assisted Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder in Jails and Prisons: A Planning and Implementation Toolkit
• Deflection and Pre-arrest Diversion Tools and Resources
• Training and Educating Public Safety to Prevent Overdose Among BIPOC Communities
• Overdose Prevention and Response in Community Corrections
• Guidance on Handling the Increasing Prevalence of Drugs Adulterated or Laced with Fentanyl
• COVID-19 Pandemic Impact on Harm Reduction Services: An Environmental Scan
• Providing Harm Reduction Services in Native Communities

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Resources

- Evidence-Based Strategies for Preventing Opioid Overdose: What’s Working in the United States (CDC)
- Harm Reduction Technical Assistance Center (CDC)
- National Harm Reduction Coalition
- NASTAD (National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors)
- NEXT Distro
- Harm Reduction Legal Project (Network for Public Health Law)

Andrew Tatarsky September/October 2019

Dr. Gregory Wm. Branch
Director and Health Officer, Baltimore County Department of Health and Human Services

Lauren Carr
Executive Director, Graves County Agency for Substance Abuse Prevention

Marlene Collick
Deputy Director, Genesee County Community Corrections
TONIGHT
NACo Conference-wide Football Watch Party
6:00 pm to 10:00 pm
International Ballroom
Concourse Level

TOMORROW
NACo Summit on Mental Health Solutions
2:30 pm to 4:45 pm
Columbia 5 & 7
Terrace Level
Thank you!

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