

Harm Reduction. Housing. Hope.

Emma Roberts (she/her)
Sarah Gorry (she/her)

NATIONAL
HARM REDUCTION
COALITION

National Harm Reduction Coalition creates spaces
for **dialogue and action** that help heal the harms caused
by racialized drug policies.



Policy &
Advocacy



National & Regional
Conferences



Trainings &
Technical
Assistance



Overdose
Prevention



Resources &
Publications

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HARM REDUCTION
COALITION**

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HOUSING OVERVIEW

THE HOUSING FIRST **APPROACH**

Housing First is a proven approach in which people experiencing homelessness are connected to permanent housing swiftly and with few to no treatment preconditions, behavioral contingencies, or other barriers

CORE ELEMENTS OF HOUSING FIRST

- Access to programs is **not contingent on sobriety**, minimum income requirements, lack of a criminal record, completion of treatment, participation in services, or other unnecessary conditions.
- Programs or projects do everything possible not to reject an individual or family based on poor credit or financial history, poor or lack of rental history, minor criminal convictions, or behaviors that are interpreted as indicating a lack of “housing readiness.”
- Housing and service goals and plans are highly **tenant-driven**.
- Supportive services emphasize **engagement** and problem-solving over therapeutic goals. Participation in services or compliance with service plans are not conditions of tenancy but are reviewed with tenants and regularly offered as a resource to tenants.

Source: [U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness](#)

CORE ELEMENTS OF HOUSING FIRST

- Services are informed by a **harm reduction** philosophy that recognizes that drug and alcohol use and addiction are a part of some tenants' lives. Tenants are engaged in **non-judgmental** communication regarding drug and alcohol use and are offered education regarding how to avoid risky behaviors and engage in safer practices.
- Substance use in and of itself, without other lease violations, is not considered a reason for eviction.
- Tenants in supportive housing are given reasonable **flexibility** in paying their share of rent on time and offered special payment arrangements for rent arrears and/or assistance with financial management, including representative payee arrangements.
- Every effort is made to provide a tenant the opportunity to transfer from one housing situation, program, or project to another if a tenancy is in jeopardy. Whenever possible, **eviction back into homelessness is avoided.**

Source: [U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness](#)

IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- Find your local CoC contact: <https://resources.hud.gov/>

Click “Find Homeless Resources Near Me”

- Keep in mind faith-based organizations, coalitions & soup kitchens
- In rural communities the CoC may not be in your own county
- Limitations to Housing First
 - Not every housing program adopts the model
 - Fidelity to the model can vary widely
 - Some people fundamental disagree with the approach
 - Various factors impact referrals and housing placements including a lack of affordable housing

Housing First is an evidence-based approach

HOUSING FIRST WITH HARM REDUCTION

“While the majority of the HFwithHR articles explicitly identified harm reduction as part of Housing First, language discussing harm reduction as compatible with, **rather than critical to**, Housing First could be taken to mean harm reduction is an optional component of the intervention.”



HARM REDUCTION OVERVIEW

THE HARM REDUCTION **APPROACH**

Harm reduction is an evidenced-based practical public health approach that reduces the negative consequences of drug use and sex work and promotes the health of people and communities

**SAFER
TECHNIQUES**

MANAGED USE

ABSTINENCE

HARM REDUCTION PRINCIPLES

Health and
Dignity

Participant
Centered
Services

Participant
Involvement

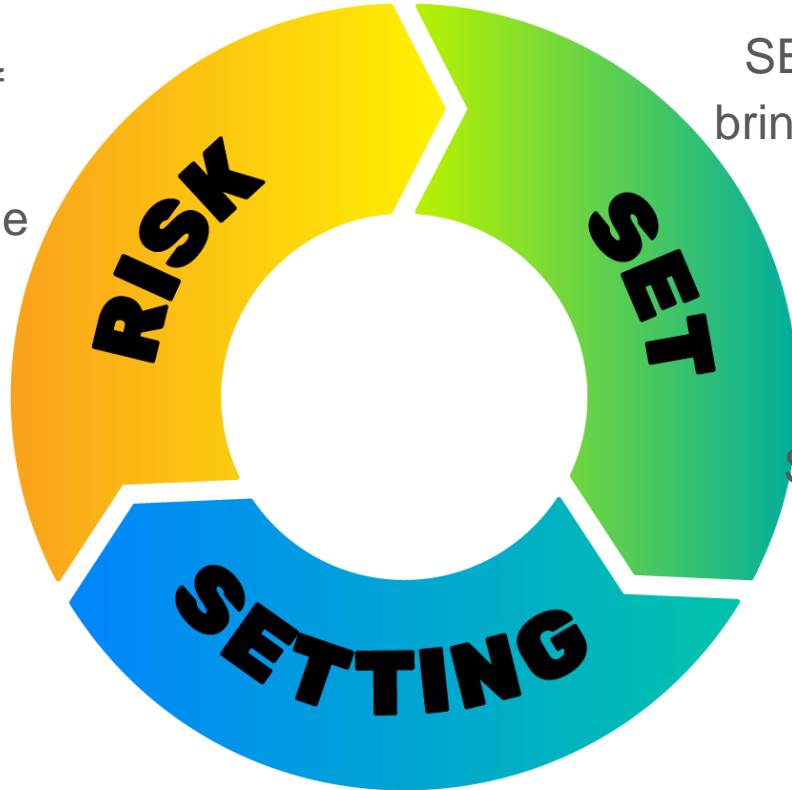
Participant
Autonomy

Sociocultural
Factors

Pragmatism
and Realism

RISK, SET, SETTING MODEL

RISK - The risk itself
you're discussing
(directly related to the
use of drugs or
doing sex work)



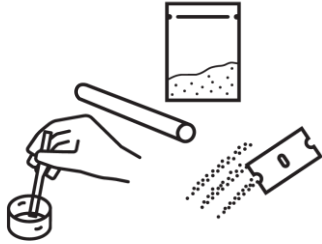
SET - The “mindset” someone
brings to the situation, including
thoughts, mood, and
expectations

SETTING - The physical and
social environment where
the person is, and their
perception of how that can
promote or reduce risk

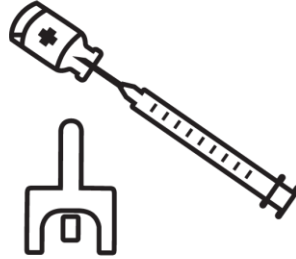
HARM REDUCTION SERVICES



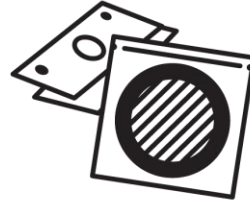
Syringe Access and
Disposal



Safer Drug Use
Supplies



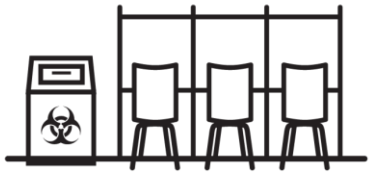
Overdose
Prevention



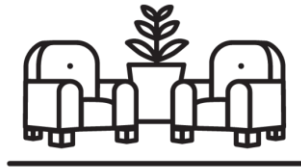
Safer Sex Materials



Medication for
Opioid Use
Disorder



Safer Consumption
Services




Drop-in
Centers



Housing
First



Referrals



NOT ALL PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS ARE
LIVING UNHOUSED

NOT ALL PEOPLE WHO ARE LIVING
UNHOUSED USE DRUGS



WHAT ARE SOME REASONS THEY MAY
OVERLAP?

DRUG USE AND HOUSING INSTABILITY

**Setting of drug
use**

**Substances are
often used to
endure, cope,
and survive**

**Continued loss
of belongings**

**Hierarchy of
Needs**

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH FOR PWUD



- **Social determinants of health** are social, economic, and political circumstances that influence individual and community health status.
- Comprehensive harm reduction addresses drug use as well as the environment in which someone is using drugs.
- Experiences of discrimination and trauma related to race and gender identity, class, family history, and incarceration influence people's drug use behaviors and access to care.
- Within a harm reduction framework, **providers' responsibility is to acknowledge and address barriers in order to promote stability, safety, and health for their communities.**



INFORMAL PARTNERSHIPS

INFORMAL PARTNERSHIPS

- Being a soft hand off to each other
 - Create an environment where it's safe to disclose housing/drug use status
 - You are a trusted person
 - Be a trustworthy partner
- Sharing of information
 - Respect a person's right to privacy
 - Informal sharing of information when the person is present with permission throughout
 - Formal release of information
- Housing takes time
 - Stay connected and share updates
 - Allow space for the frustrations
- Knowing people's places
 - With their permission, know how to find them when things happen

INFORMAL PARTNERSHIPS

- Housing Providers
 - Spread the word about Narcan
 - Tour your local SSP
 - Practice harm reduction
- Harm Reduction Providers
 - Practical safety planning
 - Hygiene products, mirror, socks, coffee, snacks, time in bathroom
 - Providing space to regroup
- Join each other's coalitions



MORE FORMAL PARTNERSHIPS

FORMAL PARTNERSHIPS

Hope Gardens and Evergreen Health

- Harm reduction counseling in a single-site permanent supportive housing (PSH) program

Evergreen Health and Outreach Team

- Weekly scheduled outreach at the local SSP
- Has outlasted staff turnover

SYSTEMATIZED PARTNERSHIPS

NYC's Jericho Housing Opioid Overdose Prevention Program (OOPP)

- Housing staff can train people in how to use narcan
- Allows housing staff to distribute narcan

Process for becoming an OOPP varies by state

- In NYS Department of Health website includes instructions and registration form



WHO ARE THE PROVIDERS IN YOUR
COMMUNITY YOU MAY WANT TO
PARTNER WITH?

RESOURCES

National Harm Reduction Coalition

<https://harmreduction.org/resource-center/>

Corporation for Supportive Housing

<https://www.csh.org/resources/>

RIZE Massachusetts

<https://www.rizema.org/yourrights/>

Pathways to Housing

<https://www.pathwayshousingfirst.org/>



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