

**HARM  
REDUCTION**

A yellow inverted triangle with a black border, containing the text "HARM REDUCTION" in bold black capital letters. The triangle is centered on a white background with a subtle texture. The entire image is set against a dark teal background with a wavy, liquid-like pattern.

# Areas of Harm Reduction

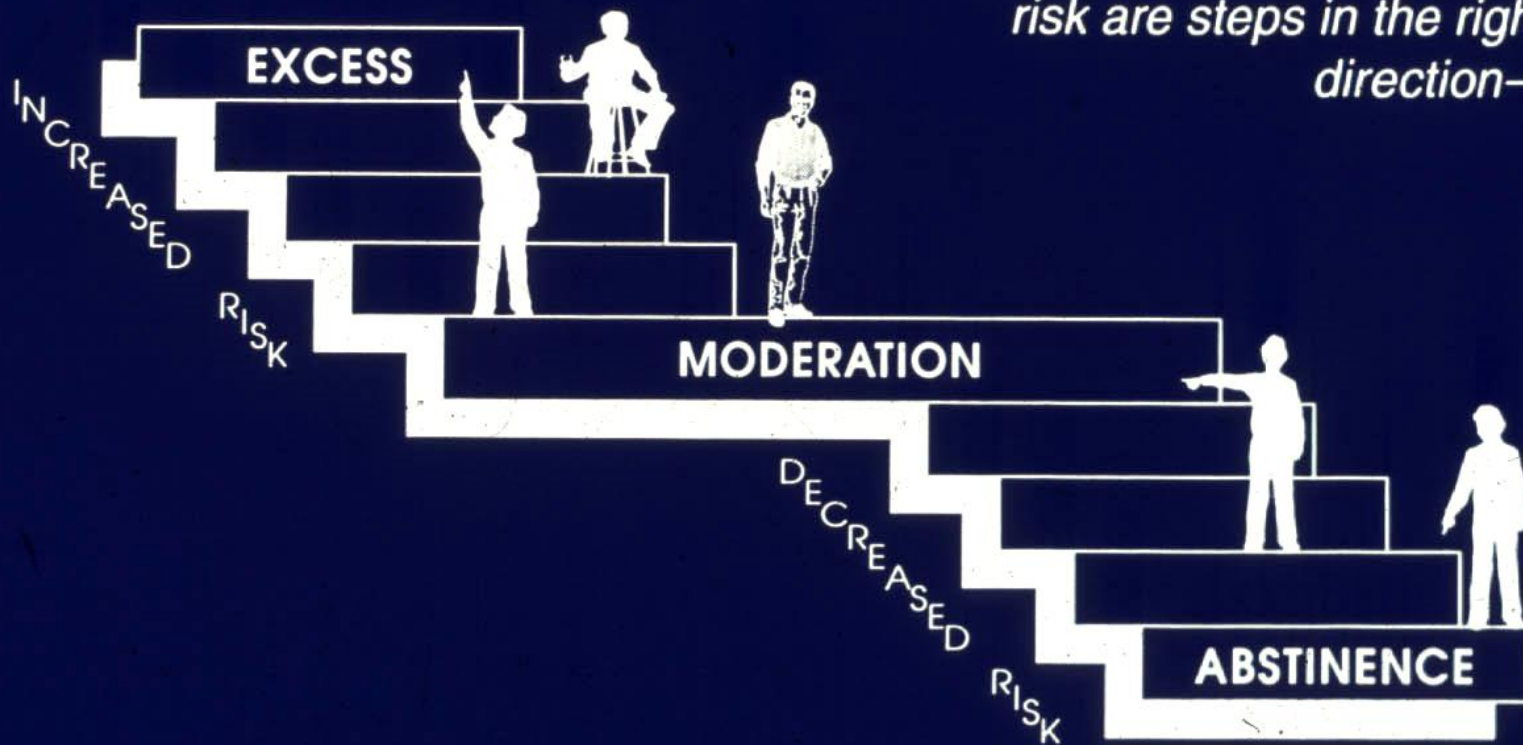
- Safer Sex – condom use, avoidance of risky sexual practices, abstinence.....
- Safer Driving – speed limits, seat belts, intoxication limits, air bags, defensive driving, alternatives to driving.....
- Safer Drug Use....

# AOD Harm Reduction: Overview

- Harmful consequences of drug use can be placed on a continuum
- Goal: to move client along this continuum by taking steps to reduce harm

# Continuum of Excess, Moderation, and Abstinence

*—Any steps toward decreased risk are steps in the right direction—*



# Harm Reduction

“Habit is habit and not to be flung out of the window by any man but coaxed downstairs a step at a time.”

Mark Twain,  
Pudd'nhead Wilson's Calendar,  
Chapter 6

# Principles of Harm Reduction

- Does not attempt to minimize or ignore the real and tragic harm and danger that can be associated with illicit drug use

# Principles of Harm Reduction

- Accepts, for better or worse, that licit and illicit drug use is part of our world and chooses to work to minimize its harmful effects
- Understands drug use as a complex, multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses a continuum of behaviors from severe use to total abstinence, and acknowledges that some ways of using drugs are clearly safer than others

# Principles of Harm Reduction

- Establishes quality of individual and community life and well-being — not necessarily cessation of all drug use — as the criteria for successful interventions and policies
- Recognizes that not all persons who use drugs are capable of quitting use or cutting down
- Meets clients “where they’re at”

# Principles of Harm Reduction

- Calls for the non-judgmental, non-coercive provision of services and resources to people who use drugs and the communities in which they live in order to assist them in reducing attendant harm

# Principles of Harm Reduction

- Ensures that people who use drugs and those with a history of drug use routinely have a real voice in the creation of programs and policies designed to serve them

# Principles of Harm Reduction

- Affirms people who use drugs (PWUD) themselves as the primary agents of reducing the harms of their drug use and seeks to empower PWUD to share information and support each other in strategies which meet their actual conditions of use

# What is Harm?

- Areas of harm:
  - Addiction in general
  - Physical problems directly related to AOD use
  - Physical problems related to lifestyle
  - Involvement with criminal justice system
  - Death (OD, DUI)

# What is Harm Reduction?

- Reduces damage done to:
  - User
  - Family
  - Friends
  - Co-workers
  - Society

# What is Harm Reduction?

- Family
  - Worry
  - Fear
  - Anger/Resentment
  - Broken promises
  - Negative role model for children

# What is Harm Reduction?

- Friends
  - \$
  - Worry
  - ↓ contact/activities
  - ↑ risk of their use
  - Involvement in illegal activities

# What is Harm Reduction?

- Co-workers
  - More work for them
  - Can't finish job/project
  - Supervisor takes heat for absences
  - Supervisor has to write you up

# What is Harm Reduction?

- Society
  - DUI accidents, injuries, deaths
  - Crime
  - Law enforcement costs



# Harm Reduction: DUI

- Don't drive
- Don't drink
- ↓ drinking to levels below 0.08
- Don't drink and drive

# Why Harm Reduction?

- Users see some AOD use as risky
- Users see some AOD activities as risky
- Medical problems
- Pressure from
  - Family
  - Friends
  - Work
  - Criminal justice system
- Integration into a recovery program

# Harm Reduction: Drug/Alcohol Use

- Get into treatment
- Don't inject drugs
- Find a "safe injection" site
- Safer methods of i.v. drug use (clean syringes/"works"/"rig", don't share works, utilize needle exchanges, use 1:9 bleach/H<sub>2</sub>O to clean works)

# Harm Reduction: Drug/Alcohol Use

- Obtain naloxone
- ↓ frequency/amount of use
- Don't mix alcohol and other drugs
- Have your drugs checked out
- Don't use street drugs

# Harm Reduction: Methods

- If a person cannot or will not stop AOD use:
  - Safer route of drug administration (e.g., stop i.v. use)
  - Safer methods of i.v. drug use (clean syringes/"works"/"rig")
  - Reduce intensity of drug use (e.g., lower dose)
  - Reduce frequency of drug use
  - Stop mixing AOD
  - Progressive abstinence (begin with more harmful substances)

# Harm Reductive: Drug/Alcohol Use

- Don't use someone else's Rx
- Begin abstinence with most harmful drugs
- Don't use tobacco
- ↓ smoking
- Stay home when drinking/using
- Avoid high-risk activities when drinking/using
- Don't involve family/friends
  - Criminal justice involvement
  - Relationship
  - Child abuse/neglect
- Don't have sex when drunk/high