



THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF HARM REDUCTION




We accept that drug use is common. We accept people who use drugs without judgment rather than punish, shame, or blame them.

We acknowledge that people use drugs in different ways and for different reasons. Drug use can range from heavy to none at all; and beneficial to problematic. There are ways of using drugs that are less harmful to the body, personal life, and community life.




We measure success by improving the wellbeing of people who use drugs and empowering them to meet their personal goals. People who use drugs deserve to thrive whether or not they continue to use drugs.

Services and resources should not include shaming, blaming, coercion, or censure of people who use drugs or their communities. Services and resources should empower people and communities to reduce harm.



People who use drugs should be leaders in the programs that serve them and help design the policies that affect them.

People who use drugs are experts in their own lives and communities. They can provide support, share knowledge, resources, and empower each other, and reduce harm in ways others cannot.





All People have different histories and interactions with society that impact how vulnerable they are to drug-related harm and their ability to handle that harm. People can be impacted by poverty, class, racism, social isolation, past trauma, sex-based discrimination and other social inequalities.


We do not ignore or minimize the dangers and tragedies that accompany drug use.



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