

Connected

August 2019

A Newsletter from the Opioid Dependence Treatment Centre of Excellence
Newfoundland and Labrador

Crafting a Definition of Harm Reduction

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Harm reduction is a pragmatic approach that recognizes that people have, and will, use substances, and abstinence may be neither realistic nor desired. It is grounded in empirical evidence and suggests that traditional responses to substance use can exacerbate already difficult situations, and produce more harm to communities, families, and individuals.

Harm reduction respects that people have the right to make their own life choices, and also recognizes that for most people, perfect choices do not exist. This may challenge our personal bias. We are reminded that it is not appropriate or helpful for us to form opinions about the decisions and actions of others, based on choices that might be available in our own lives. In other words, the options available to me are very different to those of the person sitting next to me. For many, there may be no 'good' options due to circumstances. Choices may be between horrible, worse, and worst. Harm reduction asks us to not judge people for choosing an option that makes the best sense for them, and ultimately causes them the least harm.

Supporting people 'where they are' can prevent costly crisis-driven responses and empower clients to achieve the best outcome based on their personal situation. In opioid dependence treatment, harm reduction includes offering a Take Home Naloxone Kit and safe supply education, providing low threshold opioid-agonist treatment, as well as a range of recovery-focused services.

While there is no universally accepted definition for harm reduction, experts acknowledge that any responsive description must be grounded in social justice and human rights; and should focus on positive change garnered without coercion, judgment, and discrimination.



As a Harm Reduction Consultant, Jane provides leadership and expertise in the development and implementation of provincial harm reduction programs, policies, learning opportunities, and awareness activities. For more information, Jane can be reached at jane.henderson@easternhealth.ca.

What are the HUBS in the ODT Hub and Spoke Model?

'Hubs' are regional Opioid Treatment Centres (OTC) that provide rapid access to evidence-informed, comprehensive, and coordinated opioid dependence treatment.

The Regional Health Authorities have made great progress in the past few months! Space has been located, staff have been hired, training is underway or has been completed, clients are feeling welcome, and waitlists have been reduced or eliminated.

The ODT *Hubs* provide opioid-agonist treatment, particularly with individuals who have complex needs such as moderate to high opioid use disorder (OUD), poly-substance use, mental or physical health concerns. Inter-disciplinary teams offer a range of psychosocial supports such as OUD education, addictions counselling, harm reduction, peer support, and links to specialists or other services. Telehealth and other technologies will be used to serve communities in all regions.

As well, the regional *Hubs*/Opioid Treatment Centres are available to consult with and support community-based physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, pharmacists, and counsellors upon request.

Access an OTC near you, with referral or self-referral: [Click here for locations and contact information.](#)



Provincial Opioid Dependence Treatment

Centre of Excellence

To join the **Distribution List** of the Provincial ODT Centre of Excellence please contact us at: sara.warren@easternhealth.ca

From the FRONTLINE

Kayla Ryan, B.Sc., BN, RN, Care Facilitator

Kayla has been a Registered Psychiatric Nurse for seven years and works as Care Facilitator at the provincial Recovery Centre in St. John’s. She is a true advocate for harm reduction services and Take Home Naloxone:

What does harm reduction mean to you?

I think that harm reduction is the foundation of health care. In order to offer support, you have to build a foundation of trust, and let the individual guide what it is they need to live a healthy life. Harm reduction is necessary to support individuals and also aids in building a healthy community.

What tips do you have for those who want to have a harm reduction approach?

Be genuine. Be non-judgmental and get to know the whole person. It is incredibly important to build relationships with clients and to hear their whole story, and not to have pre-conceived notions of what they need. Always look for teachable moments. Never underestimate the power of a supportive connection.

What harm reduction initiative do you like best?

It would be a toss up between the Safe Works Access Program (SWAP, AIDS Committee of NL) and the provincial Take Home Naloxone Kit Program.

Both are opportunities to engage with individuals who use substances, to learn from them, and to build trusting therapeutic relationships. They both create teachable moments.

I am directly involved with the Take Home Naloxone Kit Program. When I provide instruction and give out Kits, there is always discussion about health promotion and prevention such as safe sex and safe drug use, STI screening, Hep C and wound care. This is harm reduction education and I thoroughly enjoy being a part of it.

Tell us about your involvement with Naloxone Pop-Ups...

It is so important to have Naloxone Pop-Ups throughout our communities to raise awareness, reduce stigma, educate and save lives. The community has been receptive. It is a chance for people to easily get a Kit and learn about preventing, recognizing and responding to an overdose. It was a wonderful experience to help at the Regatta Pop-up this summer. We heard a lot of personal stories that helped cement the reason we were there.



Thanks to Kayla for sharing her views and experience!

EVENTS AND NEWS	Webinar	Conference	Online Education	NL Conference
	What is OUD and ODT? August 27, 2019 1:30—2:30 pm (NDT) Joni Ingram RN, Presenter Click to join: Teams Meeting	CCSA Issues of Substance November 25 -27, 2019 Ottawa, Ontario For information: https://issuesofsubstance.ca/	Clinical Opioid Primer machealth McMaster University To register: Click here	Opioid Dependence Treatment November 2019 Stay tuned for details!

RESOURCES

Harm Reduction

- [Guide to Harm Reduction, Interior Health, BC \(2017\)](#)
- [Working With People Who Use Drugs: A harm reduction approach, Non Prescription Needle Use Initiative \(2007\)](#)
- [Toward the Heart: Harm Reduction and Reducing Stigma](#)

Take Home Naloxone Kits

Over 3,000 Take Home Naloxone Kits have been distributed throughout our province, with 58 Kits reported to have been used in an overdose situation. There are over 150 Kit Contacts at 110 distribution sites. For more information, visit [Opioid Treatment and Naloxone](#)

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