



Simcoe Muskoka Drug Strategy
Community Partner Advisory Committee

Use of a Harm Reduction Lens to Address the Opioid/Drug Toxicity Crisis

October 21, 2024

The Simcoe Muskoka Drug Strategy’s Community Partner Advisory Committee (SMDS-CPAC) recognizes that the current opioid/drug toxicity crisis is complex and requires a comprehensive and collaborative response that involves addressing the crisis through the use of a Harm Reduction Lens, while recognizing the importance of prevention, community safety, treatment and recovery in a comprehensive approach.

Harm Reduction is an evidence-based, person-centred approach that seeks to reduce the health and social harms associated with addiction and substance use, without the end goal of ending substance use or abstinence.

The approach promotes working towards finding practical and compassionate ways to reduce harms, increase personal wellbeing, and improve health overall.

Harm reduction is grounded in justice and human rights. It includes the voices of people who use substances. It focusses on positive change and working with people without judgement, coercion, discrimination or requiring them to stop using drugs. It strives to keep people alive and to encourage positive change in their lives.

Upstream Approaches to Harm Reduction	Mid-Stream Approaches to Harm Reduction	Downstream Approaches to Harm Reduction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Income Security • Food Security • Access to primary care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decriminalization • Prescribed Safer Supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needle/Syringe Programs • Naloxone • Consumption and Treatment Services

SMDS-CPAC supports an Indigenous Approach to Harm Reduction, including the following

- Harm reduction is connectedness to self, family, community and culture
- Harm reduction recognizes and supports people on their journey. It offers everyone a place in the circle
- Harm reduction creates space for healing and wellness
- Harm reduction looks beyond individual behaviours and helps us see the whole person

