



# Module 2: Harm Reduction Strategies



# Learning Objectives

1. Define harm reduction and summarize examples of harm reduction strategies
2. Identify stigmatizing behavior and barriers to managing patients with substance use disorder (SUD) within a pharmacy
3. Describe appropriate verbiage to reframe the language of addiction



# Harm Reduction

# What is Harm Reduction?

- Harm reduction refers to minimizing or "**reducing**" harm by decreasing **negative social** and **physical consequences** that result from various **legal or illegal** human behaviors
- Overall goal of harm reduction is to improve public health with risk free use instead of complete abstinence



# Harm Reduction Targets

Overdose

HIV/AIDS

Hepatitis B  
and C

Bacterial  
infections

Dependence

Physical and  
mental health  
problems

Accidents and  
aggression

Crime

Harm from  
criminalization



# Examples of Harm Reduction Strategies in Community Pharmacies

Access to  
naloxone

Access to  
PrEP

Good  
Samaritan  
Laws

Syringe  
access  
programs

Avoiding  
stigmatizing  
language



# Question 3

Which of the following an example harm reduction strategy that could help minimize harm from the opioid epidemic?

- A. A pharmacist asks a customer, "Are you a druggie?" when the person asks to purchase clean needles
- B. A pharmacist refuses to stock naloxone in his pharmacy because he does not want "those type of people" in his store
- C. By Maryland law, a pharmacist administers naloxone to a person who appears to be overdosing on opioids is protected from charges, prosecution, or arrest.



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# Key points

- Harm reduction refers to minimizing or "reducing" harm by decreasing negative social and physical consequences that result from various legal or illegal human behaviors
- Harm reduction strategies include access to naloxone, access to PrEP, good Samaritan laws, syringe access programs, and avoiding stigmatizing language



# Breaking Barriers and Stigma



# Addiction



Addiction is a complex disease of the brain that is influenced by biology



# Reframing the Language

## Stigmatizing Language

Addict, Druggie,  
Junkie

Ex-addict, *Are any  
of your patients'  
ex-addicts?*

## Reframed Language

A person with  
substance use  
disorder

Someone with  
substance use  
disorder

Recovery, *Are any  
of your patients in  
recovery??*

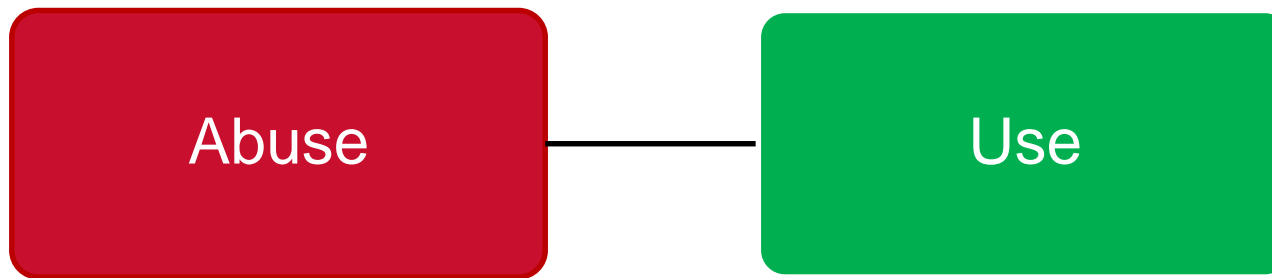
- This stigmatizing language:
  - Defines the person as **only** their substance use disorder



# Reframing The Language

## Stigmatizing Language

## Reframed Language



- This stigmatizing language:
  - May limit the conversation to people who use recreational drugs and exclude patients prescribed prescription drugs
  - Makes the person seem as though they need punishment instead of therapy



# Reframing The Language

## Stigmatizing Language

## Reframed Language

Clean/Dirty, *Are you clean?*

Abstinent/Relapsed, *Have you been able to stay abstinent?*

- This stigmatizing language:
  - Implies because they use drugs, they are a dirty person



# Question 4

Reframe underlined stigmatizing language.

- A. “TB injects heroin. He is a druggie.”
- B. “AJ, are you clean?”
- C. “CH, what drugs do you abuse?”



# Question 4

Reframe underlined stigmatizing language.

- A. “TB injects heroin. He has a substance use disorder.”
- B. “AJ, have you been able to abstain from drug use?”
- C. “CH, what drugs do you use?”





# Key Points

- Addiction is not a moral failure but a complex disease state with a biological basis
- Reframing language is a harm reduction strategy





# You have completed Module 2: Harm Reduction Strategies



# Module 1 Key Takeaways

- Harm reduction refers to minimizing or "reducing" harm by decreasing negative social and physical consequences that result from various legal or illegal human behaviors
- Harm reduction strategies include access to naloxone, good Samaritan laws, syringe access programs, and avoiding stigmatizing language
- Addiction is not a moral failure but a complex disease state with a biological basis
- Reframing language is a harm reduction strategy

