

HARM REDUCTION INTERVENTIONS

(H)arm (R)eduction:

A philosophical and political movement focused on shifting power and resources to people most vulnerable to structural violence



(h)arm (r)eduction:

The approach and fundamental beliefs in how to provide the services



risk reduction:

Tools and services to reduce potential harm



HOUSING X HARM REDUCTION

Background: Harm Reduction Coalition spent 6 months doing formative research; they conducted focus groups, one on one interviews and phone calls with providers and consumers of services across San Francisco. Through these conversations one of the key themes that emerged was that **consumers expressed feeling judged by staff** — especially when they have trans lived experience, visible mental health symptoms and/or drug use. **Consumers also said housing programs often felt punitive** and triggered previous trauma; similarly, **providers experience vicarious trauma** from supporting people who are chronically unhoused and navigating a system with limited housing resources.

Providers with direct lived experience of trauma likewise are overlooked and want more concrete support to gain insight into their responses/reactions. Lastly, it was determined that **providers felt a need to be rigid around rules** since housing options are so limited, although **consumers state that high barrier regulations often are a reason that they choose not to access housing**. These elements informed our workforce development trainings which centered on trauma, harm reduction principles and practices; The information also spoke to the need for a space to reflect on personal and vicarious trauma experienced throughout the system.

TYPES OF TRAUMA

 <p>Community Ex: Tuskegee Study</p>	 <p>Historical Ex: Mayflower</p>	 <p>Circumstantial Ex: War on Drugs</p>	 <p>Individual</p>
 <p>Natural Disaster</p>	 <p>Intergenerational</p>	 <p>Chronic Ex: War</p>	 <p>Vicarious</p>

HOW CAN YOU APPLY HARM REDUCTION TO YOUR SPACE?

Health & Dignity

- Affirming messaging within space
- Bathrooms accessible to both participants & staff members

Participant Autonomy

- Having supplies & resources in spaces that are accessible without having to ask staff
- Allowing for participants to come/leave freely

Participant Centered Services

- Offering what participants say is most important (e.g. access to chargers, phones, computers)

Sociocultural Factors

- Multi-lingual resources
- Posters that explicitly state that all people are welcome
- Variety of images in the space

Participant Involvement

- Create message boards for participants to contribute feedback or share resources with others
- Elections for services & space changes

Pragmatism & Realism

- Consider posting community agreements in public
- Create alternative spaces for people who need to move/be alone/pace

If you're in a management position...

- Actively involve people with lived experience of homelessness in the creation of policies
- Perform an audit of all programs policies and question reasons for different policies (funding, safety, regulation) and be open to which ones can shift
- Change policies to recognize that people who drugs for a variety of reasons –not requiring abstinence to get services Invite open conversation regarding policies and procedures with all levels of staff and participants
- Review language in program materials and therapeutic interventions to ensure gender inclusivity, & person first non stigmatizing language
- Provide every staff member, regardless of licensure status, with clinical weekly supervision
- Provide harm reduction and trauma informed training to every level of staff from security guard to leadership

If you're in a direct service position...

- Offer to meet people outside or in a location of their choosing where they feel the most comfortable
- Allow people to choose the chair they sit in in your office
- Acknowledging and validating all coping skills, even ones that appear to cause harm, for example, substance use, self harming behaviors, volatile relationships
- Making room for people to be their full and authentic selves by making space for creative expression and the release of anxiety, for example; singing, tapping/rocking, doodling, joking, telling stories, moving their bodies/dancing, being quiet and not engaging, helping to clean the space, re-organizing bags/backpacks