

HARM REDUCTION POSITION STATEMENT SUMMARY

Réseau ACCESS Network is committed to the mission of serving the community in a comprehensive, evidence-based, holistic approach to HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, Harm Reduction, and related health issues. The Agency strives to provide equitable access to health and social care, with targeted service delivery centered around members/patients, which include people who use drugs (PWUD).

The Agency provides an array of services that affirm the dignity and worth of PWUD while employing strategies that reduce risk or harm, including a Safe Consumption Site (SCS) in Sudbury. The philosophy of harm reduction has guided the work of Réseau ACCESS Network for over three decades. Harm reduction is a framework focused on reducing the adverse physical, emotional, mental, social, and spiritual harms that stems from ineffective, racist, colonial, and classist drug policies (WRHA, 2016). Réseau ACCESS Network embraces harm reduction as the most effective framework in centering the expertise of PWUD in reducing the harm associated with criminalized drug use.

The Agency recognizes that the harms and stigma surrounding substance use stem from prohibition and ineffective drug policy and stands in solidarity with all those lost and affected by the drug policy crisis, which has caused countless preventable deaths throughout Turtle Island. Through peer led initiatives, advocacy, education and awareness, the Agency strives to reduce the number of overdoses and foster a holistic approach to grief and healing.

As such, the Agency aims to create a space that fosters a collective sense of belonging, equity, and inclusion. As part of these efforts, the Agency will continue advocating for the needs of PWUD and other oppressed populations which include an expanded safer supply program to help reduce the number of fatalities associated with the illicit & poisoned drug supply, the decriminalization of drug use through drug policy change, and the need to support harm reduction as part of health and social care.

- Harm reduction is both a clinical practice and a movement for social change.
- Supervised Consumption Sites (SCS) provide a safe, empathetic space for people who use drugs to consume criminalized substances under the supervision of medical staff.
 - SCS provides greater opportunity for engagement and education for PWUD.
 - Members will be able to access sterile harm reduction supplies or use the consumption room and have access to various social services, or medical referrals as requested by PWUD.
- Linkages to health and social care are a result of accessing harm reduction services.

