
What's The Harm?

— Applying —
Harm Reduction Skills

Goals and Objectives

- Put Harm Reduction in Context
- Define Harm Reduction
- Review Harm Reduction Principles
- Discuss Application of Harm Reduction Skills

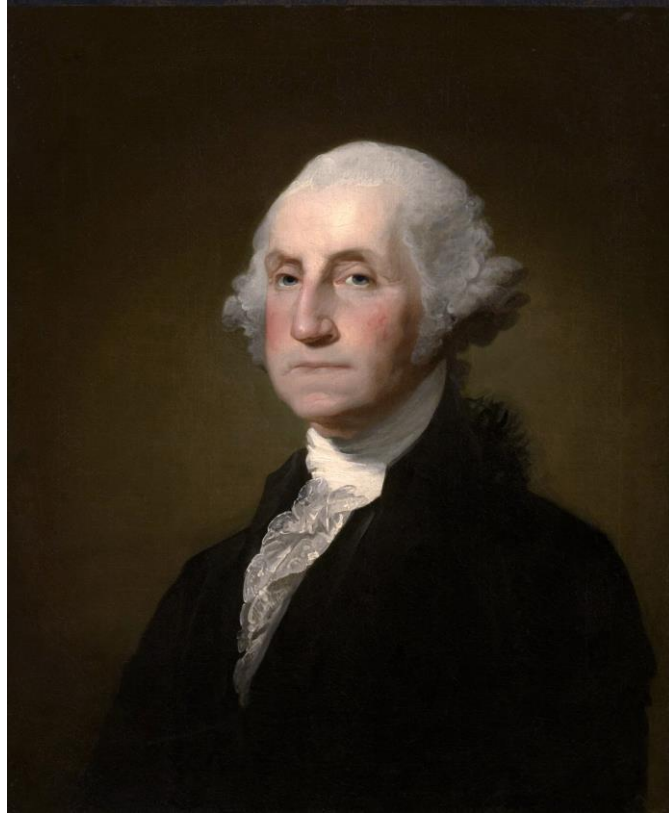
HR Mind Benders

A Brief History of Substance Use

- Ancient Sumerians used Opium (5000 BC)
- Alcohol used in ancient Egypt (3500 BC)
- Medical marijuana in China (2737 BC)



Who Uses Drugs?



Are We All Addicts?



Defining Harm Reduction

A Few Things to Consider

1. Why do people use drugs?
2. What does change normally look like?
3. What helps people change?

Examples of Harm Reduction



A Working Definition

- HR seeks to reduce drug-related harm for individuals, their family and friends, and communities *without necessarily reducing the consumption of drugs and alcohol.*

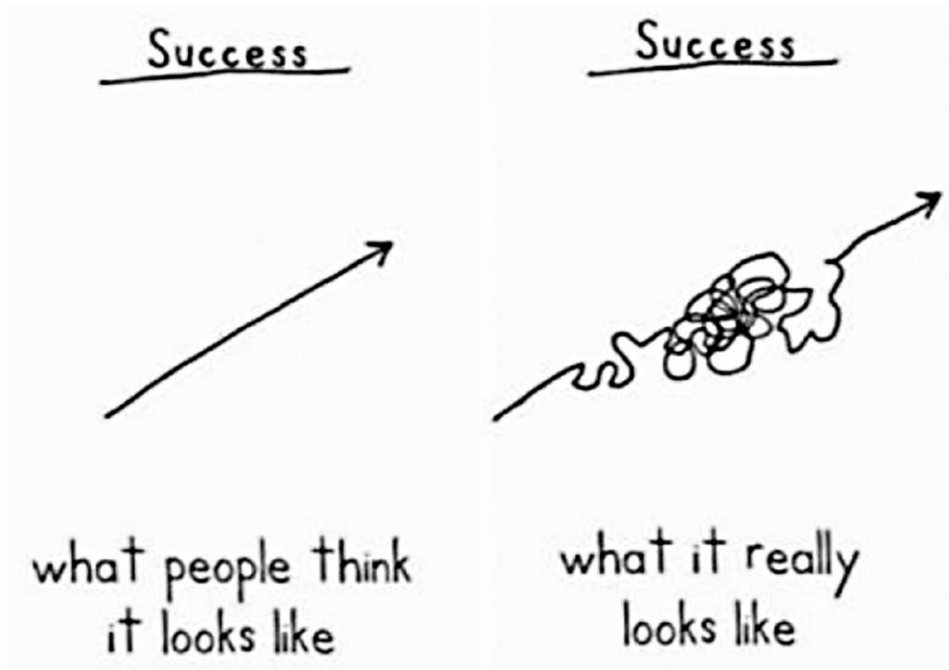
The Harm Reduction Movement and Principles

Harm Reduction Movement

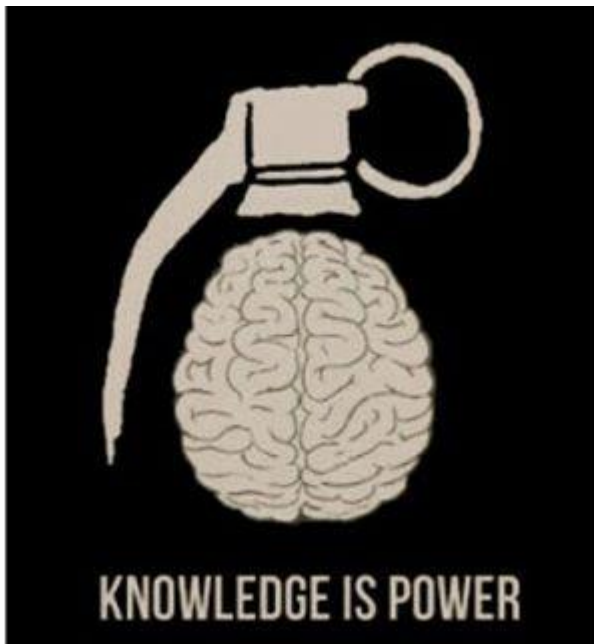
- Response to increased HIV rates among intravenous drug users during the 1980s in the UK and Netherlands
- Focused on compassion and choice
- Led to a dramatic decrease in the number of people infected

Harm Reduction Principles

- For better or worse, people use drugs
- People have reasons for using drugs
- Change is hard, often gradual and slow



Harm Reduction Principles (cont.)



- People are experts on themselves
- Drug use exists on a continuum (abstinence to chaos)
- Just Say **Know**

Applying these ideas...

A Matter of Values

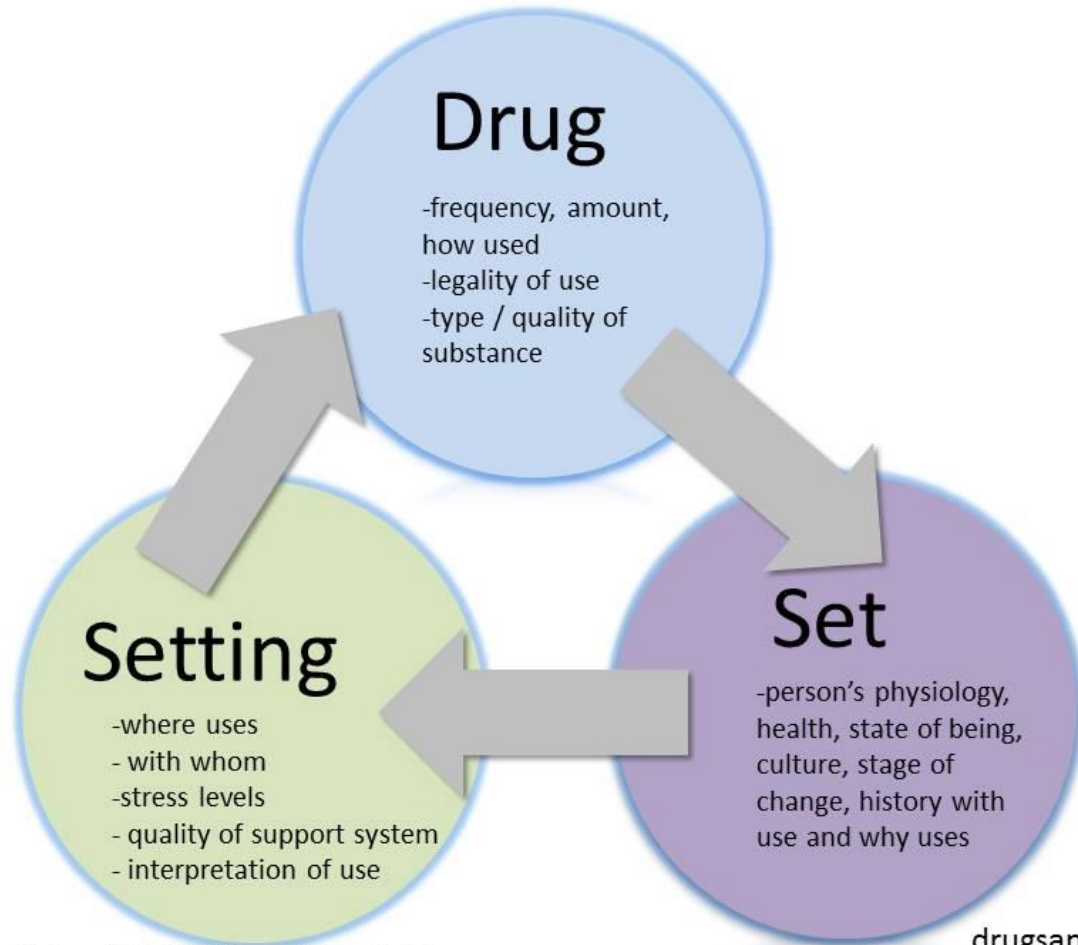
- What matters most to you in your work with clients?
- What matters most to your clients?

Harm Reduction Goal-Setting

- HR can be a goal in and of itself.
- HR can be a means to an end goal of abstinence or moderation.

Drug, Set, Setting

- Drug: Specific drug properties that influence a person's experience
- Set: A person's mindset, personality, strengths, challenges and motivations
- Setting: The physical and social environment



Adapted from Zinberg's Model of Drug, Set and Setting

drugsandstuff.co.uk

Substance Use Management

Any steps taken to control the use of, and the harms associated with, alcohol and other drugs.

Our job is to help people see as many options for change as possible.

Substance Use Management (cont.)

Possible areas to effect change:

- Amount of drug used
- Number/types of drugs used together
- Frequency with which a person drinks/uses
- Route of administration

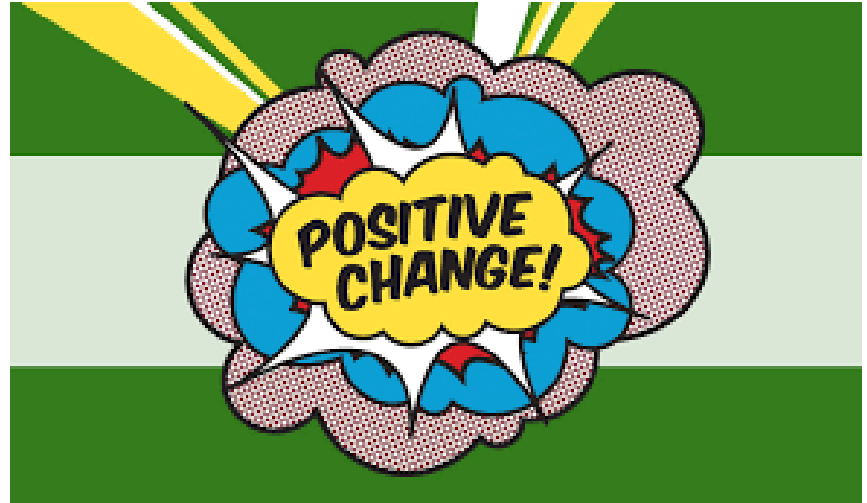
Substance Use Management (cont.)

Other areas to effect change:

- Situation
- Planned drug use
- Drug substitutions
- Overdose prevention measures

Any Positive Change

- Recognize and honor all positive change
- Be genuine, not naive
- Examples of positive change from your hardest client moments?



Decisional Balance

- Discuss the pros and cons of making a change or not
- Have a real conversation
- Give clients space to discuss the reasons they use

Decisional Balance

Maintaining Current Use

Changing Use Pattern

Benefits	Benefits
Costs	Costs

Menu of Options

- A tool from Motivational Interviewing
- A way to give direction to a meeting
- Helps clients see options when they're stuck

Menu of Options (cont.)

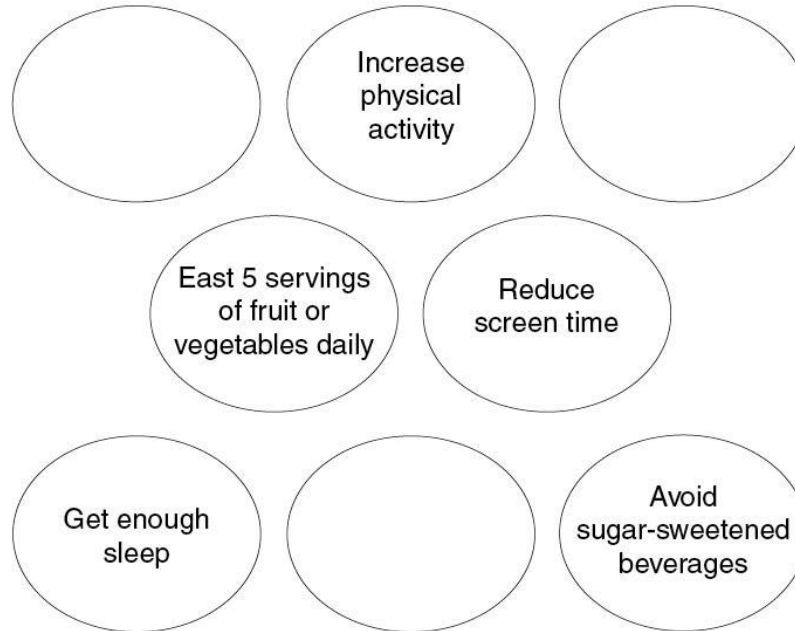


Figure 3. Visual Behavioral Menu Example.

Other Creative Strategies

- Drug-Free Days
- Trial Moderation
- Sobriety Sampling

But, remember...

- These are all just tools.
- The trusting, collaborative relationship you build with your clients is what really matters.

And sometimes things still go wrong!



Resources

- Over the Influence: The Harm Reduction Guide for Managing Drugs and Alcohol Use (Denning, Little, and Glickman, 2004)
- Practicing Harm Reduction Psychotherapy: An Alternative Approach to Addictions (Denning & Little, 2012)
- Building Motivational Interviewing Skills: A Practitioner's Workbook (Rosengren, 2009)