

# Spectrum of Harm Reduction & Other Considerations

For Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario



**lumenus**  
Community Services



# Land Acknowledgement

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# Today's Agenda

- ❑ **The Spectrum of Harm Reduction**
- ❑ **Capacity for Harm Reduction Implementation**
- ❑ **Legal and Policy Considerations**
- ❑ **Q & A**

# Viewing Harm Reduction as a Spectrum

- Harm reduction is a set of values, beliefs, services and practices that aim to reduce health and social harms associated with risk behaviours.
- There are many core pillars to harm reduction that help inform harm reduction philosophy and what it looks like when applied
- Since harm reduction is not simply a linear pathway and can be shown in many actions at different degrees, it can be helpful to view it as a spectrum

# Core Pillars of Harm Reduction

**Pragmatism**

**Humane  
Values**

**Focus On  
Harms**

**Social  
Justice**

## **Pragmatism**

**Drug use is inevitable and some ways of using drugs are safer than others**

## **Humane Values**

**Acknowledging an individual's dignity, rights and choice**

## **Focus on Harms**

**Prioritizing the reduction of harms related to substance use**

## **Social Justice**

**Recognizing systems which make some people more vulnerable to drug related harms**

# The Spectrum of Harm Reduction

Agencies will find themselves at different points of the spectrum when incorporating harm reduction philosophy into their work

- An agency adjusts their policies to incorporate harm reduction philosophy as their approach to care, with little change to their services
- Another agency may choose to implement more harm reduction centred services, such as providing harm reduction safe supplies kits or providing a safe use site.

**Adopting harm  
reduction  
values in your  
services**

**Partnering  
with other  
agencies to  
provide HR  
services**

**Offering  
harm  
reduction  
workshops**

**Hiring  
peer  
workers**

**Offering  
ongoing staff  
training in  
harm  
reduction**

**Having  
naloxone  
at your site**

**Implementing  
harm  
reduction  
programs and  
services**



# Scenario 1

Counsellors have been mentioning that some clients under 18 have reported using Xanax that they've gotten from home and friends. One of the counsellors mentions that one of their client's used Xanax at a party and experienced an overdose. The counsellor is unsure how to support this client since the client continues to use Xanax recreationally.

- **What may help frontline staff to support this client?**

**Having  
conversations  
with staff about  
how to navigate  
these scenarios**

**Working with  
outside agencies to  
refer clients**

**Providing staff  
with harm  
reduction  
training**

**Provide staff  
harm reduction  
resources and  
info**

**Hosting  
harm  
reduction  
workshops  
for youth**

# Capacity for Implementing Harm Reduction

- An organization's ability to apply harm reduction into their work depends on different factors
- Assessing where you're currently at informs your starting place
- Exploring community needs informs where you want to go



# Assessing Where You're At

- Attitudes, beliefs and experience of staff
- What does staffing look like at your agency?
  - How much time do people have to dedicate to capacity-building?
- Do you have funding dedicated to support this work?

# Assessing Where You Want To Go



- Consider the needs of your clients and community
- Thinking about what current practices may/may not align with HR philosophy
- The supports and services available/accessible in your region

## Scenario 2

The MARS YWHO hub partners with Agency Pluto to deliver some of their mental health and substance use supports. While MARS approaches substance use through a harm reduction lens, Pluto takes a zero-tolerance approach to substance use. A client at MARS is referred to services at Pluto.

- How could these differences affect this client who uses substances?
- What steps could be taken to support this client?

# Scenario 3

Clementine Clubhouse is known in their community for drop in and group programs for youth. The organization promotes a “safe space” policy committed to being inclusive and respectful of all clients. Clementine Clubhouse conducted a youth needs assessment and identified a need for a harm reduction approach in their services, as many youth expressed they don’t feel comfortable talking about drug use.

- What are some steps this organization can take to support youth to feel more comfortable discussing substance use?

# Legal & Policy Considerations

- The legal and policy framework that is used greatly influences the way we interact and approach service delivery
- Staff must be supported in understanding how to navigate laws and policies that are relevant to their work
- Understanding applicable laws and professional mandates are critical to understanding how your organization will work with individuals who use substances .



# Legal & Policy Considerations

- Access to services for minors
- Parental consent
- Duty of disclosure
- Laws related to Naloxone administration
- Provision of safer substance use/sexual health supplies
- Policies related to substance use

## Consider the following:

A client comes into the walk-in for counselling and is suspected to be under the influence.

## Questions to think about:

What might you need to consider before deciding how to proceed?

- Why do you suspect they're under the influence?
- Do you have policies in place regarding substance use?

# Capacity to Consent

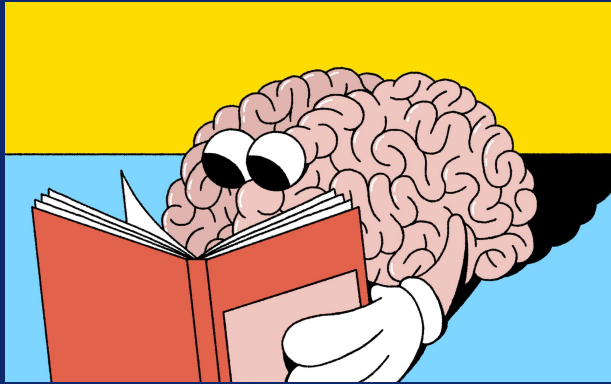
- According to the OCSWSSW, capacity is determined by:
  - Understanding the information relevant to the proposed treatment in issue, and
  - Appreciate the reasonably foreseeable consequences of consenting or refusing consent.

# Balancing Needs

- Being aware about balancing the need to support clients who use substances with other considerations and stakeholders (i.e. parents, community, etc.)
- It can be a call to be creative in finding specific ways to create pathways instead of barriers



# Key Takeaways



- ❑ HR can be implemented in many different ways
- ❑ Understanding community needs is critical to where you may fall on the HR spectrum
- ❑ Consider laws, policies and procedures

Questions?

**Please complete  
our evaluation!**

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**Next webinar:**

**Harm Reduction Capacity  
Building**

**Tuesday December 15th  
2020**

**11:00am-12:15pm**



# Thank You!

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For follow up questions, comments, consultations  
etc. please email [jrovet@lumenus.ca](mailto:jrovet@lumenus.ca)

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