



**lumenus**  
Community Services

# Harm Reduction Capacity Building

---

Prepared for Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario

# Land Acknowledgement

# Today's Agenda

- ❑ Harm Reduction Capacity Building
  - ❑ Lumenus' Harm Reduction Capacity Building Model
  - ❑ Conducting Needs Assessment
-

What do we mean by  
harm reduction  
capacity building?

---

# Harm Reduction Capacity Building

```
graph TD; A[Harm Reduction Capacity Building] --- B[Structural Shifts]; A --- C[Increasing Knowledge]; A --- D[Reducing Barriers]
```

**Structural Shifts**

**Increasing Knowledge**

**Reducing Barriers**

# Lumenus' Harm Reduction Capacity Building Model

- An outline for youth mental health agencies to build capacity to work with youth that use substances
- Informed by a project conducted at Lumenus to build agency capacity to implement harm reduction within the organization
- **Not a one size fits all approach** - this is our model and process, not the only way to do this work

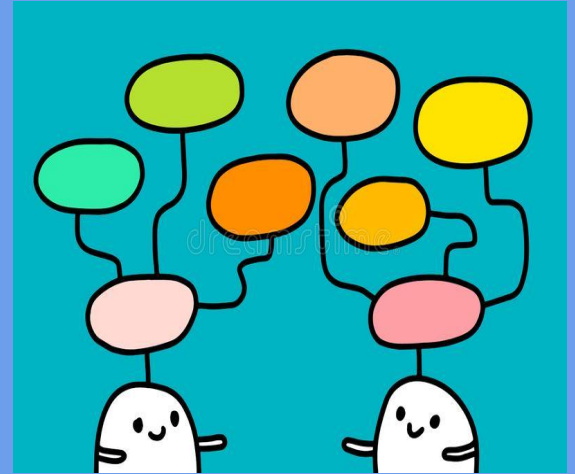
# 1. Setting The Stage

- Exploring the attitudes and concerns of staff
- Reminder that HR meets people where they are at
- Identifying shared values, concerns and goals amongst staff



## 2. Laws & Policies

- Mapping the legal environment of your organization and assess barriers
- Exploring implications of providing services to young people who use drugs
- Review your policies and consider adapting them to align with a harm reduction framework





### 3. Key Principles of Harm Reduction

- Provide education on the HR continuum, HR values and principles
- Address misconceptions about harm reduction
- Ensure that staff have a strong understanding of what your YWHO site means by harm reduction implementation and what this will mean for their work

## 4. Staff Needs Assessment

- Identify gaps in knowledge and learning needs
- Staff capacity will vary and tailored training/support will likely be required
- Needs assessments should include the opportunity for staff to identify concerns about harm reduction
- Needs assessments can also translate into progress assessments

# Harm Reduction Capacity-Building for YWHO Sites

## Staff Needs Assessment

**Position:**

**Department:**

### **Current State:**

How would you describe your site's current relationship to harm reduction?

How does your program currently approach working with individuals who use substances?

What support might your program need to improve its capacity to deliver harm reduction based service?

## Needs Assessment:

**Please use the following scale (1-5) to evaluate level of knowledge:**

5 "I have a lot of prior knowledge in this topic"

4 "I have some prior knowledge of this topic"

3 "I have limited knowledge of this topic"

2 "I am familiar but do not have a lot of knowledge with this topic"

1 "I have no prior knowledge of this topic"

	Level of Knowledge				
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Harm Reduction Tips for:</b>					
Alcohol					
Nicotine (cigarettes, chewing tobacco)					
Cannabis (flower, oils, edible)					
Inhalants (nitrous oxide, gasoline etc.)					
Stimulants/Uppers (cocaine, speed)					
Opioids (heroin, fentanyl, methadone)					
Psychedelics (shrooms, LSD/Acid)					

Smoking					
Vaping					
Snorting					
Injection					
<b>Other topics:</b>					
Harm Reduction Services in Your City					
Overdose Prevention & Response					
Drug Laws and Legality					
Motivational Interviewing					
Stages of Change					
Approaching Conversations About HR with Family/Community/Clients					

How have you sought youth  
expertise in the past?

---

# 5. Involving Youth with Lived Experience (Peers)

- Why peer workers?
  - The meaningful employment of people with lived experience of substance use improves service quality through more relevant, accessible services informed by those who may access them.
- Peer workers can be responsible for:
  - Facilitating staff training
  - Developing/leading youth needs assessments
  - Assisting with program and policy development
  - Advising on capacity-building initiatives (if not leading them)

## 6. Identifying Youth Needs

Consider a wide variety of methods to engage with youth. These may include:

- Suggestions boxes/questionnaires in waiting rooms
- Focus groups
- Online surveys
- Interviews
- Arts-based activities



## 6. Identifying Client Needs

Some questions to consider asking youth clients:

- Upon coming to our site, what was your first impression of our ability to support you as someone who uses substances?
- How comfortable do you feel talking about substance use with staff?
- When discussing experiences with staff, have you ever felt the need to leave out details related to substance use? If so, what are the reasons you felt this way?
- What (if anything) does/would make this space feel like a safe place to talk about substance use?

## 6. Identifying Community Needs

Questions to consider asking youth with experiences of mental health challenges and substance use.

- Have you ever accessed mental health services? If not, what prevented you from doing so?
- What types of resources and/or supports would you find helpful?
- What would contribute to feelings of safety in conversations about mental health/substance use with service providers?
- How would knowing that our site practiced harm reduction influence your decision to engage in conversations about substance use with staff?

## 6. Identifying Youth Needs

When engaging youth, prepare to (if/where possible):

- Employ peer workers to facilitate the discussion and/or develop evaluation questions
- Be transparent about the right to leave, have information taken out and/or to not participate in the needs assessment
- Review confidentiality and anonymity
- Explain why and how information will be used
- Provide honoraria and/or other incentives

# 7. Exploring Readiness for Change

Once needs have been identified, consider how your hub/sites can meet them.

- Does the organization have the capacity to meet the identified needs of youth who use substances?
- How will staff be supported in gaining skill/knowledge related to youth harm reduction?
- How are we able to support youth harm reduction needs as we build internal capacity?
- How can we build or further build capacity?
- What can be put in place to sustain our capacity?

## 8. Building Capacity

- Offer peer-led staff trainings, such as;
  - Harm reduction philosophy
  - Safer substance use strategies
  - Supporting parents/guardians of youth who use substances
  - Routes of administration
  - Overdose prevention and response

## 8. Building Capacity

- Offer consultations to support staff beyond team training
- Create and share resources
- Make knowledge and learnings accessible to staff
- Remain accountable to the goals set and client needs
- Build space for staff to feel comfortable asking questions and getting support
- Know that this is a continuous, non-linear learning process for all involved

## 9. Sustainability

Ask yourself: *What needs to happen in order to maintain hub capacity?*

- Offer opportunities for ongoing learning
- Incorporate harm reduction into hiring practices and orientation
- Include harm reduction into staff supervision and team meetings
- Identify ways to evaluate capacity-building initiatives and ongoing progress
- Integrate harm reduction as a key pillar of organizational excellence

**Please  
complete our  
evaluation!**

[www.surveymonkey.com/r  
\\_ywhowebinar3](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/_ywhowebinar3)

Next webinar:

Peer Best Practices

Thursday December  
17th 2020

11:00am-12:30pm

---





**lumenus**  
Community Services

# Thank You!

---

[jrovet@lumenus.ca](mailto:jrovet@lumenus.ca) | [www.yhrt.org](http://www.yhrt.org) | [@yhrt.toronto](https://twitter.com/yhrt.toronto)