

# COVID-19, Housing & Harm Reduction

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# COVID facts

- How COVID Spreads
  - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
  - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.
  - These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
  - COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.
- **The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.** You can take steps to slow the spread.
  - Maintain good social distance (about 6 feet). This is very important in preventing the spread of COVID-19.
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
  - Routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
  - Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face covering when around others.





# COVID, Substance Users and Outreach

## HARM REDUCTION

- **Definition:** *Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use. Harm Reduction is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of people who use drugs. -Harm Reduction Coalition*



# Harm Reduction Principals

- Accepts, for better and or worse, that licit and illicit drug use is part of our world and chooses to work to minimize its harmful effects rather than simply ignore or condemn them.
- Understands drug use as a complex, multi-faceted phenomenon that encompasses a continuum of behaviors from severe abuse to total abstinence, and acknowledges that some ways of using drugs are clearly safer than others.
- 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.
- 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.
- Ensures that drug users and those with a history of drug use routinely have a real voice in the creation of programs and policies designed to serve them.
- Affirms drugs users themselves as the primary agents of reducing the harms of their drug use, and seeks to empower users to share information and support each other in strategies which meet their actual conditions of use.
- Recognizes that the realities of poverty, class, racism, social isolation, past trauma, sex-based discrimination and other social inequalities affect both people's vulnerability to and capacity for effectively dealing with drug-related harm.
- Does not attempt to minimize or ignore the real and tragic harm and danger associated with licit and illicit drug use.
- (Harm Reduction Coalition)



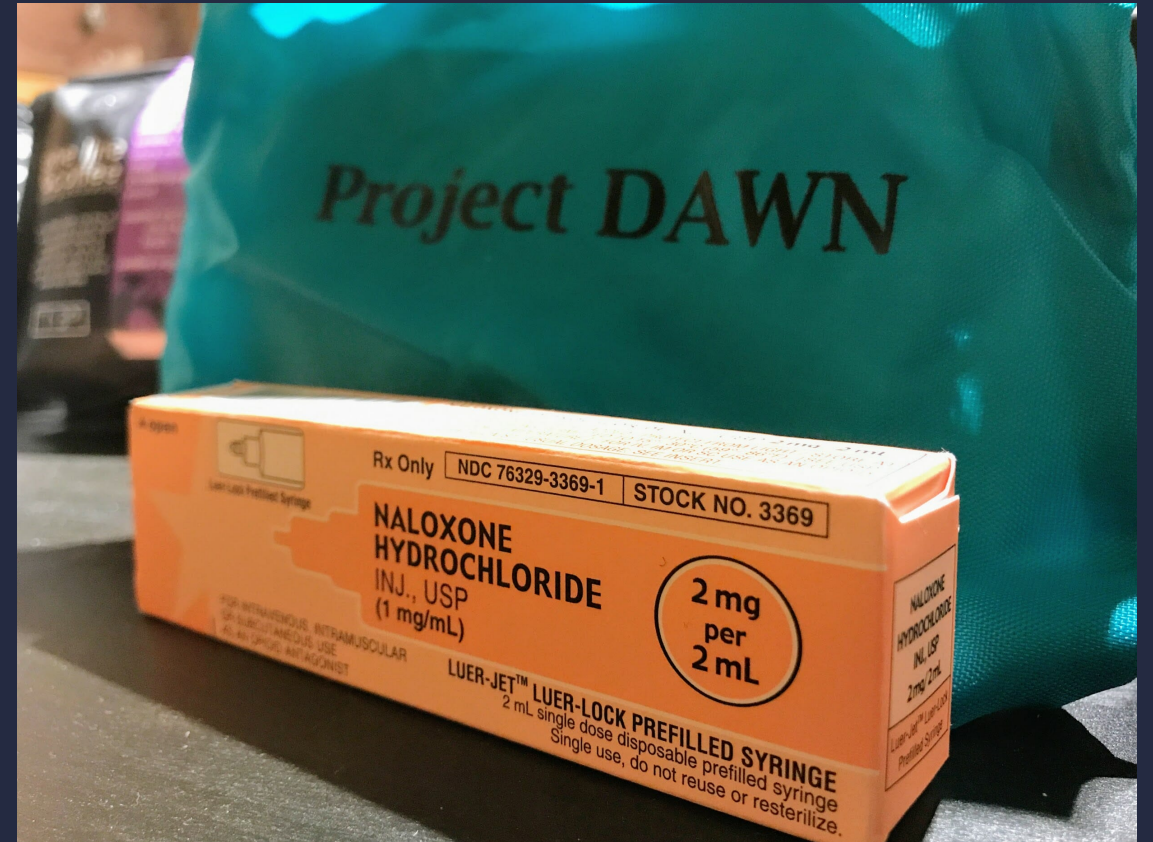
# Harm Reduction Practices during COVID

- 82% – who inject opiates and roughly half of methamphetamine users are interested in reducing or stopping their use and are open to a broad array of services to help them manage their substance use
- 48% of Methamphetamine users would like to reduce or end their drug use (Washington State Syringe Exchange Health Survey, 2019)
- Substance Users want access to: clean syringes, fentanyl test strips and naloxone (NCBI, Harm Reduction Coalition..)
- COVID-19 keeps users isolated—aggressive outreach is key to keeping people safe and saving lives
- Access to many services have been cut off during the outbreak and many agencies have reduced staff as well as 1:1 contact



# Harm Reduction Practices during COVID

- What the YMCA is doing:
- We operate several different housing programs, the downtown YMCA houses over 400 men in SRO units.
- We supply PPE for our residents.
- We partner with several agencies to help provide: Narcan, fentanyl test strips and COVID testing.



# Harm Reduction Practices during COVID

- The Franklin County Health Department reports overdose surges in real time, our staff then notifies known users and supplies Narcan and fentanyl test strips
- We partner with various agencies such as the Southeast RREACT team, The Franklin County Health Department, Maryhaven, Safepoint and Harm Reduction Ohio
- SE RREACT provides extensive outreach for people who are experiencing substance abuse issues, they offer Peer Support, Social Workers and Addiction Specialists to help link users to same-day treatment. They also offer free Naloxone and fentanyl test strips.
- Harm Reduction Ohio offers free Naloxone for users.
- Safepoint provides free syringes and other Harm Reduction supplies via it's in person location (new COVID hours). There is a program being designed for mail Naloxone delivery.



# Resources

- Harm Reduction Ohio: <https://www.harmreductionohio.org/> email: mary@harmreductionohio.org
- Southeast RREACT: <https://southeasthc.org/> contact: James Alexander alexanderj@southeastinc.com
- Safepoint: <https://safepointohio.org/> contact: [safepoint@equitashealth.com](mailto:safepoint@equitashealth.com)
- Harm Reduction Coalition: <https://harmreduction.org/>
- CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/unsheltered-homelessness.html>
- COHHIO <https://cohhio.org/>

# Presenter Contact Information

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# Questions?

