

Guide to Harm Reduction (GHR)

Reducing Harm and Improving Health for People Who Use Drugs and for the Community



Course Overview

The purpose of this course is to convey a working understanding of harm reduction (HR) as it is applied to substance use disorder (SUD).

Harm reduction incorporates a spectrum of evidence-based and evidence-informed strategies from safer use, to managed use, to abstinence to meet drug users “where they’re at,” addressing conditions of use along with the use itself.

In this course you will learn the benefits of harm reduction and how HR strategies can be applied to reduce harm and further complications from drug use and reduce the harm and risks to the community. The course will dispel some common myths of harm reduction and illustrate where it fits within the continuum of substance use treatment and recovery. Participants will gain an understanding of harm reduction principles and services and be able to define what it means to “practice” harm reduction.

Practicing harm reduction is not simply the act of doing harm reduction like things. It is to apply Harm Reduction Principles and Philosophies to strategies and interventions. Then and only then is one practicing harm reduction.

This course is for individuals, parents, healthcare professionals, first responders, businesses, and organizations who are working to prevent and reduce the effects of addiction / substance use disorder and the opioid public health crisis. As well as groups who serve individuals at risk for opioid misuse / addiction or overdose.

What You Will Learn

- Define harm reduction as it is used in engaging people who use drugs into services and support.
- List a minimum of four benefits of harm reduction for the individual and/or community.
- Discuss the history of harm reduction and its connection to structural inequalities and racism and where it fits in SUD treatment and recovery.
- Identify the principles and philosophy of harm reduction and examples of harm reduction tools and services.
- Recognize an effective Harm Reduction practice in contrast to a practice which does not apply harm reduction principles to the services / tools.

