When Using Drugs

WHAT IS HARM REDUCTION?

» Refers to policies, programs and practices that aim to minimize negative health, social and legal impacts associated with drug use, drug policies and drug law.

» Grounded in justice and human rights — it focuses on positive change and on working with people without judgement, coercion, discrimination, or requiring that they stop using drugs as a precondition.

» Offers a set of practical strategies that reduce negative consequences of drug use, incorporating a spectrum of strategies from safer use, to managed use, to abstinence.

MANAGED DRUG USE

ABSTINENCE ➔ CHAOTIC DRUG USE ➔ HARM REDUCTION

Harm reduction strategies meet drug users “where they’re at,” addressing conditions of use along with the use itself.

GOALS OF HARM REDUCTION

» Keep people alive and encourage positive change in their lives.

» Reduce the harm of drug laws and policy.

» Offer options to help people manage their drug use and achieve their individual goals.

GENERAL HARM REDUCTION TIPS FOR DRUG USE

» DO NOT USE ALONE.

» Test substances for fentanyl.

» Avoid mixing drugs.

» Stay hydrated.

» ALWAYS carry Naloxone.

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**SAFER INJECTING TIPS**

» ALWAYS use a clean needle, as well as the safest injection supplies available (tourniquets, sterile water, clean cookers, etc.).

» Clean the injection area with an alcohol prep pad.

» Avoid injecting prescription pills (time release agents can damage veins).

» Avoid injecting into neck, wrists, groin area, or back of knees.

» ALWAYS rotate injection sites.

**AVOID HEAD AND NECK**
Overdosing is more likely when you shoot up near areas closest to the heart and brain. Abscesses are more dangerous here, too.

**AVOID THE WRISTS**
Nerves, veins, and arteries are all close together in the wrists. Shooting up here is dangerous.

**HANDS**
The veins on the back of the hands are sensitive. If you inject here, it will hurt! Inject slowly.

**FEET**
The veins on the top of the feet are sensitive. If you inject here, it will hurt! Inject slowly.

**AVOID THE GROIN AREA**
There are major arteries here — if you hit one, you could lose a leg or die. Never inject into or around the genitals.

**ARMS**
Use surface veins in arms if they are in good shape. Rotate sites regularly.

**LEGS**
Blood flows slowly to the legs, so inject slowly. Be careful not to hit the artery behind the knee. It is easier to get blood clots here.

**SAFER SNORTING TIPS**

» Use a clean straw instead of a dollar bill.

» Do NOT share straws.

» Post-It notes make excellent single-use (disposable) straws.

» Clean and sanitize the surface where it is being cut, and the card/razor you are cutting with.

» Flush nasal cavity with warm water.

**SAFER SMOKING TIPS**

» Use a sterilized pipe.

» Add a mouthpiece to the pipe to help prevent burns.

» Use alcohol prep pads to sterilize if sharing pipes between users.

» If the smoking individual has asthma, keep an inhaler nearby.

**LOCAL HARM REDUCTION ORGANIZATIONS**

**HIPS**
(202) 232-8150
Drop-in center, needle exchange, condom distribution, testing, suboxone, education

**BREAD FOR THE CITY**
(202) 265-2400
Food, clothing, medical care, legal counsel, advocacy, needle exchange

**FAMILY AND MEDICAL COUNSELING SERVICE, INC.**
(202) 889-7900
Medical care, substance abuse counseling, needle exchange, therapy, HIV testing and treatment

**FOR PLACES CARRYING NARCAN/NALOXONE, VISIT**
https://dchealth.dc.gov/NarcanDC

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