



Dilemma in Practicing Harm Reduction

Presented by:

Mr. Leung Hoi Tat, Ray/ A.S.W.O/S.A.R.D.A

Ms. Leung Wing Ki Ingrid/ A.S.W.O/ S.A.R.D.A

Mr. Yeung Yuk/ A.S.W.O/ S.A.R.D.A



Definition - HR

- An approach where the goal is to decrease the risks and harmful health and social consequences of drug use without necessarily reducing drug use
- Policies, principles or programmes that aim to reduce the harmful consequences caused by drugs (and alcohol) – without aiming at a drug free life.

Mr. Garth Popple, (IFNGO 2007)

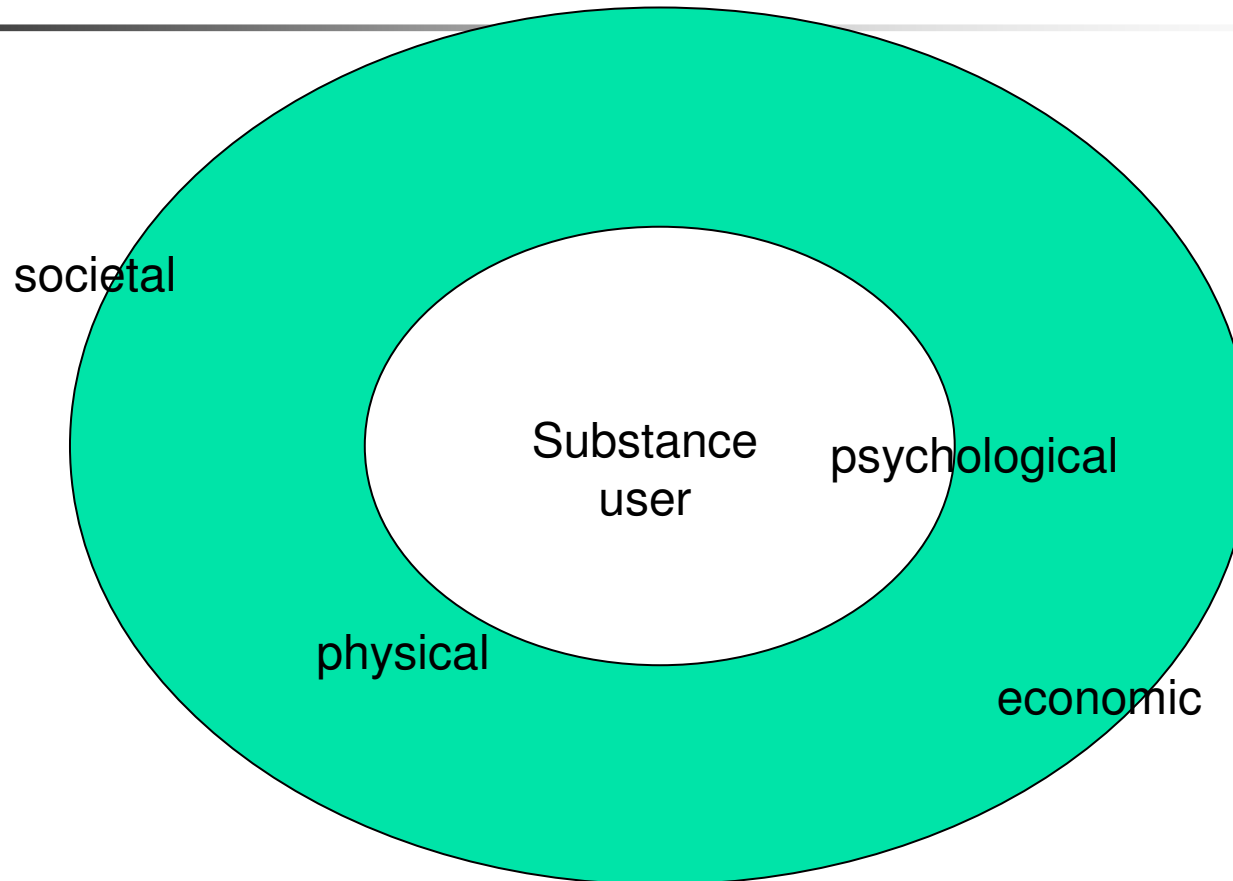


Principles of Harm Reduction

- Reduce harmful consequences of drug and alcohol use
- Collaborate with the client on treatment goals and interventions
- Practice pragmatism: Use what works

(Blume, Anderson, Marlatt, 2001)

What Harms ?



Source:

http://www.acsa.ab.ca.acsw.conference/essentials_of_harm_reduction_for_acsw.pdf

What Harms ?

Health care costs (public or private) physical/mental illness

Addiction

Effects of maternal use on infants

Disease transmission

Prevention of quality control

Loss of incentives to seek treatment

Restriction on medicinal uses

Reduced performance, school/workplace

Poor parenting, child abuse

Influence on others' using

Harm to self-esteem

Harm to reputation

Harm to employability

Accruing criminal experience

Acquaintance with criminal networks

Elevated dollar price of substance

Infringement on liberty and privacy

Prevention of benefits of use

Accident victimization

Property/acquisitive crime victimization

Fear, restricted mobility

Sense of public disorder

Reduced property values near markets

Observably widespread violation of laws

Increased police/court costs

Preempting of scarce jail/prison space

Court congestion and delay

Police invasion of personal privacy

Corruption of legal authorities

Demoralization of legal authorities

Violation of the law

Devaluation of arrest as moral sanction

Interference in source countries

Strained international relations

Fines

Times and income lost (in court, prison)

Legal expenses

Stigma of criminal, prison record

Fear of apprehension

Violence

Source : Kevin Sabet, M.Sc. (Oxon), IFNGO 2007



Clients:

- ➔ Reduce or minimize harm
 - Improve health/ reduce harmful consequences
 - ➔ HIV, Hep B & C, fatal incidents
 - Enhance one's social functioning (family relationship, employment ...)



Helping professions:

- Develop partnerships
- Opportunities (Entry Points) for professional contacts
- Increases options/ choices/ alternatives
- Self-determination & Non-judgmental



Macro level – community

- Decreased rates of infection
(e.g. HIV/ Hep B/ Hep C)
- Example:

Location: Australia

**Program: Needle and syringe programs
(NSP)**

Needle and syringe programs (NSP)

Harm reduction initiatives in drug free settings- Australian National Council on Drugs



Source: Mr Garth Popple (FNGO, 2007)



Macro level – community

- Safer environments (crime reduce)
 - Less stigma & discrimination
 - Cost-effectiveness
- NSP saved US\$1,681 million

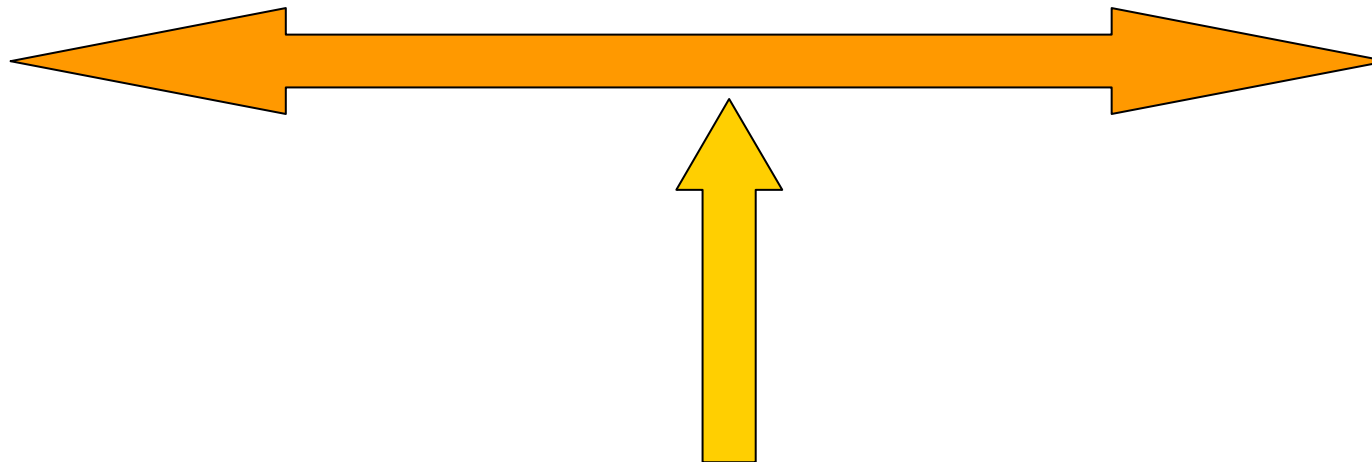
(Source: Return on Investment in Needle and Syringe programs in Australia, Commonwealth of Australia 2002)

Harm Reduction

a process, development, continuum?

Total Abstinence

Drug Use



Harm Reduction-Balance between



Dilemma in practicing Harm Reduction for heroin users

Case One:

- HR: remind clients to take 'safe dosage' and 'safe method' if relapse

- Dilemma: disempowerment or life saving?



Dilemma in practicing Harm Reduction for heroin users

Case Two:

- HR: encourage safe use of heroin ?
(smoking VS injection)

“Cut down or use safer alternatives”

(Blume, Anderson, Marlatt, 2001)

- Dilemma:
Reduction of harmful practice VS tolerance of
addictive habit



Dilemma in practicing Harm reduction for young substance abusers

- Different roles and standpoints → Dilemma
- For Probation Officers.
 - →abstinence and law enforcement
- For parents (addicted child)
risky situations and prolong addictive behaviors.



Dilemma in practicing Harm reduction for young substance abusers

Case Three

HR: No driving/operating machinery after taking substances

- Dilemma:
 - allow them to take drugs when they are off duty
- SW/parents:
 - Safe driving is important
- PO :
 - total abstinence



Dilemma in practicing Harm reduction for young substance abusers

Case Four:

HR: Don't take Ketamine and Cocaine at the same time
“Emphasize quality of use over quantity”

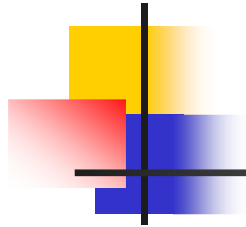
(Blume, Anderson, Marlatt, 2001)

- **Parents/PO:**
-Total abstinence
- **SW:**
-achievable goals
-new way out and hope



Analysis

- Lateral thinking and vertical thinking
- HR is paradoxical but generates positive effects
- A step by step approach
- Enable clients to gain certain freedom from drug bondage
- Starts where the client is

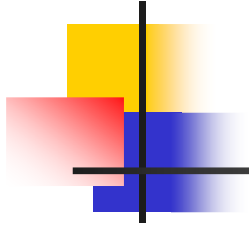


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- Professional judgment is essential when practicing HR, in avoidance of being manipulated by clients.



Reference

- www.eurad.org
- http://www.acsa.ab.ca.acsw.conference/essentials_of_harm_reduction_for_acsw.pdf
- **Blume, A.W., Anderson, B.K., Fader, J.S., Marlatt, G.A. (2001) In Coombs, R.H. (ed.) (2001). Addiction Recovery Tools. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.**



Thank
You