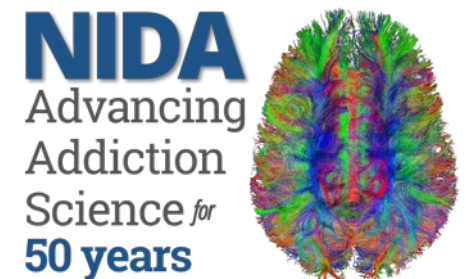
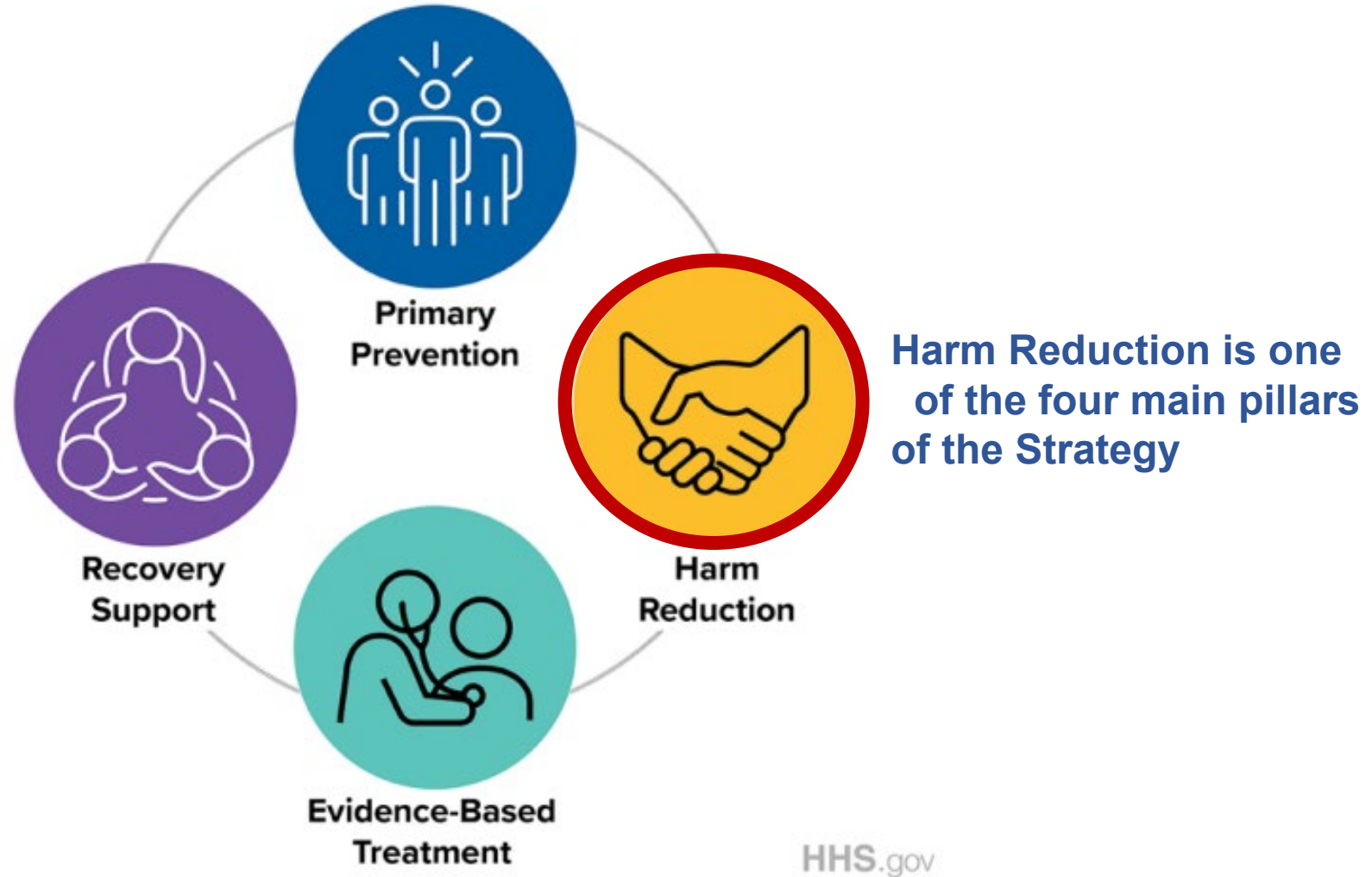


Scientific Strategies for Harm Reduction: Mitigating the Consequences of Substance Addiction

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HHS Overdose Prevention Strategy



Harm Reduction

Model of substance use care created by and for people who use drugs, that aims to reduce health and safety issues associated with drug use

Syringe Exchanges and Syringe Services Programs (SSPs)



SSPs **save lives** by lowering the likelihood of deaths from overdoses.



Providing testing, counseling, and sterile injection supplies helps prevent outbreaks of other diseases. For example, SSPs are associated with a **50% decline** in the risk



Users of SSPs were **three times more likely** to stop injecting drugs.

Naloxone



Drug Testing



Fentanyl and Xylazine Test Strips



Overdose Prevention Centers



Challenges in the Penetration of Harm Reduction Approaches for Which There Is Very Strong Evidence of Efficacy

Syringe Services Programs (SSPs)

Despite evidence that SSPs prevent HIV, HCV, and endocarditis and can serve as linkage to substance use disorder treatment and other health care support, many communities do not support them.



Naloxone Distribution

Despite evidence that naloxone is very effective in reversing opioid overdoses and the resources to expand their availability and use, including OTC formulations, there are still areas with insufficient access to naloxone.



Drug Testing



Media Advisory

Monday, June 12, 2023

NIH and FDA leaders call for more research, lower barriers to improve and implement drug-checking tools amid overdose epidemic

Tools such as fentanyl test strips hold promise to reduce drug-related harms and save lives.

Fentanyl and Xylazine Test Strips



NIDA welcomes proposals for research on fentanyl test strips and other approaches to drug checking and screening; such proposals may be investigator-initiated applications under multiple grant mechanisms, including SBIR.

<https://nida.nih.gov/funding/nida-funding-opportunities>

Harm Reduction Research Network

Purpose: Increase our understanding of the effectiveness, implementation, and impact of existing and new harm reduction strategies

Novel harm reduction approaches

- Community drug checking
- Overdose prevention centers
- Meth sobering center
- Contingency management

Novel settings for and modes of service delivery

- Emergency department
- Mobile apps
- Hotline
- Text messages
- Mail delivery
- Secondary distribution
- Remote lockboxes

Understanding and addressing barriers

- Limited access
- Not using naloxone when it is available
- Burnout & trauma from responding to overdose
- State-level policy barriers

Reaching understudied populations

- Racial/ethnic minority groups
- Women
- Rural communities
- People who use stimulants

Coordination Center – 4 cores

- Communication and Coordination
- Data Harmonization and Methodology
- Community and Stakeholder Engagement
- Dissemination and Translation

(10 R01s, 1 R24)

Research Examples Supported by this Program

- Developing and testing novel harm reduction approaches in urban and rural settings.
- Evaluating novel settings for delivering harm reduction services that do not require face-to-face interactions.
- Exploring and addressing individual and system-level barriers to accessing harm reduction services.
- Examining strategies for reaching vulnerable, understudied, and hard-to-reach populations.
- Assessing the effectiveness of harm reduction strategies for individuals who use methamphetamine and other stimulants.

MORE RESEARCH QUESTIONS...

- What is the evidence of benefit or harm for the use of other drugs like cannabis or kratom that drug users rely on to manage withdrawal and craving?
- What are the benefits and harms associated with the use of alternative routes of drug administration such as smoking instead of injecting?
- What is the context that influences potential cost benefits for harm reduction interventions and how to tailor accordingly?
- What are the considerations in providing harm reduction approaches to pregnant women and adolescents?

Urgent Emerging Need...

Xylazine Harm Reduction Strategies

- 1) acute poisoning
- 2) prolonged sedation
- 3) skin wounds



Fig. 1 Photo of a discarded bottle of AnaSed[®] xylazine found in a shrubby area in Kensington, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Courtesy Christopher Moraff

Harm Domain

Clinical Implications

Harm Reduction Strategies

Heavy Sedation

- Continued sedation after naloxone
- Pressure ulcers and skin breakdown likely
- Elevated risk for DVT
- Elevated risk of compartment syndrome
- Nerve, muscle, and soft tissue injury
- Rhabdomyolysis

- Encourage using drugs with a friend
- Roll people nodding onto their side
- Move people nodding every two hours
- Pad under bony areas (sacrum, heels, shoulders, etc.)
- Avoid wrinkled or hard surfaces under nodding person

Skin Wounds

- Bacterial superinfection possible
- Ensure adequate longitudinal wound care
- Can cause shame and reduced care-seeking due to untreated wounds
- Individuals may be deemed ineligible for in-patient care due to untreated wounds

- Coach to avoid injecting into or near wounds
- Facilitate wound care access
- Teach individual and friends/family how to care for wounds
- Provide wound care supplies
- Teach on signs of worsening condition

THANK YOU!