



# Harm Reduction Guide for Prevention Professionals in Rhode Island

*November 2023*



New England (HHS Region 1)

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Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network

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# Table of Contents

**01**

**HARM  
REDUCTION  
DEFINED**

**02**

**SHARED GOALS  
AND PRIORITIES**

**03**

**COLLABORATION  
ACROSS THE  
CONTINUUM**

**04 - 09**

**BEST AND  
INNOVATIVE  
PRACTICES**

**10 - 13**

**RESOURCES**

**14**

**CITATIONS**



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# Harm Reduction

What do the following tools have in common?



They are ALL implemented to reduce harm to people in our communities.

*SAMHSA defines harm reduction as a practical and transformative approach that incorporates community-driven public health strategies — including prevention, risk reduction, and health promotion — to empower people who use drugs and their families with the choice to live healthy, self-directed, and purpose-filled lives.*



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# Shared Goals and Priorities



*Harm reduction spans across the continuum of care*

## Shared Goals

- Healthy and happy people
- Safe communities
- Meeting people's basic needs such as housing, food

## Shared Strategies

- Sharing information about substances and the science and disease of addiction
- Providing education on positive alternatives to substance use
- Mental health support, coping and regulation skills, referral to treatment or recovery services
- Leading and supporting drug take-back events
- Referrals to treatment and/or recovery services
- Encouraging healthy lifestyles
- Making safe storage an easy option
- Supporting the Good Samaritan Law
- Distribution of and training on Naloxone
- Motivational Interviewing to identify levers for change
- Co-creating a strengths-based plan for action



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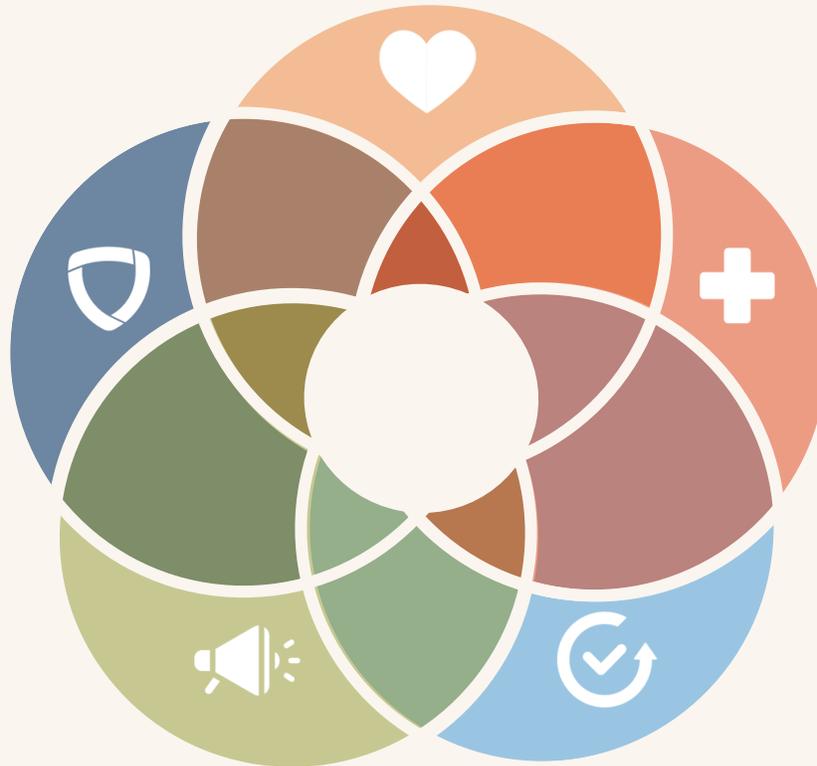
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# Collaboration Across the Continuum

*When prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and recovery work together, there can be a greater reach and more positive impact on the community.*



## Professionals across the continuum can better collaborate by...

- Encouraging professionals to openly share their perspectives and experience
- Learning more about each other's work (e.g., attending prevention, treatment, recovery, harm reduction workgroup meetings or a state summit)
- Making referrals to services across the continuum of care
- Developing and updating shared definitions and language
- Incorporating people with lived experience in decision making, planning, evaluation, and implementation across the substance use continuum



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# Best Practices

## Harm reduction IS



Encouraging safer use by those who will use drugs and always welcoming them back to care

Compassionate, person-centered

A journey with multiple stops along the way

Infectious disease prevention, overdose prevention, wound care, safe and sterile supplies

Meeting people where they're at and encouraging achievable, positive change

Supported by state and federal funding

## Harm reduction IS NOT



Encouraging substance use

Judgmental, stigmatizing

Straight line from point A to point B

Just overdose prevention

Telling people what you think they need

Prohibited by state and federal funding



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## Language Matters

The use of affirming language inspires hope.

**LANGUAGE MATTERS.**

**Words have power.**

**PEOPLE FIRST.**

The PTTC Network uses affirming language to promote the application of evidence-based and culturally informed practices.



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# Best Practices for Messaging and Communication

**“People-first”** language should be used when speaking to and about people with a substance use condition to ensure the person remains at the center of the conversation, not the condition (e.g., “people with a substance use condition” instead of “substance user.”)

**Be thoughtful about the language you use** that may label someone, avoiding words such as “addict”, “clean” or “dirty”, and “substance abuser.”

“Nothing about us without us.” People with a substance use condition must be meaningfully **included** in setting goals for positive change in their substance use, and any planning, implementation, and evaluation of statewide harm reduction efforts.

People with a substance use condition in Rhode Island report being most likely to find out about resources and supports through **word of mouth**, which makes peers with shared experiences invaluable messengers to reach this community.

Making it clear **that all are welcome** for care, without conditions such as needing to promise sobriety or exhibiting a serious medical or mental health condition.



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# Well-supported SAMHSA-approved\* harm reduction practices



**Integrated reproductive health education, services and supplies, and sexually transmitted infection screening and treatment**



**Fentanyl test strips**



**Supplies to promote sterile injection and reduce infectious disease transmission through injection drug use (excluding sterile needles, syringes, and other drug paraphernalia)**



**Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution**



**Safer smoking kits to reduce infectious disease transmission (excluding pipes/pipettes and other drug paraphernalia)**

*\*No federal funding is used directly or through subsequent reimbursement of SAMHSA grantees to purchase pipes in safer smoking kits. Grants include explicit prohibitions of federal funds to be used to purchase drug paraphernalia.*

For more information: <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/harm-reduction>



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# Innovative Harm Reduction Practices



Pharmacy Interventions (e.g., pharmacists distributing naloxone)

Safe spaces for oversedation (i.e., location where people who are over sedated can be monitored)

Bathroom safety (e.g., bathroom monitoring, posters advocating for safer use, sharps boxes, easy access to naloxone)

Injectable opioid agonist treatment (diacetylmorphine, hydromorphone) for patients with a severe opioid use disorder who inject opioids

Fourier-transform infrared spectrometers (FTIR) to test substances for all known contaminants



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# Innovative Harm Reduction Practices



(continued)

On-call certified peer recovery specialists

Knock and Talk outreach, similar to the Hope Initiative in RI, (i.e., public health and public safety partners reach out to overdose survivors and link them to services)

At-home delivery of harm-reduction supplies

Harm Reduction vending machines

Public health-public safety surveillance and rapid response

Never use alone technology (Brave App, BeSafe App, Never Use Alone Hotline)



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# Resources for Prevention Professionals

**Training and education about the foundations of harm reduction and how it pairs with existing prevention efforts.**

- Rhode Island
  - Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals (BHDDH) <https://bhddh.ri.gov/prevention>
  - Rhode Island Prevention Resource Center <https://www.riprc.org/>
- New England
  - New England PTTC Training and Technical Assistance <https://pttcnetwork.org/centers/content/new-england-pttc>
  - Addiction Technology Transfer Center (ATTC) <https://attcnetwork.org/>
  - Strategic Prevention Technical Assistance Center (SPTAC) <https://www.samhsa.gov/sptac>
- National Partners
  - National Harm Reduction Coalition <https://harmreduction.org/>
  - The Opioid Response Network (ORN) <https://opioidresponsenetwork.org/>
  - National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD) <https://nastad.org/>
  - Peer Recovery Center of Excellence webinars, The Intersection of Harm Reduction, Prevention, and Recovery <https://peerrecoverynow.org/product/the-intersection-of-harm-reduction-prevention-recovery-part-i/> and <https://peerrecoverynow.org/product/the-intersection-of-prevention-recovery-part-ii/>.
  - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) <https://www.samhsa.gov/>



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# Resources for Prevention Professionals

## Training and education about the foundations of harm reduction and how it pairs with existing prevention efforts.

- Collaboration between harm reduction and primary prevention is critical to break down stigma and achieve common goals. Engaging with the harm reduction workforce and people with lived and living experience is crucial to fostering the relationship between prevention and harm reduction. Rhode Island has a Harm Reduction Workgroup that meets monthly to share information and resources to advance the field.
  - Harm Reduction Workgroup <https://preventoverdoseri.org/task-force-work-groups/#harmreduction>
- Messaging and communications with and regarding people with a substance use condition should use person-first, non-stigmatizing language.
  - Rhode Island's Words Matter Guide <https://eohhs.ri.gov/words-matter>
  - Recovery Research Institute's Addictionary <https://www.recoveryanswers.org/addiction-ary/>
- Harm reduction messaging and materials are valuable for prevention professionals to post and disseminate in the community.
  - Rhode Island Department of Health substance use and harm reduction messaging <https://health.ri.gov/order/publications/resultsbyparameter.php?audience=%20ALL&topic=Addiction%20and%20Overdose>
  - Prevent Overdose Rhode Island Social Media Toolkit <https://preventoverdoseri.org/social-media-toolkit/>, places to get help <https://preventoverdoseri.org/get-help/>, safer substance use practices <https://preventoverdoseri.org/safer-drug-use-practices/> and more at <https://preventoverdoseri.org/>.
- Prescription drug disposal sites are available across the state.
  - List of drug disposal options <https://bhddh.ri.gov/prevention/prescription-drug-disposal-sites>



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# Resources for People with a Substance Use Condition

- Rhode Island's Stack the Deck information on harm reduction approaches, resources, and supplies, included with harm reduction supply kits
- The Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals (BHDDH) maintains an updated list of agencies licensed to provide treatment and recovery services for individuals with a substance use condition (<https://bhddh.ri.gov/substance-useaddiction/licensed-treatment-providers-0>) and also has resources for families (<https://bhddh.ri.gov/substance-useaddiction/individual-and-family-information>)
- Prevent Overdose Rhode Island (<https://preventoverdoseri.org/get-help/>) has harm reduction resources including:
  - Treatment locator (harm reduction vending machines, buprenorphine and methadone, detoxification, etc.)
  - Overdose prevention centers that offer counseling and harm reduction supplies
  - Information overdose prevention centers (<https://preventoverdoseri.org/overdose-prevention-centers/>)
  - Safe Stations for 24/7 connection to treatment supports and services
  - Drug overdose information, including how to recognize and respond to an overdose (<https://bhddh.ri.gov/substance-useaddiction/drug-overdose-information>)
  - Peer recovery and family support info: (<https://bhddh.ri.gov/substance-useaddiction/recovery-services>)
- Harm Reduction Vending Machines are available throughout the state (see Prevent Overdose RI "Get Help" resource above for locations). These vending machines often include the following:
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Safer injection and smoking kits</li> <li>○ Naloxone (Narcan)</li> <li>○ Fentanyl test strip kits</li> <li>○ Condoms/ safer sex kits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wound care kits</li> <li>○ Hygiene kits</li> <li>○ Referral cards for services</li> </ul>
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# Resources for People with a Substance Use Condition

- Prevent Overdose RI resources for people who use drugs (<https://preventoverdoseri.org/people-who-use-drugs/>)
- Harm reduction organizations are spread across the state. These organizations offer resources and supplies such as Naloxone, needle exchange, fentanyl test strips, infectious disease testing, and others. Some of the most well-known organizations in Rhode Island are below, along with their primary addresses:
  - AIDS Care Ocean State (<https://aidscaresos.org/>)
    - 557 Broad Street, Providence, RI 02907, (401) 273-1888
  - Project Weber/RENEW (<https://weberrenew.org/>)
    - 640 Broad Street, Providence, RI 02907, (401) 383-4888
    - 124 Broad Street, Pawtucket, RI 02860, (401) 867-2882
    - Downtown Mobile Outreach, Kennedy Plaza, in downtown Providence (on the side of Kennedy Plaza near the “Superman Building” (Industrial Trust Bank)
  - Parent Support Network (<https://psnri.org/>)
    - 535 Centerville Road, Suite 202, Warwick, RI 02886, (401) 467-6855
  - Community Care Alliance Safe Haven (<http://www.communitycareri.org/ProgramsServices/MentalHealthAddictions/AddictionsSubstanceUseTreatment/SafeHaven.aspx>)
    - 245 Main St, Woonsocket, RI 02895, 401-235-6044
- Call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 9-8-8 for any behavioral health concerns or crises.
- The statewide Buprenorphine Hotline: 401-606-5456 to connect with providers who can prescribe buprenorphine.
- BH Link - A walk-in center that is always open to connect you to immediate care and recovery supports. Located at: 975 Waterman Avenue, East Providence, RI 02914
- Never use alone technology includes the Brave App, BeSafe App, and Never Use Alone Hotline. These tools allow for someone who is alone to be monitored remotely. If an individual becomes unresponsive, these tools will automatically call for help.



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**Suggested Citation for this Publication:** New England Prevention Technology Transfer Center. (2023). (rep.). *Harm Reduction Guide for Prevention Professionals in Rhode Island* (pp. 1–12). Augusta, ME.

## Funding Acknowledgement

This guide was prepared by Public Consulting Group (PCG) for the New England Prevention Technology Transfer Center (New England PTTC). The PTTC is supported by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award with 100 percent funded by SAMHSA/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by SAMHSA/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

Cooperative Agreement # 5H79SP081020-05M005



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