

Heritage Skills Development Centre (HSDC)



Helping Families Build a Strong Foundation



HARM REDUCTION BOOKLET & COMMUNITY RESOURCE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|----|------------------------------|
| 01 | Understanding Substance use |
| 02 | Substance use current facts |
| 03 | Substance use continuum |
| 04 | Harm reduction |
| 05 | Overdose and prevention |
| 06 | Naloxone; a life saving tool |
| 07 | Community resources |



UNDERSTANDING SUBSTANCE USE

What is a substance:

These are drugs that work on the mind or affect behavior. They can alter your mood and the way you think or act. Common substances includes; alcohol, stimulants , Nicotine. Marijuana

What is substance use:

Refers to the use of selected substances, including alcohol, tobacco products, drugs, inhalants, and others that can be consumed, inhaled, injected, or otherwise absorbed into the body with possible dependence and other detrimental effects.



What is substance use disorder:

Substance use disorder or Addiction, is a condition where someone cannot stop using a substance, even if they want to. Addiction affects the brain, making it hard to control the desire to use substances.

The four factors which are present in substance use disorder are;

- CRAVING: An intense desire for the substance
- CONTROL: Repeated failed attempts to cut back or control use
- COMPULSION: uncontrollable urge that they must use.
- CONSEQUENCES - substance use is continued despite negative consequences.



COMMONLY USED SUSTANCES



Alcohol



Caffeine



Tobacco/Nicotine



Prescription painkillers
opioids which can be
addictive if misused.



Cannabis (Marijuana)



Illegal Drugs: Includes
substances like cocaine,
heroin, methamphetamine,
and ecstasy, which carry
significant health and legal
risks



Prescription sedatives
which can be addictive if
misused.

SIGNS OF SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

- Difficulty controlling the amount used.
- Spending a lot of time using or recovering from the substance.
- Problems at work, school, or with family due to substance use.
- Feeling withdrawal symptoms (like anxiety or nausea) when not using.
- Continuing to use despite negative consequences.
- Trying and failing to stop using the opioid drug
- Having intense cravings for the drug
- Needing increased amounts of the drug to get the same effects – tolerance

IMPACT

- **Physical Health:** Substance use can cause serious health issues like liver disease, lung damage, heart problems, and overdoses.
- **Mental Health:** It can increase the risk of mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, and psychosis.
- **Social Impact:** Substance use can lead to relationship issues, and legal troubles.
- **Economic impact:** which can include job loss or financial problems

SUBSTANCE USE- 2024 CURRENT FACTS

Canada is currently struggling with an overdose crisis



Opioid related deaths

Between Jan 2016- March 2024

- 47,162 apparent opioid toxicity deaths reported

Between Jan- Mar 2024

- 72% of apparent opioid toxicity deaths occurred in males
- 81% of accidental opioid death involved fentanyl.
- 61% accidental opioid death also involved a stimulant.
- 31% occurred in individuals between 30 to 39 years
- 84% of accidental opioid deaths occurred in British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario
- 84% of accidental opioid death involved opioids that were non-pharmaceutical

Opioid related poisoning hospitalization

Between Jan 2016- March 2024

- 44,366 reported opioid-related poisoning hospitalizations

Between Jan- Mar 2024

- 1,505 opioid-related hospitalizations so far. 17% involved co-poisoning with a stimulant.
- 65% of hospitalizations occurred in males
- 33% of opioid-related hospitalizations involved fentanyl and its analogues
- 24% occurred in individuals between 60 and above
- 571 stimulant-related hospitalization. 46% involved co-poisoning with an opioid

Opioid related emergency department visits

1 47% of opioid-related ED visits involved fentanyl and analogues

2 8% of opioid related ED visits involved co-poisoning with a stimulant.

3 Jan 2016- March 2024
180,961 reported opioid-related poisoning emergency department

4 75% occurred in individuals between 20 -29

5 For stimulant related ED visits, 32% involved co-poisoning with opioids and 19% with fentanyl or its analogues.

6 68% of ED visits occurred in males



SUBSTANCE USE CONTINUUM

Substance use can be viewed on a continuum. In most cases, substance use does not harm individuals or others as using a substance doesn't always mean that we have a substance use problem.



No use



Beneficial use



Non problematic
use



Substance use
disorder



Potentially
harmful



Problematic
use

Substance use related Harms

Harms related to method of drug use

Injecting drugs can cause or result in:

- skin infections
- diseases (if sharing needles or having unprotected sex)
- isolation and loneliness (because of social stigma)
- criminal record
- overdose

while smoking drugs can cause or lead to lung problems



Harms related to intoxication (using too much at one time)

Heavy use of alcohol or other drugs can cause or result in:

- family conflict
- impaired parenting skills
- alcohol poisoning, overdose or death
- accidents or falls (from reckless or careless behaviour)
- violence
- legal problems
- unwanted sexual activity

Harms related to regular, long-term use

Long-term use of alcohol or other drugs can often result in:

- cancer and/or other serious diseases of the heart, lungs and liver
- memory and thinking problems
- reckless or risky behaviour to get/keep drug supply
- seizures and severe withdrawal symptoms when the drug is not available
- mental health problems

In certain circumstances long-term use may lead to:

- money, relationship and work performance problems
- child abuse and neglect



HARM REDUCTION

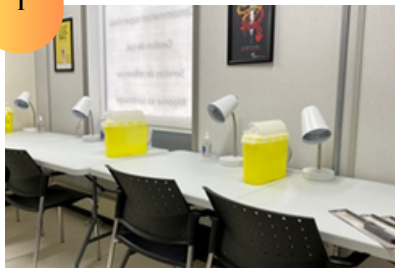


Why harm reduction

- Harm reduction are strategies that aims to reduce negative consequence of substance use.
- It recognizes that while some people may not be ready or able to stop using substances there are ways to minimize the risk involved.
- Harm reductions is all about safety, dignity and respect. Helping individuals reduce the risk of substance related harms while maintaining health and well being
- In everyday life, harm reduction is the reason why seatbelt is worn while driving, roads have speed limit or helmets are worn in several sports just to reduce the harm associated with such activities
- Prevents overdose, reduces overdose and overdose mortality.
- Safer use supplies reduces sharing of substance use equipment which stops the spread of diseases like Hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS
- Creates a non-judgmental space for substance users thereby reducing isolation
- Increases access to healthcare and other services therefore Supporting your health as a substance user
- Reduces harm to individuals involved, their families and society and also creating healthy support systems
- Build rapport, trusting relationships and reducing stigma
- Increases knowledge around safer substance use and also safe sex knowledge.
- Helps individuals make informed decisions to reduce potential harm from drug use.
- Addresses co-occurring disorders

HARM REDUCTION SERVICES

1



Supervised consumption
site

2



Naloxone kits

3



Distribution of harm
reduction kits

4



Needle exchange
program

5



Drug testing programs

6



Medication Assisted
treatment

HARM REDUCTION SUPPLIES



Safer Injecting supplies

Safer Smoking and snorting supplies

- Harm reduction supplies include a range of equipment that support people who use drugs to implement safer injecting, smoking and snorting practices.
- The distribution of these supplies is an evidence-based approach to reducing a range of preventable harms which is fundamental to supporting the health and wellness of people who use drugs in Canada, reduce the transmission of Hepatitis C and HIV and prevent a range of other potential harms associated with substance use.
- The content of the kit can vary according to the targeted substance and specific needs of the community

HARM REDUCTION TIPS



- Use clean supplies; this will prevent the spread of infections. Harm reduction kits are available in the community
- Using a sharps container for syringe disposal
- Avoid mixing your substances this can be very dangerous
- Test your substances; there are drug testing sites available for your safety so know what you take.
- Use the testing kits if available to check for harmful additives or the actual substance you intend to use
- If possible use supervised consumption site and have a team of professionals cater for you
- Always carry Naloxone. Free naloxone is available in the community. It saves lives
- Educate yourself about the substances you're using, including effects, risks, and potential interactions.
- Decide on a safe amount to use beforehand, and stick to it to avoid overindulgence.
- Surround yourself with friends who support you and can help if needed.
- Drink plenty of water to reduce dehydration, especially with alcohol or stimulants.
- Give yourself time between uses to assess how you feel and avoid bingeing.
- Use substances from reliable sources to minimize the risk of contamination or adulteration.
- Not driving when high. Make a plan for getting home safely and have a backup option in case things don't go as expected.



HARM REDUCTION TIPS

- Familiarize yourself with the symptoms of overdose for the substances you use and know how to respond
- The use of nicotine patches and gums instead of cigarettes
- Medicated Assisted Treatment (MAT- Buprenorphine (suboxone), Methadone) or Substitution Therapy.
- Practicing safe sex when using substances



Harm Reduction
Saves Lives

- Myth: Harm reduction encourages or promotes drug use.
- Fact: Harm reduction does not promote drug use. It focuses on minimizing the negative consequences of substance use, such as overdose, disease transmission, and injury, while supporting individuals where they are, regardless of whether they are ready to quit or not



Helping Families Build a Strong Foundation



Overdose and Prevention

What is an Overdose:

An overdose occurs when someone takes more of a substance than their body can handle, resulting in serious, often life-threatening symptoms.

Who can Overdose

Anyone can overdose these include; First time users, longtime users, old people young people or people released from treatment

Signs of overdose vary depending on the substance(s) use;

- Opioids (e.g., heroin, fentanyl): Slow breathing, unconsciousness, blue or grayish lips, Slow heartbeat, gurgling or snoring sound, cold and clammy skin, pupils appear small
- Stimulants (e.g., cocaine, methamphetamine): Rapid heartbeat, Chest pain, Seizures, Agitation, paranoia, or confusion
- Alcohol: Confusion or inability to wake up, Vomiting, Seizures, Slow or irregular breathing, Low body temperature or clammy skin

With increase in Overdose cases, the Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act was enforced to encourage everyone to save a life during an overdose

This Act protects you from charges for possession of a controlled substance

it applies to

- anyone seeking emergency support during an overdose incident including the person experiencing an overdose.
- It protects the person who seeks help
- It also protects anyone else who is at the scene

If you witness any
of these signs....
the time to act is
NOW!!!





What to do in case of an Overdose



If you suspect someone is overdosing, act quickly because you can save a life. The Good Samaritan act will protect you

1

Stimulate or try waking the person up

2

CALL 9-1-1
IMMEDIATELY

3

Administer
Naloxone
intranasal spray

4

Perform CPR (if needed). If the person is not breathing or has a weak pulse

5

After 2-3 minutes administer Naloxone again if no response and help has not arrived

6

Place in a recovery position on the side, hands supporting the head and knees bent



7

Stay with the person till help arrives.
Do not leave them alone.

Overdose Prevention Tips

- Avoid mixing substances; for example alcohol with opioids or benzodiazepines will greatly increase the risk of overdose.
- Start with a lower dosage, and go slowly when you start using especially after any period of abstinence or decreased use.
- Test your drugs before using, there are drug testing sites available
- Use drug test strips to test substances for the presence of fentanyl
- Test the strength of the drug before using the whole amount even when using the same dealer
- Carry Naloxone (Narcan): a life-saving medication that can reverse opioid overdoses if administered in time.
- Train yourself and your family and friends on how to use Naloxone.
- Be aware of the signs of overdose and be prepared to take action.
- Make use of a safe Consumption Sites: communities offer safe consumption spaces where people can use substances under the supervision of trained staff who can intervene if an overdose occurs.
- Avoid Using Alone: never use alone.
- If you must use alone, consider calling an overdose prevention hotline, or use apps that monitor and alert emergency services in case of an overdose.



Naloxone; A life saving Tool

What is Naloxone?

Naloxone (also known as Narcan) is a medication that can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. It works by quickly blocking the effects of opioids (e.g., heroin, fentanyl, prescription painkillers) on the brain, helping restore normal breathing in someone who has overdosed.



Why Carry Naloxone?

- Opioid overdoses can happen anywhere, whether from prescription medications or illicit drugs.
- Once you take opioids, having naloxone is very important in case of an overdose, it can save your life
- Anyone can administer naloxone. You don't need to be a healthcare professional to use it
- Naloxone saves lives: It provides critical time until emergency services can take over.

Important Things to Remember

Naloxone only works on opioids. It won't reverse overdoses from other substances like alcohol, cocaine, or methamphetamine

Naloxone is safe to use even if opioids are not present.

It won't harm someone if they haven't taken opioids.

It is available without a prescription at most pharmacies at no cost

“Carry Naloxone—overdoses can happen unexpectedly, but Naloxone can save your life”



6 Easy steps to use Naloxone



1

Stimulate and check for
signs of overdose

2

CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY



3

Peel the package to remove
the device

4

Place the thumb on the
plunger and two fingers on
either side of the nozzle



5

Insert the Nozzle into
one nostril and press
the plunger to release
the dose

6

Place in recovery
position



Always carry a Naloxone, it can save your life



ADDICTION SUPPORT COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Heritage Skills Development Centre
2387 Eglinton Avenue East,
Scarborough, M1K 2M5
www.hsdconline.org
Info@hsdconline.org
(416) 345-1613

Agincourt Community Services
Association
4155 Sheppard Ave E. Suite 100
<https://acsa.ca/>
mrahema@agincourtcommunityservices.com
647 459 6912

Black coalition for prevention of AIDS
20 Victoria Street, 4th Floor
<https://blackcap.ca/>
info@black-cap.com
416.977.9955

Hong Fook Mental Health Association
Suite 201, 3320 Midland Avenue,
Scarborough, ON, M1V 5E6
www.hongfook.ca
info@hongfook.ca
416 493 4242

Salvation Army Homestead Addiction
Services
2085 Ellesmere Rd, Scarborough ON
M1H 3K2
<https://salvationarmy.ca/> 416 431 4379
ext. 221

Tamil Wellness Centre
2660 Eglinton Avenue East
<https://www.vasantham.ca/>
416 847 4172

Centre for Addictions and Mental Health
<https://www.camh.ca/>
osp.info@camh.ca
4165358501

City of Toronto (The works)
277 Victoria St
<https://www.toronto.ca>
PublicHealth@toronto.ca
416-392-0520

Malvern Family Resource Centre
90 Little Road, Scarborough, ON
M1B5E2
<https://mfrc.org/>
info@mfrc.org
416 284 4184

Scarborough Centre for Healthy
Communities
629 Markham Road
<https://schcontario.ca/>
info@schcontario.ca
416) 642-9445

Connex Ontario
Phone: 1-866-531-2600
Website: <https://www.connexontario.ca/>

Good2Talk
Free, confidential support services for
post-secondary students
1-866-925-5454
Text GOOD2TALKON to 686868

Strides Toronto
Whats up Walk in
100 Consilium Place, Ground Floor -
Suite 102 Scarborough,



ABOUT HSDC



Heritage Skills Development Centre (HSDC) is a grassroots non-profit organization established in 1993 with a mission to promote arts, the health, social, cultural and economic self-sufficiency of newcomer immigrants, refugees, low-income, at-risk and other marginalized group through integrative and empowering programs and services.

Some of the main HSDC program/services include :

- Capacity Building and Training programs
- Social Programs
- Senior programs
- Mental health, Addictions support
- Referral and Information Services
- Supportive Counselling and Mentorship
- Arts & Culture

CONTACT US



(416) 345-1613



info@hsdconline.org



<https://hsdconline.org>



@heritage Skills Development Centre (HSDC)



@hsdcscarborough



- 2387 Eglinton Avenue E, Unit 3, Scarborough, ON, Canada, M1K 2M5
- 400 McCowan Road, Ground floor, Scarborough, ON, Canada, M1J 1J5