

# Introduction to Harm Reduction

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# What is Harm Reduction?

Harm reduction refers to interventions aimed at reducing the negative effects of health behaviors without necessarily extinguishing the problematic health behaviors completely.<sup>1</sup>

This practice is seen and modeled throughout all of health care.

# Overview

- Lummi Tribal Health Center started a Needle Exchange Program in 2013, which successfully exchanged 3430 needles, however the program came to a halt during it's first year.
- Restarting in late 2015, the needle exchange program (now Primary Integrated Care Syringe Service Program ) has reformatted to an integrated primary care visit that offers increased privacy as well as access to primary care

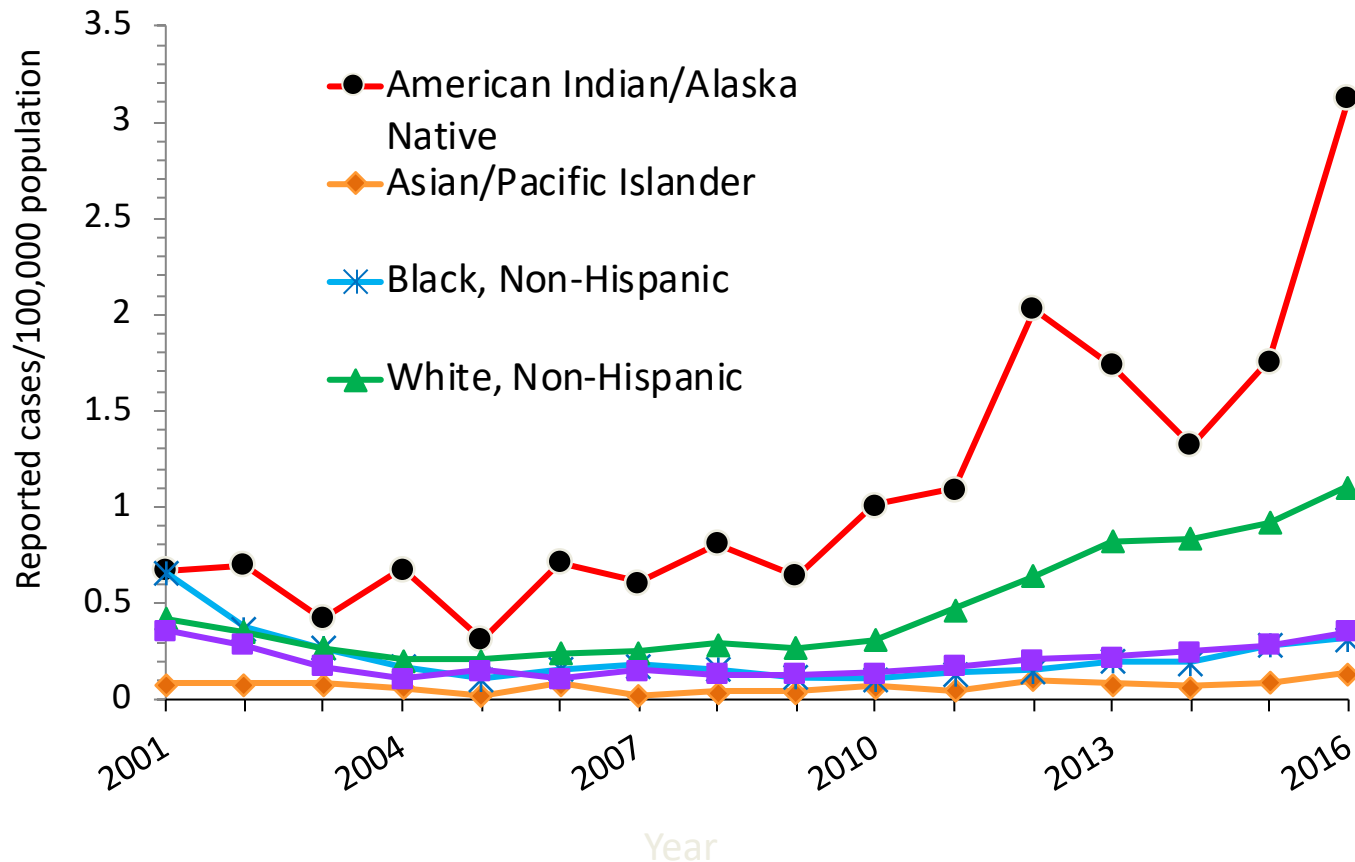
# Why did LTHC PICSSP begin?

American Indian and Alaska Native alone account for 3.2% of Whatcom County's population.

In 2012 40% of new HCV cases in Whatcom county were Native American. This identified a significant health disparity.

In an effort to prevent and decrease transmission and acquisition of blood borne infection, a needle exchange program was started at LTHC in 2013. A policy was developed by clinic staff.

# Incidence of Acute Hepatitis C by Race/Ethnicity (USA)



# Principles of Harm Reduction



Human-centered design. Meeting people where they are and really taking their needs and feedback into account. When you let people participate in the design process, you find that they often have ingenious ideas about what would really help them. And it's not a onetime thing; it's an iterative process.

— *Melinda Gates* —

# Purpose

The purpose of the Syringe Services Program (SSP) is to:

- Decrease transmission and acquisition of blood borne infections.
- Reduce the amount of contaminated syringes and needles in public places.
- Reduce the sharing behavior of all parts of the drug preparation and injection process
- Promote wellness through individualized education, referrals, medical care, specific testing and treatment

**Harm Reduction:** Materials, services and strategies that reduce the likelihood of blood borne diseases and negative consequences of substance use

# Procedure

1. The syringe services program is open to anyone desiring to exchange syringes on the Lummi reservation
2. The nurses and public health nurses at Lummi Tribal Health Center (LTHC) conduct the PICSSP. Trained volunteers may provide program support.
3. The nurses or trained volunteers provide Harm Reduction materials and education during each point of contact.
4. The PHN or other nurses or trained volunteers will assess and determine the type and quantity of supplies necessary.

LTHC posts signs stating “LTHC Does Not Tolerate Illegal Drug Activity On The Premises”.

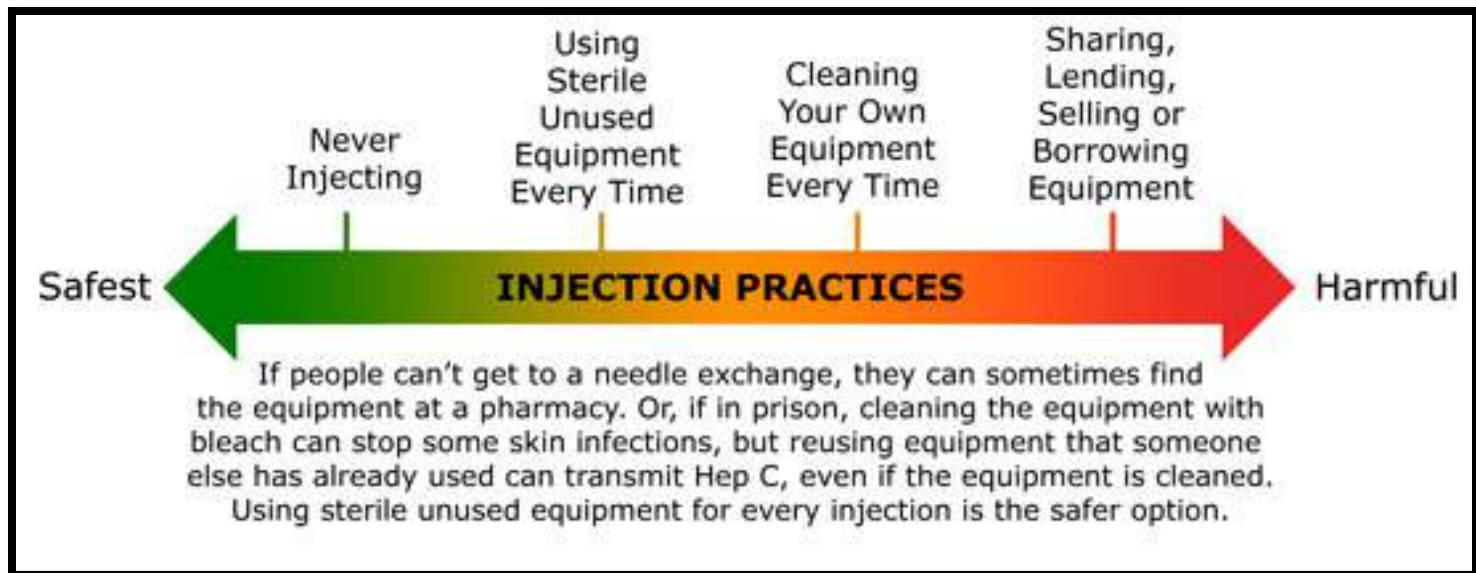


**ALL PATIENTS  
DESERVE ACCESS TO  
TREATMENT**

Offering HCV treatment to all patients, including those actively or intermittently injecting, requires an optimization of a syringe program to minimize any future exposures.

Lummi Tribal Health Center (LTHC) offers a Primary Integrated Care Syringe Service Program that allows patients to access harm reduction materials while maintaining anonymity.

LTHC offers screening and treatment for Hepatitis C through Primary Care Providers participating in ECHO sessions.

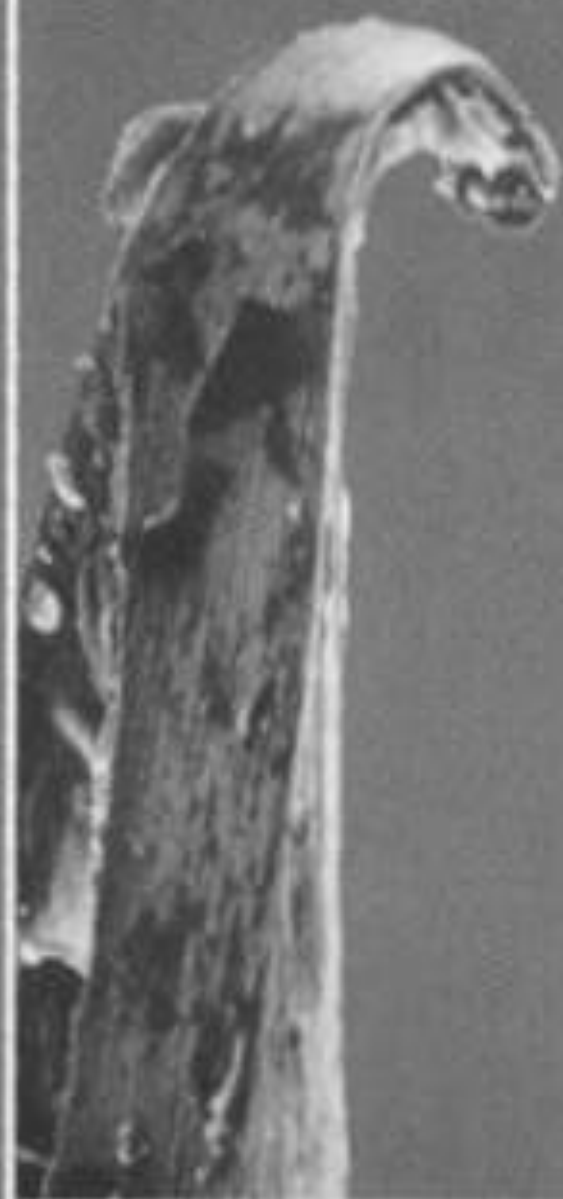




BEFORE USE



AFTER 1 USE



AFTER 6 USES

# Supplies:

These may include but are not limited to the following prevention items:

- Sterile syringes 1 mL (generally with 27 g 1/2in needles)
- Alcohol prep pads
- Cookers
- Cotton filters
- Sterile water
- Bandages
- Condoms
- Tourniquet



# Easy and SAFE access to Narcan



# HARM REDUCTION

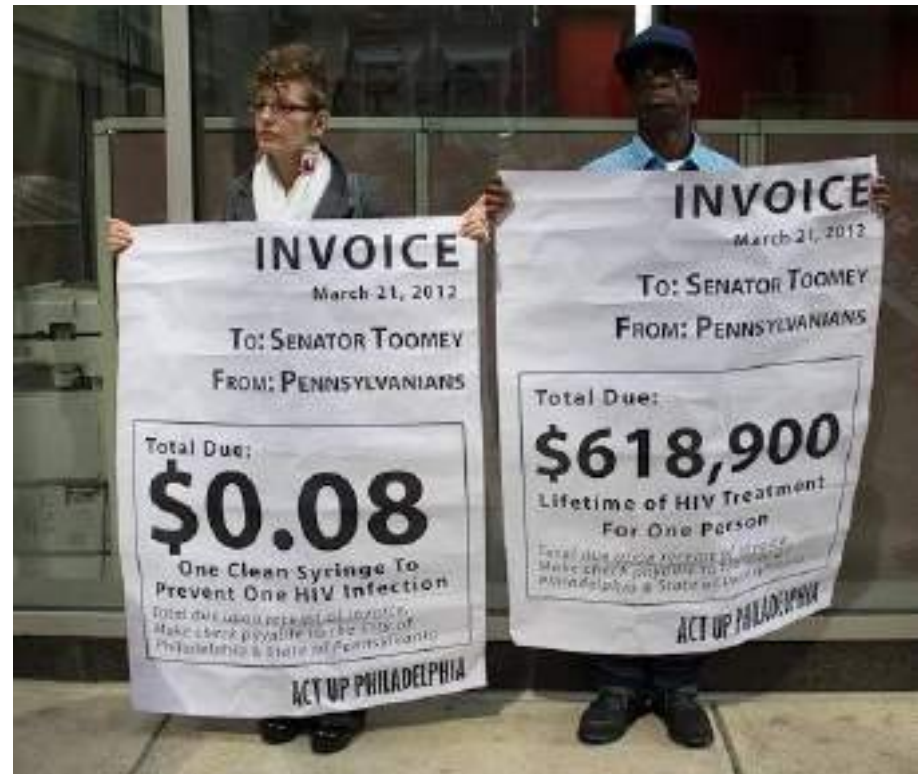
- ✓ Is a practical strategy that attempts to reduce negative consequences of drug use and other activities.
- ✓ Accepts that some will engage in dangerous activities, but does not attempt to minimize the harm or dangers involved.
- ✓ Focuses on the individual and their health and wellness needs.
- ✓ Places individuals in the greater social context.
- ✓ Places a value on drug users having a voice in the creation of programs and policies designed to serve them.

- Prevention of injection-related wounds
- Prevention of secondary infections (endocarditis, cotton fever)
- Safer injection technique
- Alternatives to injecting
- Overdose prevention and response
- Immunization
- STI testing
- Safer sex supplies
- Case management
- Addiction treatment
- Allows patients access to Primary Care that they previously did not seek out
- Connects patients to Recovery and Treatment options

# Harm Reduction is Cost Effective

Every dollar invested in  
SSPs results in  
**\$7 in savings**

just by preventing new HIV  
infections.<sup>1</sup>







## USING A SHARPS CONTAINER CAN HELP PREVENT AN INJURY

**BROKEN GLASS**



**INSULIN SYRINGES**



**SEWING NEEDLES**



**EPI PENS**



## THANK YOU FOR KEEPING THIS COMMUNITY SAFE!

IF FULL OR DAMAGED PLEASE CALL - LTHC @ 360-384-0464



CALL 911 then GIVE NARCAN (see box for complete instructions)

When the Person is Safe and Wants Outreach

To Request Outreach:

1. Call LYDC hotline, You may remain anonymous.
2. Give the name, phone number, & best place to meet the person wanting outreach.
3. A Lummi Behavioral Health counselor will provide outreach within 24 hours. The counselor can help connect the individual with services and support.

 #ENDSTIGMA

# OPIOID ADDICTION IS A DISEASE

Opioid addiction, also called opioid use disorder, is a serious medical condition. It is a chronic, relapsing brain disease with symptoms that include compulsive seeking and use of the drug, despite harmful consequences.

It is considered a brain disease because drugs change the brain; they change its structure and how it works. These brain changes can be long lasting and can lead to many harmful, often self-destructive, behaviors.

Opioid addiction, like other medical conditions, can be treated.



STOP THE STIGMA

- Integrated primary care SSP offers patients a higher level of anonymity and has proved to be a successful change for our clinic.
- Fostering an individual connection with our patients has rebuilt trust and relationship with our patients with SUD and has strengthened our program and allowed for innovative changes.



THANK YOU!

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360 312 2426

# RESOURCES

<sup>1</sup><https://harmreductionjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12954-017-0196-4>

[www.Harmreduction.org](http://www.Harmreduction.org)

<http://stopoverdose.org/>

<https://nasen.org/>

Local County Health Departments

Good Days Foundation : <https://www.mygooddays.org/for-patients/patient-assistance/>

Mary Beth Levin “Why Should Anyone Care” Harm Reduction

<https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2017/04/18/524380027/in-portugal-drug-use-is-treated-as-a-medical-issue-not-a-crime>

<https://www.bchumanservices.net/2016/11/the-language-of-addiction-updated-guide/>

<https://trash-cans.com/products/outdoor-sharps-disposal-kiosk-square-38-gallons-ce138-ch-s>