

HOMELESS
HEALTH CARE
LOS ANGELES

Shifting the Paradigm Harm Reduction

Presented by: Amber Roth, LCSW
Director of Operations & Programs
Homeless Health Care Los Angeles
2330 Beverly Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90057

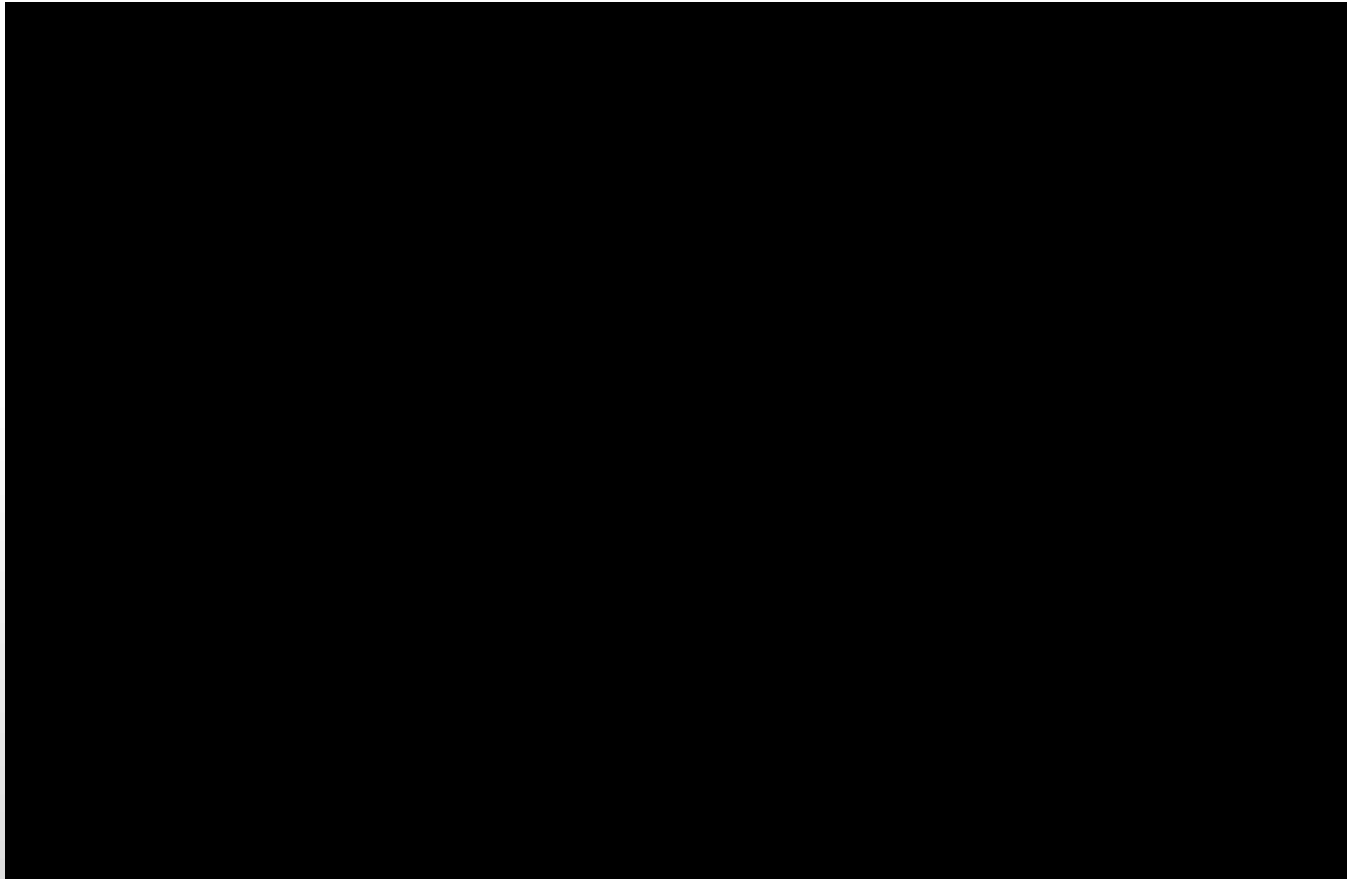
Homeless Health Care Los Angeles



Objectives

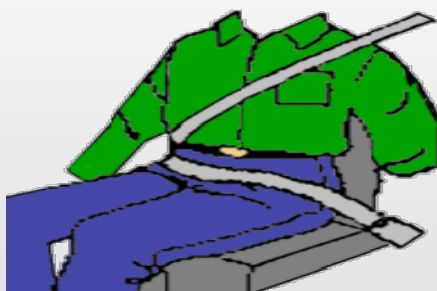
- Explore the need to shift the paradigm
- Explore the philosophy of Harm Reduction
- Identify key principles of Harm reduction
- Identify key practices/activities of Harm Reduction

A Life Saved



Shifting the Paradigm: Moving towards Harm Reduction

Although most commonly associated with substance use treatment, most of us practice Harm Reduction in our everyday lives



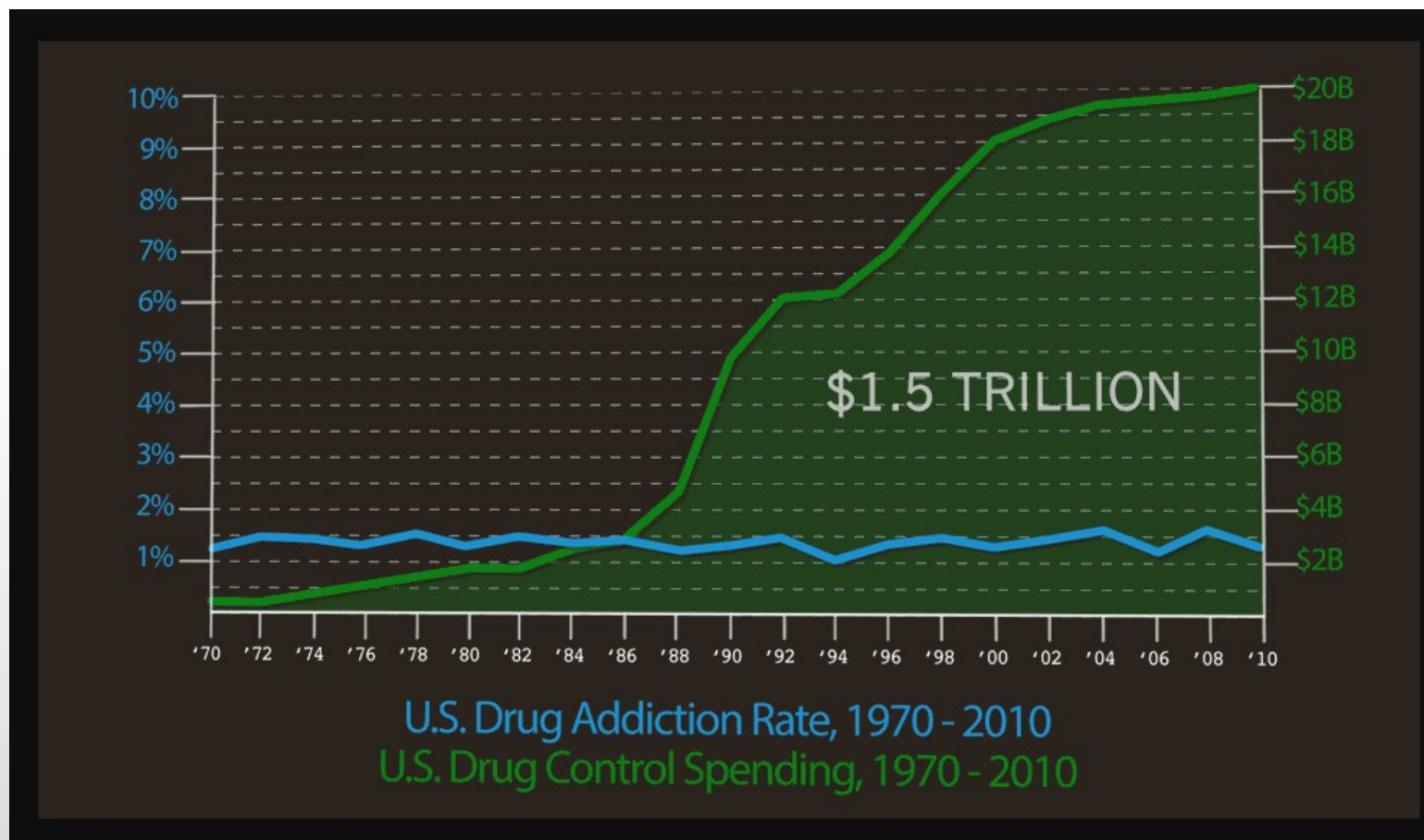
The War on Drugs

The stigmatization of substance users is a direct result of the US's punitive enforcement of substance use

Since the early 1900s, US drug policy has treated substance use an issue to be solved through criminal justice interventions, rather than humanitarian or public health interventions.

This approach was radicalized in the 1980s via the War on Drugs, which led to mass incarceration and arguably created more social problems than substance use itself

The War on Drugs



Harm Reduction vs. The War on Drugs

Compared to Europe, a continent with many countries that have institutionalized Harm Reduction, the US has the highest rates of:

- Opioid Use
- Cocaine Use
- Amphetamine use
- Overdose

The Roots of Harm Reduction

- Criminalization and punitive enforcement have proven ineffective in solving social problems stemming from substance use

Shifting the Paradigm

Traditional Approach

- On size fits all
- Punitive in nature
- Stigmatization and discrimination already vulnerable populations

Harm Reduction Approach

- Works within the gray areas
- Dignifying practices
- Individualized
- Strength-based
- Creates “Life Saving” services

Harm Reduction Continuum of Care

Example:

Punitive  Dignity

Philosophy of Harm Reduction

- Meeting an individual's needs where they currently are in their life
- Reduce associated harms and risks

Core Harm Reduction Beliefs

- Nurturing environments
- Compassionate care-promoting dignity and respect
- Building positive relationships-non-judgmental and patient
- Develop social bonds
- Facilitative process verses coercive
- Focuses on the needs of the individual
- Every step towards change = success

What does it take?

- Offer a broad spectrum of services and interventions
- Client-centered and supports self-determination
- Easy access to services/low barrier programming

Harm Reduction and Homeless Services

Today, Harm Reduction has become accepted as a best practice in all arenas of homeless services, not just substance use treatment:

- All Functions of Case Management
 - Outreach and Engagement
 - Assessment
 - Case Planning
 - Documentation and Evaluation
- Housing and Housing Retention
- Mental and Physical Health Care



Examples Harm Reduction Practices & Interventions

HOMELESS
HEALTH CARE
LOS ANGELES



Syringe Exchange Programs

Safer Use Kits

Safe Injection Facilities

Medication Assisted Treatment

Overdose Prevention/Naloxone Distribution

Housing First

Outreach Hygiene Centers

Outreach Testing Sites

Low-Barrier Shelters/Safe Zones

In & Out privileges for shelters

Motivational Interviewing

Being Trauma Informed

Client-Centered Services



How can you practice Harm Reduction?