Overview of Harm Reduction

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QUESTION

What word/s or phrases come to mind when you hear

Harm Reduction
Areas of Harm

- Health (physical and mental)
- Personal Safety
- Housing
- Financial/Job Performance
- Relationships
- Legal/Criminal
Research on Addiction, Benefits of Harm Reduction

NCHC/Zerger (2002): 2/3rds of homeless participants dropped out of residential treatment prior to completion

Tsemberis (2004): significant improvements in housing stability and self-efficacy/no change in substance use patterns


Larimer (2012): HFM results in savings of $2,449/person/month; significant reductions in use
“The philosophy of harm reduction promotes and supports the right of people who use substances and engage in other risky behaviors to be treated with dignity and respect; their right to exercise self-determination related to use; and their right to expect and receive collaboration in therapeutic relationships.”

- Midwest Harm Reduction Institute
Why Harm Reduction

- Respond to rising fatalities from overdoses
- Keep people engaged if they relapse or aren’t abstinent
- Reach vulnerable people

From Harm Reduction Coalition 2016 Webinar

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Why Does it Work

**Harm Reduction is an integration of well established evidenced based practices; and found to be effective because:**

- It understands that most people change gradually and experience ups and downs
- It builds upon one success at a time
- It is individualized - Each individual’s relationship with drugs and alcohol is different
- It emphasizes self determination, is client directed and encourages honesty
- It empowers clients to choose their own goals
- It fosters client growth, self discovery and decision making
- It requires commitment, compassion and caring
Harm Reduction Core Principles

- Individuals have a voice
- The focus is on reducing harm, not consumption
- The individual’s decision to engage in risky behaviors is accepted
- There are no pre-defined outcomes
- The individual is expected to take responsibility for his or her own behavior
- The individual is treated with dignity
Harm Reduction is...

- A set of practical strategies to reduce negative consequences of drug use and sexual risk.

- Incorporates a spectrum of strategies including safer techniques, managed use, and abstinence.

- Meets people “where they're at” but doesn't leave them there.
Harm Reduction is not…

- For or against drug use
- A consent to use
- Don’t ask, don’t tell
- Anything goes
- Anti-abstinence
The 3 Factors That Impact Risk
Assertive Engagement Principles

- Provide and/or connect to services and resources
- Use positive reinforcement, recognition and acknowledgement
- Be nonjudgmental and use unconditional positive regard
- Develop an honest and trusting relationship

*Professionals are catalysts for change*
Roadblocks to Listening

- Giving advice or making suggestions
- Persuading, using logic or arguing
- Moralizing, preaching
- Judging, blaming, shaming
- Reassuring, sympathizing, consoling when it's time to listen
Increasing Skills

- Problems can seem overwhelming
- Break the problem into smaller pieces
- Ask which pieces you can do something about
- Often, different people can help with different parts of the puzzle
- Small successes builds confidence

THANK YOU!