

COMMUNITY LIVING DURHAM NORTH
HARM REDUCTION (HHSP Program)

Policy No: B-20 (Service Delivery)

Effective Date: May 12, 2020

Last Revision: April 9, 2025

Last Review:

Rationale:

Whereas CLDN's Housing and Homelessness Support Program (HHSP) is unique within the agency, in that it can offer Harm Reduction supplies and education to the people it supports, this policy provides a framework for that activity; it seeks to ensure adherence to best practices and to the delivery of non-judgmental, wrap-around services.

Policy Statement:

Community Living Durham North subscribes to the concept of "Harm Reduction" - a social service construct based in social justice and human rights, that aims to reduce the negative health, financial and social consequences caused by substance use and/or risky sexual behaviour.

As members of the HHSP team offer the education and the supplies that are the hallmarks of Harm Reduction, they will seek to:

- Reduce the stigma associated with substance abuse and risky sexual behaviour, consistent with CLDN's vision of a community where everyone is valued;
- Increase the likelihood of successful and sustainable housing;
- Improve community safety and promote wellness;
- Create and maintain positive partnerships with other service providers.

Approved by: Clare Suggitt
for the Board of Directors

Date: April 9, 2025

COMMUNITY LIVING DURHAM NORTH
HARM REDUCTION (CHPI PROGRAM)

Procedure No: B-20-1

Definition of Harm Reduction

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Harm reduction is a social service construct based in social justice and respect for the rights of the person; it aims to reduce the risk of health, financial and social harm caused by engaging in substance use and risky sexual behaviour. Harm reduction assumes that all substances have both positive and negative effects and that substance use may affect a person's mental, spiritual, emotional, physical and financial health, all of which will in turn greatly impact their housing.

The HHSP program acknowledges that many factors can lead to homelessness, including substance use, and it works with members of the North Durham community no matter their status of usage; abstinence is not a requirement for our services. By making harm reduction supports and supplies a part of our services, we acknowledge that each person's relationship with substance use is different. The availability of these supports and supplies will enable people we support, if they are users, to have increased choice and control over their health and help them to take protective measures for themselves, their families and our North Durham community.

Procedure No: B-20-2

Core Components of Harm Reduction

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Components of Harm Reduction

- Supplies Distribution
- Education about safe usage
- Referrals to health and community services
- Advocacy in the community around homelessness and substance use.

Harm Reduction Supplies

HHSP will have two main types of harm reduction supply kits: injection kits and smoke kits. Both will both include condoms, crisis cards and our business cards/flyer. The two kits will be as follows:

The injection kits include:

- 10 needles (either short or long stem)
- 10 sterile water ampoules
- 10 cookers
- 5 tie off bands
- 5 pack of 5 filters each
- 10 or more alcohol wipes
- 2 condoms
- An HHSP business card
- Crisis Card

A smoke kit includes:

- 2 glass pipettes or 2 ball pipes
- 2 packs of 5 screens each
- 2 push sticks
- 2 mouthpieces
- 2 alcohol wipes
- 2 condoms
- An HHSP business card
- Crisis Card

Procedure No: B-20-3
**Procurement, Storage, Distribution
and Tracking**

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Procurement

Community partnerships have been made and will continue to be made with community services in south Durham already offering Harm Reduction, including John Howard Society and CAREA. These kits come pre-packaged. To begin, HHSP will have limited kits on hand (10 to 15 of each). As we see the level of community need, we will adjust our stock accordingly.

Storage

Once kits are on site they will be locked in the filing cabinet. Only unused kits will be kept on site. No used materials will be accepted by HHSP staff.

Distribution

HHSP staff will offer kits to program participants who are in need. This can be done through conversation, text, email or any other means. Harm reduction will be added to our flyer as a service and mentioned during intake to raise awareness of the service. We recognize that people may not feel comfortable accepting harm reduction kits upon beginning their relationship with an HHSP staff. This service will be available to them throughout their involvement with HHSP, including during follow-up and potentially once they have been discharged from housing services.

As part of the distribution process and throughout the working relationship with the person, HHSP staff will let people know about community services for addiction, including Pinewood Addiction Services in Port Perry, and offer to make any connections they may want.

When a person does express an interest in harm reduction supplies, HHSP staff will ask them what kind of supplies they need, ensuring to ask about preferences regarding needles or stems (long needles, short needles, straight or ball stems/pipes). Arrangements to meet the person in a public space to provide these supplies will be made. Supplies will be given in non-transparent plastic bags so as to ensure discretion and confidentiality.

All distribution will be done during normal program hours and in public places as is normal for meetings between our staff and people receiving service. When giving the kit to a person for the first time, HHSP staff will make sure to ask if they are familiar with the supplies and provide any education needed. Staff will inform each recipient how to safely dispose of their used materials. This includes taking any used sharps to a pharmacy for disposal (or encouraging clients to get a sharps container for their used materials) and putting any used pipes in a sealed garbage container.

Used materials will not be taken by HHSP and staff will direct people to dispose of used supplies in places that can be safely used for this purpose.

Distribution of harm reduction kits will be made available to anyone asking for the service regardless of age, substance use status, or any other distinction that might be used to stigmatize or discriminate. Staff will also recognize that it is not uncommon for those procuring harm reduction supplies to do so for others as well. For this reason, multiple kits, to a maximum of five, will be available to a single person if requested.

When giving supplies to people during a pandemic, social distancing will be practiced at all times.

Tracking

A tracking spreadsheet will be created for harm reduction supplies. When kits are brought into the office they will be added to the spreadsheet. Any kits given out will also be tracked including some demographic information about the client, when known. This will allow us to get information about the population we are serving for statistical analysis and the development of future proposals.

Procedure No: B-20-4
Education and Training

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As mentioned above, as supplies are provided, HHSP staff will provide education around how to use the kit safely. This will include the following (all of which is covered in training webinars provided by the Ontario Harm Reduction Network):

- Information about how to safely use materials provided in the kits, including a demonstration, if needed, about how to put materials together (a demo kit will be used for these purposes).
- Safer injection practices including the least risky injection sites (avoiding the neck, head, groin and wrists) and how to clean the area pre- and post injection.
- How to dispose of materials safely and where to return used needles (pharmacies and agencies with pick-up options).
- Safer substance smoking practices; for example, the use of filters and mouth pieces.
- What to do in case you or someone you are with overdoses, including where to get Narcan/naloxone nasal spray kits.
- Best practices when using; for example, not to use alone, using with people you trust, always have Narcan/naloxone nasal spray kits, to use in clean spaces, etc.
- Safer sex practices, how to use condoms, where to get HIV/HEP C testing done if needed, etc.
- Information on poly-substance use and the risks.
- Information on services that promote general health and well being (including mental health, addiction and health community services).

Training

HHSP staff will receive online training via webinars provided by the Ontario Harm Reduction Network (OHRN). The staff will do the basic training on both the injection and smoke kits. Each training is 90 minutes and includes how to use the supplies safely. Certificates are offered for this training which is a free resource.

Procedure No: B-20-5
Health and Safety Protocols

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Health and Safety Protocols

HHSP staff are trained in health and safety as per the Community Living Durham North standard. Harm reduction practices can put staff at some risk for contact where clients are using

substances. For this reason, staff will not enter into private spaces where usage may be happening and all meetings with clients are to be done in public places.

HHSP staff will carry Narcan/Naloxone nasal spray kits in the case that they meet someone who may be experiencing an overdose. These kits are free and offered at any pharmacy. Shoppers Drug Mart in Port Perry and Uxbridge is a source for these kits. Four kits will be in stock at a time to make sure that if one is used we have a back up in place. HHSP staff will carry a Narcan/Naloxone kits with them at all times, not just when giving a harm reduction kit. If a kit is used it will be disposed of and a new kit taken from the office. This kit will then be replaced in the inventory kept at the HHSP office as soon as possible.

Training on how to use the nasal spray kits is available through the Ontario Harm Reduction Network and HHSP staff will complete this training upon starting with the program.

If at any point a staff suspect a client is having an overdose, they are to call 911 immediately, or direct someone in the community to contact 911 as per their first aid training. The Narcan/naloxone has no adverse side effects if the person is not suffering an overdose so even if staff are unsure, they can administer the nasal spray. Staff are to follow the direction of the 911 operator and report the steps they have taken with the client. Once the client is safely in the care of emergency services, staff are to contact their manager or on-call cell phone and report the incident to management. An incident report is to be completed using Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) as soon as possible. The HHSP Program Manager will notify the Region of Durham of the incident.

Advocacy and Community Outreach

CLDN and our HHSP workers will include messaging about harm reduction, including relevant harm reduction statistics, as they emerge, in our outreach to the community regarding homelessness in the region.

Procedure No: B-20-6

Resources on Harm Reduction and Works

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The Ontario Harm Reduction Network – www.ohrn.org

The Provincial System Support Program - <https://www.eenet.ca/initiatives/ORH>

Ontario Harm Reduction Distribution Program - <http://www.ohrdp.ca/about-us/harm-reduction/>

BC Harm Reduction Strategies and Services (December, 2014). *BC harm reduction strategies and services policy and guidelines*. Retrieved from: <http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Epid/Other/BCHRSSPolicyandGuidelinesDecember2014.pdf>

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<https://www.drugpolicy.ca/our-work/issues/harm-reduction/>

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Social Planning Network of Ontario (1991). *PIT Count*. Retrieved from: www.spno.ca

Approved by: Glenn Taylor
CEO

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