

LIVE WELL NURSING

NURSE'S NOTES

By: Angela Mitchell, CNO



Meeting Clients Where They Are: Forming Trusting Relationships for Positive Outcomes

Nurses play an essential role in forming trusting relationships with clients to promote positive health outcomes. Nurses are taught from the start of their education that forming a trusting relationship with clients is key to helping achieve better health outcomes. An important part of building trust is meeting clients where they are, especially those facing challenging life circumstances. Harm reduction strategies, which minimize negative health consequences without requiring abstinence, can help nurses form initial connections and establish trust with at-risk clients. Over time, these trusting relationships can motivate clients to make positive changes and achieve their health goals.

Harm reduction strategies accept clients in an unconditional manner, focusing on keeping people alive and safe in the moment. This approach recognizes that abstinence is unrealistic for some individuals, especially at first. For clients with substance use issues, harm reduction may involve strategies like providing clean needles and naloxone kits to prevent overdoses (Strike et al., 2019). For clients who are homeless, harm reduction can mean offering showers, food, and clothing before discussing long-term housing options (Roebuck et al., 2020).

By meeting clients where they are through harm reduction, nurses can build trust that lays the foundation for positive change. Clients feel understood and cared for, which motivates them to engage further with healthcare providers (Hawk et al., 2020). As trust increases, clients become more open to discussing health risks, setting goals, and making lifestyle modifications (Roebuck et al., 2020). Even small steps in the right direction can improve the client's psychological wellbeing and self-efficacy (Strike et al., 2019). Over time, trusting relationships allow nurses to walk alongside clients in their health journeys, advocating and intervening as needed (Hawk et al., 2020).

Nurses have a unique opportunity to improve patient outcomes by forming trusting relationships that meet clients where they are. Harm reduction strategies help nurses initially connect with at-risk clients and establish trust, which later motivates clients to make healthy changes. As trusting relationships develop over time, nurses gain opportunities to intervene and advocate for clients in meaningful ways. I am proud that our nurses demonstrate care that helps our community feel seen, supported, and empowered in their Live Well journeys.

Hawk, M., Coulter, R. W. S., Egan, J. E., Fisk, S., Friedman, M. R., Tula, M., & Kinsky, S. (2020). Harm reduction principles for healthcare settings. *Harm Reduction Journal*, 17(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12954-020-00369-w>

Roebuck, M. C., Sims, H., & Huff, M. (2020). Harm reduction nursing: A model of care for high-risk, underserved populations. *Journal of Addictions Nursing*, 31(1), 3–11. <https://doi.org/10.1097/jan.0000000000000303>

Strike, C., Watson, T. M., Gohil, H., Miskovic, M., Muhimbuto, K., & Mkhabela, N. (2019). The evolving role of harm reduction in a treatment era: A global perspective. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 70, A1–A7. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2019.04.015>

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SUBMISSIONS

Please e-mail submissions (ideas, photos, articles, trainings, dates, accolades, local or national news, etc.) to:
davina.trejo-valdez@sdcounty.ca.gov

For consideration in the next issue, please submit entries by close of business on September 15, 2023. Submission limits: 125-275 words

Harm Reduction Collaboration for Foster Youth in San Diego County

By Judy Wright, MCH, PHN Supervisor

Camp Connect is a sibling camp for youth in foster care, and as one of the nurses helping to prepare for the camp as well as attending in a nursing capacity, the fact that Narcan is now a necessary precaution to prevent opioid overdose in staff, volunteers, or campers is a reminder that youth in foster care are at an increased risk for harm from illicit substances. Thankfully no Narcan was needed during Camp Connect 2023.

Due to many factors, the immense support needed to address the needs of foster youth is at times not optimal. Within the County of San Diego's Harm Reduction Strategy, one of the four strategic domains is Cross Sectoral Convening. A not insignificant number of the current unhoused population in San Diego County are former foster youth who have aged out and have had trouble finding their path. Youth attending Camp Connect are from family based foster homes and group homes. They receive therapy, education, and group counseling to assist in recovering from trauma they have experienced. Some are on psychotropic medications or controlled substances. The risk for harm is ever present, even more so when the youth are old enough to make their own decisions. With illicit Fentanyl use rising, former foster youth who have not had a smooth transition from the foster care system and living on the street are part of a high-risk group for overdosing.

Becoming a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate), can help reduce harm for foster youth, a CASA provides consistency in a youth's life and provides stability in advocating for the youth in court proceedings, educational and medical needs. Involving CASAs into the Cross Sectoral strategy to address harm reduction in foster youth could be helpful.

If anyone is interested in becoming a CASA in San Diego County, the agency is Voices for Children and the website is: <https://www.speakupnow.org/>. Another group that is focused on harm reduction in foster youth and preventing homelessness is Stand Up for Kids, website: www.standupforkids.org

Harm Reduction

By Carla Macias, Interim PHN Manager, North Inland PHC

"I see harm reduction as a way of engaging people as part of that path to recovery" - Paul Ehrlich.

An increase of 26% in drug overdose emergency department visits has been identified from 2020 to 2023 (County of San Diego Epidemiology and Immunizations Services Branch, 2023). As healthcare team members, nurses recognize the impact of this rise within the community. They must transform into leaders, recognize, and shift the paradigm to continue to strive for "the noblest motive is the public good" (County of San Diego, 2023). Harm reduction strategies are implemented by providing barrier-free Narcan distribution through public health centers, vending machines, and with the foot team nurses. According to public health professionals, the best approach to overcoming this epidemic includes thorough collaboration of services in epidemiology, prevention services, and clinics (Blanco et al., 2020). All public health systems, including community partners, must work together to address the gaps, barriers, and lack of resources contributing to these substantial deaths in the country. Some short-term solutions that have been proven effective include providing access and education to using Narcan (naloxone) (McIver, 2017). To continue these efforts, 12 vending machine units have been inclusively placed throughout the County of San Diego and have distributed 740 naloxone kits since March 2, 2023 (County of San Diego, 2023). Increasing awareness of harm reduction by one engagement at a time can make a difference.

Blanco, C., Wiley, T. R. A., Lloyd, J. J., Lopez, M. F., & Volkow, N. D. (2020, May 28). America's opioid crisis: The need for an integrated public health approach. *Translational psychiatry*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7286889/>

County of San Diego Epidemiology and Immunization Services Branch, 2023

McIver, J. S. (2017, July). Seeking solutions to the opioid crisis. *P & T: a peer-reviewed journal for formulary management*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5481299/Winstanley, E. L.,>

Harm Reduction: Addressing the Opioid Public Health Crisis

By Eva Muollo, PHN, Aging & Independence Services

Harm reduction is described by the Harm Reduction Coalition as incorporating “a spectrum of strategies that includes safer use, managed use, abstinence, meeting people who use drugs ‘where they’re at,’ and addressing conditions of use along with the use itself”. (National Harm Reduction Coalition, n.d.) The role of harm reduction in public health has long been a contentious subject in San Diego. Within the past several years, a much-needed paradigm shift has occurred when it comes to the treatment of substance abuse disorder.

This change was precipitated by the growing death toll of opioid use disorder. Opioid overdose is currently the leading cause of death of anyone under 50, affecting all facets of our society. We can no longer continue battling this epidemic using the same tired methods used for decades. “Just Say No” campaigns and the criminalization of addiction have shown to exacerbate this disease, and the toll it takes on our healthcare system and society. (Pew Charitable Trust, 2018)

The County of San Diego began distributing naloxone in 2021, after a 202% increase in fentanyl-related overdose deaths from 2019-2020. (California Department of Public Health, n.d.) Naloxone is given out free to anyone who requests it at our public health centers, HIV/STD clinics, and Homeless Outreach Foot Teams. The board of supervisors overturned a 23-year-old ban on needle exchange programs that same year. In 2022, county officials installed Narcan vending machines to allow greater access to this medication. Access to medication-assisted treatment has increased through legislative change, though the percentage of those seeking help remains low. (Jones CM, Olsen Y, Ali MM, et al., 2023)

The way health professionals, law enforcement, and government officials address the disease of addiction continues to evolve in response to its devastating toll. As public health nurses we are responsible for changing the narrative from addiction being a moral shortcoming to a chronic, treatable medical disease. Incorporating harm reduction to the treatment of substance use disorder increases the tools with which we can meet the needs our community.

Harm Reduction Principles. National Coalition for Harm reduction. Retrieved August 3rd, 2023 from www.harmreduction.org/about-us/principles-of-harm-reduction/

Jones CM, Olsen Y, Ali MM, et al. Characteristics and Prescribing Patterns of Clinicians Waivered to Prescribe Buprenorphine for Opioid Use Disorder Before and After Release of New Practice Guidelines. JAMA Health Forum. 2023;4(7):e231982. doi:10.1001/jamahealthforum.2023.1982

More imprisonment does not reduce state drug problems. (March 8th, 2018). Pew Charitable Trust. https://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/assets/2018/03/pspp_more_imprisonment_does_not_reduce_state_drug_problems.pdf

Opioid-related death dashboard. California Department of Public Health. Retrieved August 3rd, 2023 from <https://skylab.cdph.ca.gov/ODdash/>

Access the county's [EBSCO Health homepage](https://my.openathens.net/)
using a universal link



<https://my.openathens.net/>

Epidemiology and Immunization Services Branch Pursues Harm Reduction Strategies

By: Jennifer Flores, PHN Manager & Liza Macatula, PHN Manager



[Fentanyl Facts \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/fentanyl/facts/)

In 2021, the County of San Diego (County) launched a Comprehensive Harm Reduction Strategy in response to over 800 opioid- and fentanyl-related deaths that year.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “harm reduction is a public health approach that focuses on mitigating the harmful consequences of drug use, including transmission of infectious disease and prevention of overdose, through provision of care that is intended to be free of stigma and centered on the needs of people who use drugs.” (“Harm Reduction,” 2022).

The nursing unit of the Epidemiology and Immunization Services Branch (EISB) of Public Health Services (PHS) is making strides to implement harm reduction practices in alignment with the County’s harm reduction strategy. In April, EISB nurses joined Medical Care Services to launch nursing foot teams, in partnership with the San Diego Police Department Homeless Outreach Teams, to respond to an increase in cases of hepatitis A in people experiencing homelessness in downtown San Diego. The foot teams distributed more than 1,600 boxes of naloxone to the community. Naloxone is a life-saving medication that reverses effects of an opioid overdose and can be given by anyone through a nasal spray. (“Stop Opioid Overdose,” 2023).

As a result, EISB is now partnering with County Behavioral Health Services (BHS) to procure naloxone for distribution on foot teams and other community vaccination events.

As part of the County’s CDC Overdose Data to Action Grant surveillance program, EISB will increase surveillance to include case investigations and response. A PHN will provide nursing clinical support to the epidemiologist conducting opioid surveillance, and response activities for acute opioid events and clusters. The nurse will work closely with BHS to coordinate response efforts to opioid overdose situations.

Nursing leadership and advocacy is an essential element of harm reduction practices, and County PHNs promote harm reduction through holistic, person-centered care.

County directs city of San Diego to add more restrooms to combat hepatitis A among homeless residents. (2023, May 22). The San Diego Union Tribune. [County directs city of San Diego to add more restrooms to combat hepatitis A among homeless residents - The San Diego Union-Tribune \(sandiegouniontribune.com\)](https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/story/news/health/2023/05/22/san-diego-county-directs-city-to-add-more-restrooms-to-combat-hepatitis-a-among-homeless-residents/1285457001/)

Fentanyl Facts. (2023, June 27). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/stopoverdose/fentanyl/index.html>

Harm Reduction. (2022, December 9). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/od2a/case-studies/harm-reduction.html>.

Stop Opioid Overdose with Naloxone. (2023, August 3). California Department of Public Health. https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDCPHP/sapb/Pages/Naloxone.aspx?utm_source=dc_gs&utm_medium=paidsearch&utm_campaign=dc_ope_mc_en&utm_term=na_na&utm_content=na&gclid=EAIaIQobChMI3LKnoKvfgAMVqRqtBh3DDAvUEAAAYiAAEgJm4fD_BwE.



Foot team PHN, Torrey Henry, administers a vaccine in downtown San Diego. San Diego Union Tribune

Harm Reduction

By: Amaya Ly, PHN Manager, North Coastal PHC

Harm reduction International define themselves as an organization that focuses on positive change to work with people who are using drugs without judgement (What is harm reduction? 2023). The nurses who work in the clinic and home visiting programs may serve clients who are using drugs and/or educating clients about the dangers of drug use. While visiting with clients and focusing on a collaborative approach, PHNs can build rapport and trust. By doing this, clients feel that they can have an open and honest communication with their nurse. According to Winer et al., (2022), people feel that they need to hide their substance use or not ask questions because they feel that they will get in trouble. It is important for clients to inform their nurses about drug use, especially during pregnancy.

It has been brought up that health care professionals may have a hard time utilizing a positive focus for change because it may feel as though we are condoning the use of drugs. According to Winer et al., (2022), it is possible to both provide clear advice about the potential harm of substance use while also keeping open lines of communication about minimizing harms.

At North Coastal Public Health Center, we have distributed 223 Narcan kits to people who have requested it, either for themselves or for friends and family since the beginning of this year. In January 2019, a law was enacted in the state of California in which Narcan must be offered when clients have a prescription for certain dosages of opioids or are at-risk for overdosing (Davis, 2023).

If interested in learning more, here is a link to a training. <https://nhrclearinglab.thinkific.com/bundles/three-course-bundle?coupon=california100>

Davis, A. L. and C. (2023, July 18). Naloxone prescription mandates. Network for Public Health Law. <https://www.networkforphl.org/resources/naloxone-prescription-mandates/>

What is harm reduction?. Harm Reduction International. (2023, June 27). <https://hri.global/what-is-harm-reduction/>

Winer, J. M., Yule, A. M., Hadland, S. E., & Bagley, S. M. (2022). Addressing adolescent substance use with a public health prevention framework: The case for harm reduction. *Annals of Medicine*, 54(1), 2123–2136. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07853890.2022.2104922>

JingJing (Maria) Wallace
visiting with client



Anna Vanpaepegghem
educating client in the
clinic



Stacey Sundling visiting with client



The Heart Behind Harm Reduction

By: *Rebekah Huppe, QAS, Office of Nursing Excellence*

“I see harm reduction as a way of engaging people as part of the path to recovery” – Paul R. Ehrlich

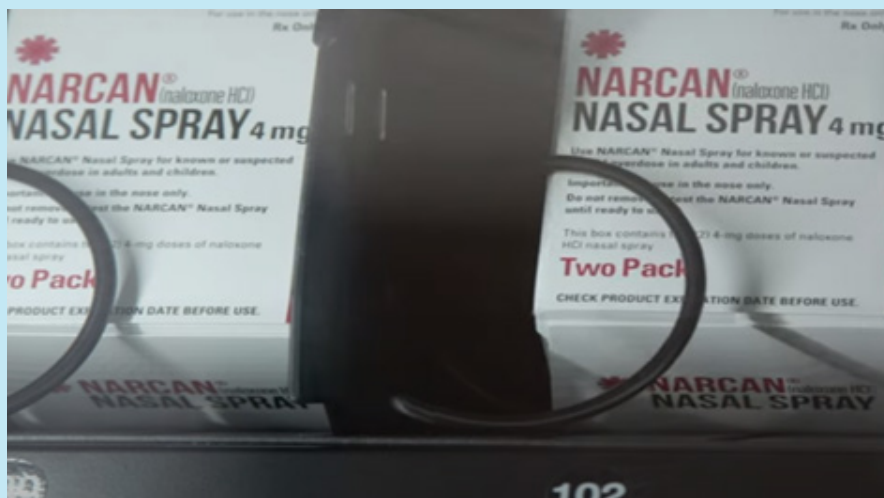
Many have heard of the term “harm reduction” as it has become a topic of increasing prevalence with the public health crisis of fatal opioid related overdoses on the rise and the movement to make life saving Naloxone nasal spray more readily available; but few may know the guiding principles and the “why” behind these harm reduction approaches. Saving lives, preserving the human rights and dignity of people who use drugs (PWUD), and providing appropriate care are the cornerstone concepts the County has adopted in this initiative. The hope is to reduce the stigma and barriers to access of care the PWUD population often experience, while simultaneously showing respect to our fellow human beings by “meeting them where they’re at” without any judgement (COSD Guiding Principles, 2021).

Adopting the widespread distribution of no cost Naloxone to the public and vulnerable populations is one of the leading strategies the County has implemented to participate in harm reduction. Currently, all six of our regional Public Health Centers, three Behavioral Health Clinics, and our Homeless Outreach Foot Team nurses all distribute this life saving medication to the public and those who need it most. Not only do we distribute this medication, but we provide education about opioid related deaths and how Naloxone saves lives to whoever receives this medication for use. When we partner with volunteers or outside organizations who may encounter PWUD’s during their community outreach events or in their daily lives, we ensure Naloxone use training and education is provided as well. As of March 8, 2023, the County installed its first ever groundbreaking Naloxone vending machine. It is operational now at the McAlister South Bay Regional Recovery Center in Chula Vista, CA, and we are slated to install more Naloxone vending machines throughout San Diego County in the coming year (Lightfoot, 2023).

Through all these combined efforts, the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) is trail blazing the harm reduction movement to ensure all humans everywhere are healthy, safe, and thriving.

Anita Lightfoot, C. of S. D. C. O. (2023, March 8). First Naloxone vending machine installed in San Diego County. San Diego County News Center. <https://www.countynewscenter.com/first-naloxone-vending-machine-installed-in-san-diego-county/>

County of san diego comprehensive harm reduction strategy. (n.d.). https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/hhsa/programs/bhs/documents/NOC/bhab/BHAB%20DRAFT_Attachment%20A_Harm%20Reduction%20Strategy.pdf



Naloxone Vending Machine

Fentanyl Crisis and Harm Reduction – SDCPH Nursing

By: Leizyl Anglo, Director of Nursing

With the unfortunate, almost overlooked fentanyl crisis in America, hospitals country wide reacted in the most proactive way. At San Diego County Psychiatric Hospital (SDCPH), we have reconfigured our hospital and mindset to better protect our patient population and hospital staff by implementing a fentanyl harm reduction strategy.

At SDCPH, we have quickly reworked and introduced new policies to better fit today's new standard. We have discussed and implemented new ways to become more proactive at patient searches, assessments, and discharges. The strong educational push towards the importance of obtaining a Urine Drug Screen (UDS) has dramatically increased our rates of specimen collection, which in turn assists our nurses in providing a more patient focused treatment and interventions. Upon discharge, patients are provided with a multitude of resources and in some cases, medications to prevent potential overdoses. The nursing staff have been a great proponent of advocating, educating, and implementing this recent harm reduction process.

As the ever-evolving medical field continues, more opportunities for improvement arise. Harm reduction strategies have and are a major focal point in our hospital's improvements. Reconfiguration and changes to our processes will be a consistent norm, but also a welcoming adjustment to prevent potential patient harm and essentially improve care.



Emergency Psychiatric Unit Nurses representing SDCPH: Gebrielle Sanchez, RN; Joshua Faulker, RN; Ellen Koci, RN; Gladys Esteban, RN; Damian Romero, RN; Christopher Custobio, RN; Ronalynn Allapitan, RN; Mince Alcorin-Shaw, RN; Andrew Nix, RN