

Harm Reduction Principles

What is harm reduction

harm reduction is interventions aimed at reducing the negative effect of health behaviors without stopping the problematic health behavior. This model came about in the 70s, 80s during the Hep B and HIV

harm redux strategies

- syringe exchange programs
 - safer injection facilities
 - overdose prevention programs & policies
 - opioid substitution treatment
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Why Harm Reduction

A systematic review of research on syringe exchange programs shows that they are cost-effective in reducing HIV transmission and increase exchange users' access to other medical and social support services

US-based Harm Reduction Coalition correctly notes that there is no single definition or formula for implementing harm reduction since harm reduction- informed **approaches focus on specific individual and community needs**

harm reduction as “... policies, programmes and practices that aim primarily to reduce the adverse health, social and economic consequences of the use of legal and illegal psychoactive drugs without necessarily reducing drug consumption. **Harm reduction benefits people who use drugs, their families and the community**

Characteristics of Harm Reduction

- (1) targeting risk and harms to people who use substances, **understanding the roots of these risks**, and **tailoring interventions** to reduce them
- (2) acknowledging **the significance of any positive change** that people who use substances make in their lives
- (3) **accepting people who use drugs as they are** and treating them with dignity and compassion
- (4) **protecting the human rights** of people who use drugs
- (5) maintaining transparency in decisions about interventions (their successes and failures).

Harm Reduction principles:

1. **Humanism** = the way that providers value, **care for, respect and dignity** patients.
 - Harmful health behaviors provide some benefit to individuals which must be assessed to understand the balance harm vs benefit.
 - **Stop the judgements**, they do not help make positive health outcomes.
 - Accept patients choices
2. **pragmatism** = none of us will be perfect in health and perfect is impossible.
 - Health behaviors and ability to change are influenced by social & community norms.
 - Abstinence is neither prioritized nor assumed to be a goal.
 - Care messages should be about actual harms to patients not morals.
 - “If daily drug user then taking meds is possible”.

Harm Reduction principles:

3. **individualism** = each person has their needs/strength, spectrum of intervention is needed that is tailored for maximum treatment options

4. **autonomy** = suggestions & education provided for medications & treatment

- patients make their own decisions.
- patient-provider partnerships are important
- shared decision-making
- reciprocal learning

5. **incrementalism** = any positive change by patient is a step toward improved health and positive health changes that can take months/years.

- celebrate small positive behaviors.
- find the small wins and find positivity

6. **accountability without termination** = hold no grudge. patients are not 'fired' for not achieving goals, help patients understand consequences, *do not penalize* backward movement

CANADA'S SUBSTANCE ABUSE WORKFORCE COMPETENCIES

Competencies for **Canada's Substance Abuse Workforce** represents *the knowledge, skills and values specific to the substance abuse field.*



Needed skills
Health Promotion
counselling
withdrawal management
supervision to admin

Behavioral indicators

Behaviour indicators are examples of behaviours that employers can expect an employee to demonstrate for a particular level of proficiency in any given competency

Levels of Proficiency

Explanation of Level		How Knowledge and Skills Are Typically Developed
Level 1 Introductory	Demonstrates basic knowledge and ability, and can apply the competency, with guidance, in common situations that present no or limited difficulties.	Through student practicum, entry level work experience, volunteering, in-service training, introductory-level college or university courses; completion of diploma or certificate, possibly combined with exceptional life experience (direct, lived experience with addiction, mental illness or concurrent disorders, or as someone close to another with direct experience).
Level 2 Developing	Demonstrates sound knowledge and ability, and can apply the competency, with minimal or no guidance, in the full range of typical situations. Likely requires guidance to handle novel or more complex situations.	Through work experience at Level 1, completion of a diploma or degree in health or social services, participation in a mentoring program, in-service training, possibly combined with exceptional life experience.
Level 3 Intermediate	Demonstrates in-depth knowledge and ability, and can consistently and effectively apply the competency in complex and challenging situations and settings. Guides other professionals.	Through several years of work experience or the completion of a university degree in mental health or addiction studies; university degree in health or social services area combined with professional development and work experience; diploma or certificate in addictions, mental health or other health or social services area, professional development and in-service training, possibly combined with exceptional life experience.
Level 4 Advanced	Demonstrates expert knowledge and ability, and can apply the competency in the most complex situations. Develops or facilitates new practices, programs and policies. Is recognized as an expert, internally and externally	Through comprehensive work experience or completion of related graduate or undergraduate university degree combined with extensive work experience; diploma or certificate combined with extensive professional development, in-service training and extensive work experience, possibly combined with exceptional life experience.

Behavioral competencies definitions

Competency Title	Definition
Adaptability/ Flexibility	Willingly adjust one's approach to meet the demands and needs of constantly changing conditions, situations and people and to work effectively in difficult or ambiguous situations.
Analytical Thinking and Decision Making	Gather, synthesize and evaluate information to determine possible alternatives and outcomes and make well-informed, timely decisions. Includes critical thinking and reasoning.
Client-centred Change	Enhance, facilitate, support, empower, and otherwise increase client motivation for positive change. Positive change is achieved by involving the client actively in the change process and encouraging the client to take responsibility for the outcomes he or she achieves. Clients may be individuals, groups, communities and organizations.
Client Service Orientation	Provide service excellence to clients (which can include individuals, groups, communities and organizations). Includes making a commitment to serve clients and focusing one's efforts on discovering and meeting client needs within personal, professional and organizational capacities and boundaries.
Collaboration and Network Building	Identify and create informal and formal interdisciplinary networks and allied community groups to support the provision of client services and achievement of the organization's objectives. Clients include individuals, groups, organizations and communities.
Continuous Learning	Identify and pursue learning opportunities to enhance one's professional performance and development and the effective delivery of high-quality programs and services.

Behavioral competencies definitions

Creativity and Innovation	Use evidence-based practices in innovative and creative ways to initiate both effective new ways of working and advances in the understanding of the field of practice. Innovation and creativity are achieved in translating research into practice to optimize improvements in service delivery and professional practice.
Developing Others	Facilitate and motivate sustained learning and create learning opportunities and resources, as well as promote and respect others' needs for ownership of learning outcomes. Includes creation of a continuous learning environment that fosters positive growth in both work and public contexts among peers, clients, client families, communities and other groups (recipients).
Diversity and Cultural Responsiveness	Provide respectful, equitable and effective services to diverse populations, as defined by culture, age, gender, language, ethnicity, socio-economic status, legal status, health, ability, sexual orientation, type and mode of substance use, etc. Affirm and value the worth of all individuals, families, groups, and communities; and protect the dignity of all.
Effective Communication	Articulate both verbally and in writing across a range of technologies in a manner that builds trust, respect and credibility and that ensures the message is received and understood by the audience. Includes active listening skills (attending, being silent, summarizing, paraphrasing, questioning and empathizing) and congruent non-verbal communication.
Ethical Conduct and Professionalism	Provide professional services according to the principles and values of integrity, competence, responsibility, respect and trust to safeguard both self and others. Includes the development of professionalism and ethical behaviour in self and others (individuals, groups, organizations, communities).

Behavioral competencies definitions

Interpersonal Rapport/Savvy	Establish and maintain relationships based on mutual respect and trust, appropriate sensitivity and transparency, empathy, and compassion with clients, colleagues, professional associates and the greater community. Encompasses skills of tact, diplomacy, and sensitivity in all encounters with others.
Leadership	Help others achieve excellent results and create enthusiasm for a shared vision and mission, even in the face of critical debate and adversity.
Planning and Organizing	Identify and prioritize tasks, develop and implement plans, evaluate outcomes, and adjust activities in order to achieve objectives.
Self Care	Deliberately and continuously apply professional and personal self care principles to oneself and, at times, others to sustain optimal productivity while maintaining physical, mental, spiritual and emotional health.
Self Management	Appropriately manage one's own emotions and strong feelings; maintain a calm and tactful composure under a broad range of challenging circumstances; and think clearly and stay focused under pressure. Encompasses self-regulation and mindfulness.
Self Motivation and Drive	Remain motivated and focused on a goal until the best possible results are achieved, with both passion for making a difference in the substance abuse field and persistence despite confronting obstacles, resistance and setbacks.
Teamwork and Cooperation	Work cooperatively and productively with others within and across organizational units to achieve common goals; demonstrate respect, cooperation, collaboration, and consensus-building.

Occupational role description

Substance abuse services must be provided by professionals with the education and experience necessary to work responsively with their clients.

Counselling	Definition: Provides counselling services to individuals, groups, and family members for substance abuse and related problems as required. Liaises with other substance abuse professionals to create treatment plans for a broad range of substance abuse issues.
	Example job titles: Counsellor, Addictions Counsellor, Alcohol & Drug Counsellor, Substance Abuse Counsellor, Intake Counsellor, Therapist, Clinical Therapist, Recreation Therapist
Health Promotion	Definition: Develops and delivers education and awareness programs in the substance abuse field to a wide range of individuals, groups and audiences. Assesses emerging substance abuse issues in targeted groups to develop timely and effective education and awareness strategies. Works closely with other agencies and community coalitions to develop, deliver and evaluate substance abuse awareness initiatives and education programs.
	Example job titles: Health Promotion Specialist, Health Education Specialist, Prevention Specialist/Coordinator, Health Educator, Health Promotion & Protection Specialist/Worker
Supervision	Definition: Provides direction for development, functioning and evaluation of program services and staff. Oversees and evaluates the quality and efficiency of services and provides supervision to staff. Works in conjunction with management to develop and deliver the goals and objectives of the organization.
	Example job titles: Clinical Supervisor, Non-Clinical Supervisor, Senior Counsellor, Lead Clinician, Manager, Coordinator
Support & Outreach	Definition: Provides encouragement, emotional support, help, and advice on practical matters to clients, their families and communities. Coordinates support and outreach activities that may include: coordination of substance abuse and related services, motivational counselling, brief assessment and referral, conducting education and information sessions, monitoring and supporting daily activities of clients.
	Example job titles: Support Worker, Outreach Worker, Alcohol Worker, Drug Worker, Substance Abuse Worker, Drug Outreach Worker, Substance Abuse Practitioner, Community Outreach Worker, Community Liaison Worker, Attendant
Withdrawal Management	Definition: Provides medical and/or non-medical support and withdrawal management services to substance abuse clients. Works with other professionals in the substance abuse field to create and deliver withdrawal management and associated treatment plans to meet the needs of clients.
	Example job titles: Withdrawal Management (Detox) Worker, Detox Nurse, Specialty Nurse, Withdrawal Management (Detox) Counsellor, Attendant

Job description : **Substance Abuse Counsellor** (Sample)

Role:

- to provide specialized counselling, education, and support services to individuals, families and the community
- help clients understand and address substance abuse and related problems, including mental health issues, problem gambling, family dynamics, and lifestyle changes
- work collaboratively with a multidisciplinary team of professionals within the organization, and to establish and maintain partnerships with related community organizations.

DUTIES:

Client-centred
Change

Effective
Communication

Interpersonal
Rapport/Savvy

Counselling

- Interview clients from diverse backgrounds and determine their suitability for participation in a particular program
- Conduct bio-psychosocial assessments and collaborate with clients to design client-centred, strength-based change strategies, reflecting evidence-based practices and clinical experience
- Conduct individual, group, and family counselling sessions in a professional and ethical manner, following all recognized standards, legislation, and guidelines relevant to clinical practice
- Counsel family members and significant others to assist them in understanding, dealing with, and supporting clients
- Respond to client requests and crises in a responsible, timely and flexible manner
- Develop discharge plans in consultation with clients and related professionals and organizations
- Match treatment services and interventions to clients' and their families' unique circumstances whenever possible

Diversity
and Cultural
Responsiveness

Ethical
Conduct and
Professionalism

Adaptability/
Flexibility

Substance Abuse Counsellor (Sample)

Education and Skills:

Bachelor's or Master's degree in social work, psychology or a related discipline, or recognized community college diploma in the helping professions with 2-4 years' related experience

Thorough knowledge of substance abuse, cause and effects, evidence-based models of treatment intervention and their application to diverse populations

Knowledge of individual, family, group, and crisis counselling methods. Ability to deal with life-threatening situations, including suicide

Adaptability/
Flexibility

- Flexibility to work evenings and respond to occasional crisis calls from colleagues and clients outside of working hours
- Comprehensive skills in case management, collaboration, program development and evaluation, and emergency response

Effective
Communication

Planning and
Organizing

Collaboration &
Network Building

Continuous
Learning

Continuous
Learning

Education, Training, Prevention

- Develop, implement and evaluate public education, treatment, prevention, and health promotion programs related to substance abuse based on best practices, and in collaboration with related professionals, organizations, and communities
- Develop, implement and evaluate substance abuse treatment programs within the organization
- Present self in an approachable and friendly manner as an ethical representative of a professional community organization

Community Consultation

- Establish and maintain professional working relationships and regular communication with community and other related organizations
- Participate on committees, teams or work groups at the local, provincial, regional and national levels
- Participate in knowledge exchange activities with related organizations by maintaining regular correspondence, sharing and inquiring about resources, and advocating for quality service delivery
- Coordinate referrals, admissions and discharges with related organizations

Teamwork and
Cooperation

Professional Development

- Participate in ongoing professional development activities, and engage in reciprocal relationships of learning with colleagues to stay current in the field
- Participate in regular individual and team supervision meetings
- Implement related learning and professional development plans as discussed with supervisor
- Maintain professional credentialing, certification and continuing education requirements, on own initiative and in conjunction with organizational resources where available

Teamwork and
Cooperation

Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction. Retrieved from:

<http://www.ccdus.ca/Eng/topics/Workforce-Development/Workforce-Competencies/Pages/default.aspx>