

2022 Western New York Harm Reduction Conference
Workshop Descriptions

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Harm Reduction Medicine in 2022: Practicing at the Cutting Edge

Shashi Kapadia, MD, Weill Cornell Medicine

Kelly Ramsey, MD, NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports

Justine Waldman, MD, REACH Medical

The federal government is embracing harm reduction in the battle against overdose deaths, which has major implications for medical providers today. Join us for a roundtable discussion on the opportunities and challenges facing harm reduction practitioners in this paradigm shift. Topics will include low-threshold access to medications for opioid use (MOUD), the potential of on-demand telemedicine inductions for MOUD, and responding to the presence of high-potency fentanyl analogs in the drug supply.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the evidence for and against urine drug screens in low-threshold care.
- Discuss what methadone access will look like in future low-threshold settings.
- Explore how to keep buprenorphine efficacious in a world of fentanyl analogs.
- Recognize how medical examiners are helping to save lives.

Embracing Ambivalence: Techniques for Developing Engagement and Building Motivation

Jason Holloway, PsyD, Center for Optimal Living

Ambivalence is the state of having conflicting feelings about something or someone. Many people with substance use concerns will at times experience ambivalence about their use, and understanding this uncertainty is a vital aspect of treatment, no matter your role in helping someone. Learning how to strategically reflect our patients' ambivalence is a key intervention in Integrative Harm Reduction Psychotherapy (IHRP). This workshop will identify specific opportunities for case managers, clinicians, peer support specialists, and others to use these techniques in a way that helps clients focus on what is most important to them about their use. It will describe techniques for assessing and building motivation to make change and reduce harm by identifying commitments to self, commitments to others, and personal values. Emphasis will be placed on motivational techniques that can be applied across the continuum of care.

Learning Objectives

- Develop a highly effective therapeutic stance for helping individuals engage in their own change-making.
- Identify when our own clinical agenda may conflict with our patients' goals.
- Become familiar with IHRP strategies including Urge Surfing, Microanalysis, Embracing Ambivalence, and the Ideal Use Plan.

Addressing Racism and Promoting Accountability in Substance Use Treatment

Tracie Gardner, Legal Action Center

Saeeda Lesley Dunston, ElmcOR

The substance use treatment system has evolved hand in hand with the rise of the carceral state. Anti-Black institutionalized racism is embedded in these systems and, as a result, has shaped national, state, and local approaches to harm reduction in distinct and often disastrous ways. This session will examine how harm reduction is giving rise to a new industry that risks replicating the injustices present in substance use treatment and other systems. Workshop participants will work collectively to have courageous, productive dialogue about racism and the nonprofit and healthcare systems.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the importance of an anti-racist approach to harm reduction and the need for a systems-level assessment of human services.
- Discuss how harm reduction was initially informed by the HIV/AIDS epidemic and how race played a part in that public health crisis.
- Examine the inherent inequities of recent strategies to address the overdose crisis, even within the harm reduction movement.

Saying Yes When the System Says No: Practicing Harm Reduction with Mandated Clients

Delores Blackwell, PhD, LCSW, Housing Works

Patricia Lincourt, LCSW, NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports

While harm reduction believes in meeting people where they are at, the abstinence-based ideology of the criminal justice system can present a conflict for justice-involved clients. This workshop will explore the challenges of collaborating with mandating entities and present strategies to engage the courts, probation, and parole as a collaborative member of the treatment team. Underlying these strategies is an ongoing commitment to social justice implicit in harm reduction. Participants at all levels of experience and interest are welcome to attend.

Learning Objectives

- Learn how to facilitate conversations with mandating entities around harm reduction approaches.
- Discuss how to navigate difficult conversations with clients about being mandated to care.
- Develop a higher level of self-efficacy to engage with managing entities.

From Local to Federal and Back Again: Sweeping Changes in Harm Reduction Policy

Chase Holleman, LCSW, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Robert Kent, White House Office of National Drug Control Policy

Michael McRae, PhD, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (invited)

Charles King, Housing Works (moderator)

As a grassroots movement, the local practice of harm reduction puts bottom-up pressure on higher levels of government to effect meaningful policy change. The last two years bear testament to this dynamic, as the federal government has embraced harm reduction in name and in spirit unlike ever before. Workshop participants will discuss these exciting changes in dialogue with local practitioners to reveal how federal changes are impacting the practice of harm reduction, substance use treatment, and other services at the state and local levels.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the federal government’s current efforts to incorporate the principles of harm reduction in substance use treatment funding.
 - Explore how local and state feedback may continue to shape and expand the federal embrace of harm reduction.
 - Identify ways local practitioners can prepare for upcoming policy changes and funding opportunities.
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CRAFT and the Invitation to Change Approach: Combining Science and Kindness for Families

Jeremy Novich, PsyD., CMC:Foundation for Change

Family and friends of people struggling with substance use or other behaviors are incredibly motivated to help their loved ones. Unfortunately, they are often given advice that is punitive (“tough love”) or blaming (“enabling”), or they are told to detach altogether. The Invitation to Change Approach® (ITC) challenges these ineffective and stigmatizing messages by bringing together evidence-based principles and practices, including kindness. ITC empowers laypeople (family, friends, first responders, educators, faith-based leaders) and health professionals (nurses, doctors, therapists, recovery coaches) to help a person struggling with substance use or other problematic behaviors. The model includes key elements of Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT), Motivational Interviewing (MI), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), and self-compassion in a framework that is user-friendly, jargon-free, and ready for anyone in a helping role. ITC will help you bring science, kindness, and compassion to everyone involved in the change process—including yourself!

Learning Objectives

- Gain a better understanding of the major components of ITC: Helping with Understanding, Helping with Awareness, Helping with Actions.
 - Understand the evidence-based protocols supporting ITC.
 - Become familiar with the strategies and skills that family members can implement when assisting a loved one with a substance use problem.
 - Become aware of ITC print and online resources as well as existing community supports.
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So You Want to Start an Overdose Prevention Center: Lessons from Year One

Jasmine Budnella, VOCAL-NY

Kailin See, OnPoint, NYC

Max Sepulveda, Housing Works

Sam Rivera, OnPoint NYC

After years of preparation and advocacy, the first locally sanctioned Overdose Prevention Centers (OPCs) have opened in New York City, making public health history in the United States as the opioid overdose crisis reaches new heights. Yet without formal approval at the state or federal levels, the path toward opening an OPC remains marked with risks and obstacles. This workshop will explore the experiences of current and potential OPC operators, spotlight the strengths and challenges of different program models, and offer advice to organizations interested in opening their own OPCs.

Learning Objectives

- Speak with current and potential OPC operators about their unique journeys toward implementation.
 - Discuss fiscal, regulatory, geographic, and other considerations that impact an OPC's formation.
 - Share strategies to get your community, your staff, and your local health department on board with OPCs.
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Innovations in the Harm Reduction Approach to Stimulant Use

Pierre Arty, MD, Housing Works

Andrew Bonfrancesco, LCSW, Housing Works

Liz Whipple, MS, CBIS, Evergreen Health

John Barry, LMSW, Southern Tier AIDS Program (moderator)

While national attention is focused on the opioid overdose crisis, clinical and social service practitioners are also grappling with the growing prevalence of stimulant use, including crystal methamphetamine. Providers are blazing a trail by pioneering clinical and community-based strategies to support a harm reduction approach to stimulant use. This workshop will share effective programs that have been developed and explore paths for future innovation in this area.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss pharmacological strategies that have been tested to support harm reduction for crystal methamphetamine and other stimulant use.
 - Explore community-driven program models that address stimulant use and other harm reduction priorities, such as HIV and hepatitis C prevention.
 - Identify gaps in community knowledge around substance use and ways to promote increased awareness and training on this subject.
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Plenary: Voices of Harm Reduction

Ivette Chavez Gonzalez, Evergreen Health and Buffalo VOCAL-NY

James Hill, Buffalo VOCAL-NY

Keith Scobie, Evergreen Health

Emma Fabian, Evergreen Health (moderator)

“Nothing about us without us” has been a theme in harm reduction since the start of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the 1980s. As harm reduction is embraced in public health and drug use treatment, it is critical to bring along this core tenant. These panelists will speak on their lived experiences with drug use, harm reduction, and how being an advocate for change has helped them in their journeys. Attendees will also learn how to start and sustain meaningful consumer feedback groups at community-based organizations and drug treatment centers.

Learning Objectives

- Understand what makes the harm reduction approach effective through the perspective of people with lived experience.
- Explore why more traditional treatment approaches do not work for most clients and patients.
- Discuss the harm reduction advocacy issues that people with lived experience are currently working on in New York State.