

Stimulants e.g. cocaine, ecstasy etc.

- Always wait at least 2 hrs before taking more.
- Avoid mixing with other drugs, especially alcohol
- Drink small sips of non-alcoholic drinks (e.g. water or isotonic drinks) but don't exceed 1 pint in 1 hour.
- Take regular breaks from dancing.
- Avoid using stimulants if you have high blood pressure, heart disease, epilepsy, and if you have psychiatric problems like depression or anxiety.

Hallucinogens e.g. LSD, mushrooms etc.

- If you find or fear you are experiencing a 'bad trip' find a place you feel safe and remember it will pass.
- Single doses can vary even in visually identical samples.
- Use with people you know and trust around you (ideally with someone who isn't using) or at least make sure someone knows where you are.
- Try not to get overstimulated- it's easy to get dehydrated if you're dancing for hours, and anxiety can sometimes set in, causing a potential increase in paranoid ideation.

Opiates e.g. heroin, morphine etc.

- Dosage is easy to get wrong and the biggest risk is overdose.
- Smoking is safer than injecting or snorting.
- Always have naloxone.
- Do not mix with other depressants (alcohol, benzodiazepines or barbiturates).
- Make sure you're in a safe environment, with trusted people as opiates can make the user less aware of other high risk behaviour.

New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)

e.g. legal high's, black mamba, annihilation etc.

- Always take a small test dose first, and wait at least 2 hours before taking more.
- Don't mix with other drugs
- Try to check drug forums beforehand to get a better idea of other users experience of dosage as some drugs are extremely potent (e.g. 25I-NBome).

General harm reduction tips

- When using substances, start with a small amount to test the strength.
- Don't be afraid of seeking help and being honest about what you have taken.
- Avoid mixing drugs, especially with alcohol.
- Look after friends, if they are sleeping or unconscious, keep your eye on them, put them in the recovery position and call an ambulance if needed.
- If you use opioids or know people who do, always carry a naloxone kit.
- Avoid injecting (smoke if possible). If you do inject, make sure you use needle exchange programmes.
- Try to use with trusted friends in a safe environment (and tell them what you're taking).
- Take into consideration the risks you are taking and get information beforehand.

Find out more

If you would like more information or support on harm reduction please contact us at Inclusion Recovery Hampshire.

Information is also available at:

NHS Website: www.nhs.uk

Talk to Frank Website: www.talktofrank.com

HOW TO CONTACT US

NORTH: 01782 639856
StarsNorth@mpft.nhs.uk

EAST: 01283 741053
StarsEast@mpft.nhs.uk

WEST: 01785 270080
StarsWest@mpft.nhs.uk

Or visit: www.staffstars.org

You. Me. Us

This leaflet was created by:   Part of Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust
Find out more at www.inclusion.org

Harm reduction

What you need to know!



 STaRS

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What is harm reduction?

A definition of harm reduction within field of substance use is as follows;

Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use. Harm Reduction is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of people who use drugs.

Harm reduction incorporates a spectrum of strategies (from safer use, to managed use to abstinence) to meet drug users 'where they're at', addressing both conditions of use, along with the use itself.

Why is it important?

It is essential that harm reduction information, services and other interventions exist to help keep people healthy and safe.

Allowing people to suffer or die from preventable causes is not an option.

Basic principles

- Harm reduction complements approaches known as abstinence (where we seek to prevent or reduce the overall level of consumption).
- Harm reduction accepts people as they are and avoids being judgemental. People who use drugs are always somebody's son or daughter, sister or brother or father or mother.
- Commitment to educating others in using substances in the safest ways possible.
- Empower users to take responsibility to reduce harm to themselves and share information and support each other.
- Not minimise or ignore the real and tragic harm and danger associated with substance use.

What is the aim of harm reduction?

Harm reduction is a whole system approach to reduce or eliminate the harms (behaviours, diseases or deaths) associated with drug use.

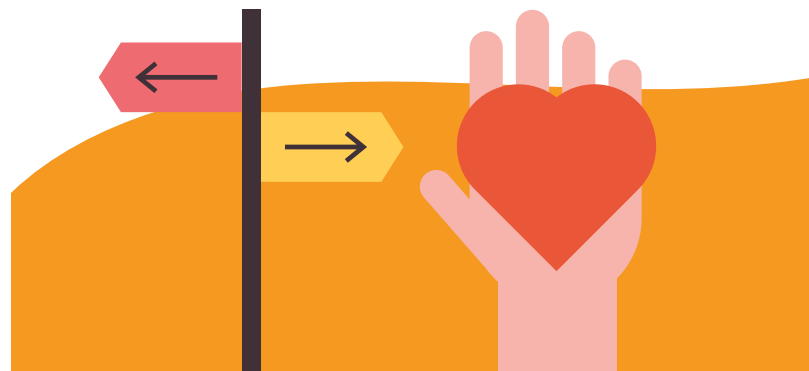
Such harms might include:

- Spread of blood-borne viruses via injecting or sexual activity
- Overdose or unintentional injury (which might lead to premature drug-related death) increased risk through co-morbidity (e.g. alcohol, mental health)
- Septicaemia, wound infections and other infections resulting from injecting
- Other general/primary healthcare issues, such as sexual health, dental health, respiratory or cardiac issues and diabetes

The myths

- There is no place for harm reduction in recovery
- Harm reduction is anti-abstinence
- Harm reduction approaches condone drug use

There cannot be a single approach to recovery. Everyone is different, and everyone's journey through recovery from addiction will move at a different pace. Harm reduction is there to help people be safer in their recovery.



What are the approaches?

- Needle distribution programs that distribute sterile needles and other harm reduction supplies
- Prescribed medication (detox/maintenance)
- Take-home naloxone program (reverses effects of opioid overdose)
- Supervised consumption facilities
- Outreach and education services
- Peer support programs
- Impaired driving prevention campaigns
- Mutual aid groups
- Sexual health services

Tips to help stay safe

Harm reduction messages vary dependent on the substance being used. General advice is on the back page. Tips on reducing harm according to the category of substance (depressants, stimulants, hallucinogens, opiates and new psychoactive substances-NPS) are as follows;

Depressants e.g. alcohol, GBH etc.

- Doses vary - always test a small amount first, particularly for GHB and GBL
- Stay hydrated / have something to eat before/ while drinking
- Do not mix with other depressants (e.g. alcohol / GHB) this can be physically disabling and potentially lead to respiratory depression and death
- To avoid 'spiking' of alcoholic drinks with GHB or Rohypnol do not accept a drink unless you have seen it being prepared and do not leave your drink unattended
- If you think you have been 'spiked', stay with a trusted friend (not someone you have just met) and go to a safe place (your home/hospital/ police station)