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# WHAT IS HARM REDUCTION?

Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use, drug policy, drug laws, sex work, sex worker policy, and sex worker-related laws.

Harm reduction is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of people who use drugs and engage in sex work.

- Robert Childs

The logo for STEP TN, with 'STEP' in orange and 'TN' in white on a black background.The logo for Cempa+ Community Care, featuring the name in white and a plus sign icon.

# WHAT IS HARM REDUCTION?

Harm reduction includes a range of cost-effective and evidenced-based public health and social services:



Syringe Service Programs



Overdose Prevention



Drug Testing



Mental Health Services



Housing First Programs



Condom Distribution

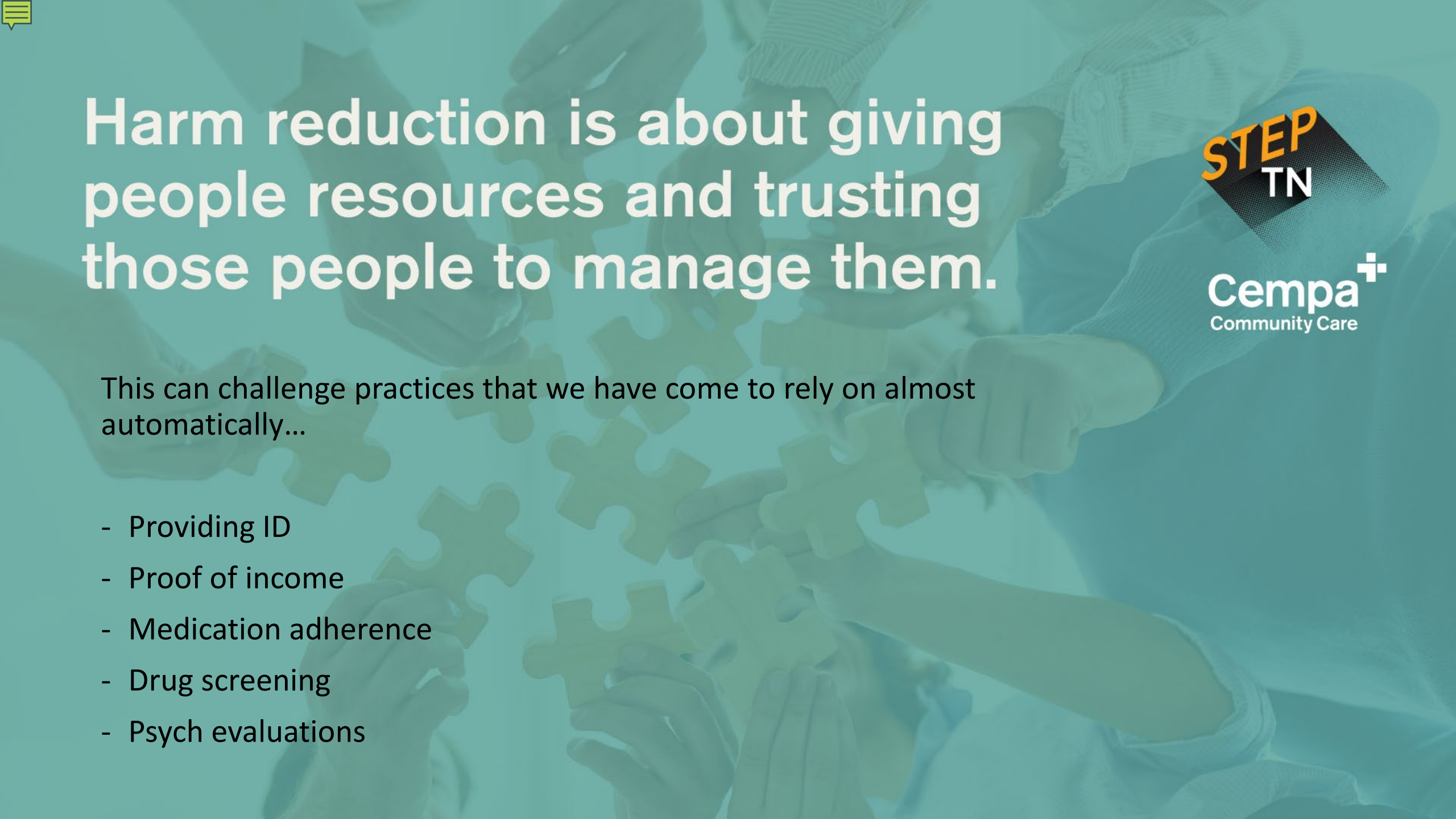


Guidance on safer drug use, safer consumption, and safer sex work

# TED MED



CARLHART

The background of the slide features a teal-tinted image of several hands of different skin tones reaching up to hold together various puzzle pieces. The puzzle pieces are scattered across the frame, with some being held in place by the hands, symbolizing teamwork and problem-solving.

# Harm reduction is about giving people resources and trusting those people to manage them.



This can challenge practices that we have come to rely on almost automatically...

- Providing ID
- Proof of income
- Medication adherence
- Drug screening
- Psych evaluations

# RISKS OF BEING "ON THE GRID"

People who use drugs face  
discrimination in finding . . .



WORK



HOUSING



GOVERNMENT  
ASSISTANCE / SUPPORT



MEDICAL  
CARE

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# Stewardship vs Gatekeeping

“The authority of a steward derives from her expertise and knowledge, not from any innate privilege or sense of absolute power. The only way a steward can ensure her desired outcome is to consistently win over the hearts and minds of key stakeholders with her skillset, securing the trust of the community. Gatekeepers, on the other hand, have the power to open and close the gate at will and hold nearly absolute authority in each transaction.”

Gatekeeper to Steward: The Evolving Concept of Radiologist Accountability for Imaging Utilization. Daniel J. Durand, MD, Geraldine McGinty, MD, MBA, Richard Duszak Jr, MD



# ENGAGING WITH HARM REDUCTION



Provide a space where people will never be punished for honesty



Share the power that your program holds with program participants



Recognize that participant goals won't be your goals



Avoid gatekeeping services



Celebrate people's victories



# INTERNALIZED STIGMA: Negative Outcomes

- Increased Depression
- Avoidant Coping
- Social Avoidance
- Decreased persistence in accessing mental health services & other supports
- Decreased Hope & Self-Esteem
- Worsening Psychiatric Symptoms

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# LANGUAGE

Do not say:

- Substance Abuse
- Dirty/Clean
- Addict
- Abuser
- Junkie
- Druggie
- Drug Abuse
- Tweaker
- Crack Head

**Health and justice terminology that is accurate, clinical, and not prejudiced**

- Respect people's preferences
- Person-first language
- Person with substance use disorder
- Used syringe/pipe, sterile syringe/pipe
- Person who uses drugs
- People in recovery
- People involved in the justice system
- People who have been incarcerated
- People with lived experience in the justice system



# Trauma-Informed Care

## Safety



Ensuring physical and emotional safety

Common areas are welcoming and privacy is respected

## Choice



Individual has choice and control

Individuals are provided a clear and appropriate message about their rights and responsibilities

## Collaboration



Making decisions with the individual and sharing power

### Principles in Practice

Individuals are provided a significant role in planning and evaluating services

## Trustworthiness



Task clarity, consistency, and Interpersonal Boundaries

Respectful and professional boundaries are maintained

## Empowerment



Prioritizing empowerment and skill building

Providing an atmosphere that allows individuals to feel validated and affirmed with each and every contact at the agency



# SYRINGE SERVICE PROGRAMS (SSPs)

## Benefits, Myths & Best Practices



# SSP BENEFITS



**5x**

Participants are 5x more likely to enter drug treatment



Lower incidence of HIV infection by up to 80% and HEP C by up to 50%

**3x**

Participants are 3x more likely to stop injecting drugs



Improves community by helping to eliminate improper disposal



Connects people to care



Decreases law enforcement needle stick injuries by 66%, and crime by 11% through programs that connect people who use drugs to public and private social services



Decreases overdoses

- Robert Childs



# STEP TN

## CONTINUUM OF CARE

Relationship Building

Syringe Services

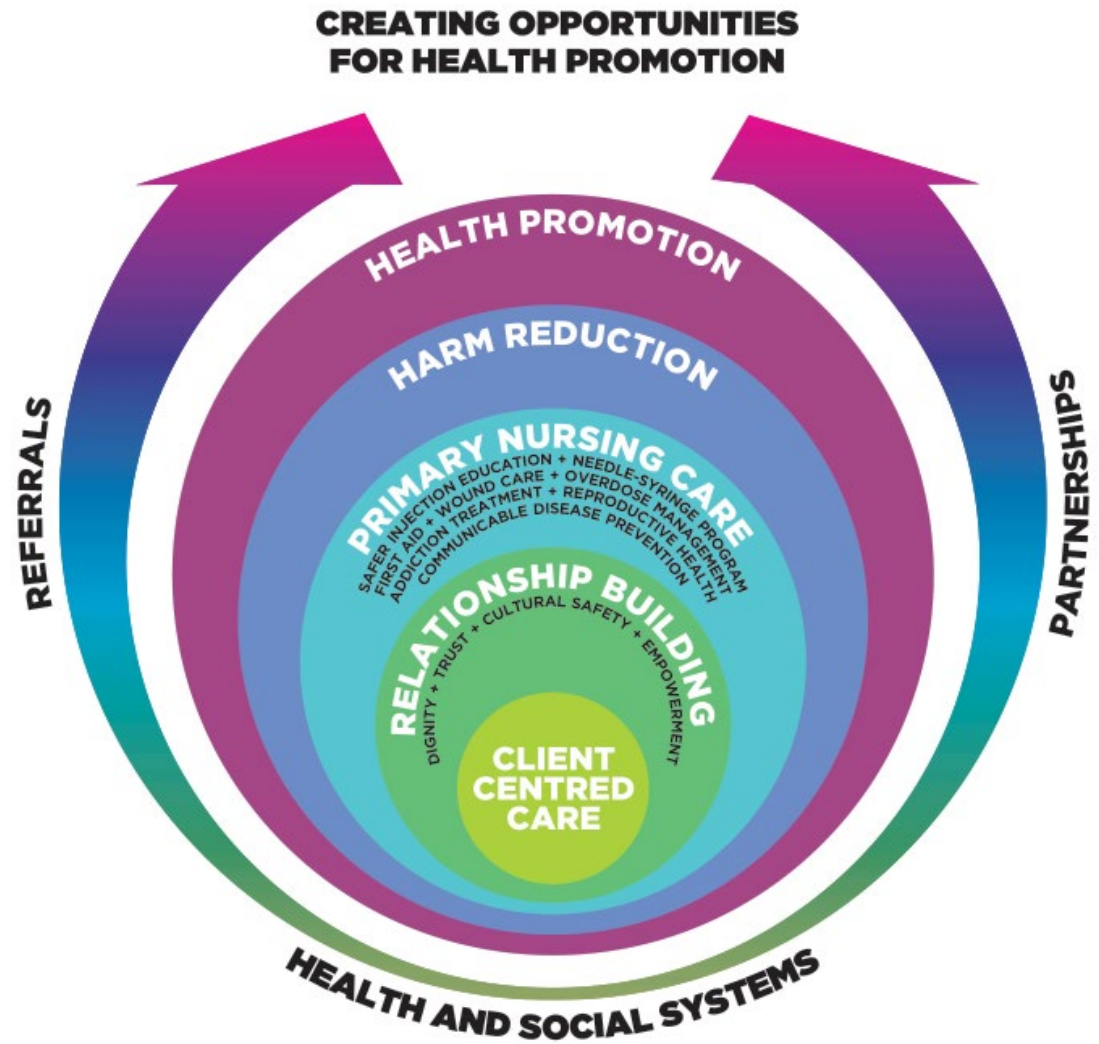
Primary Care

Testing

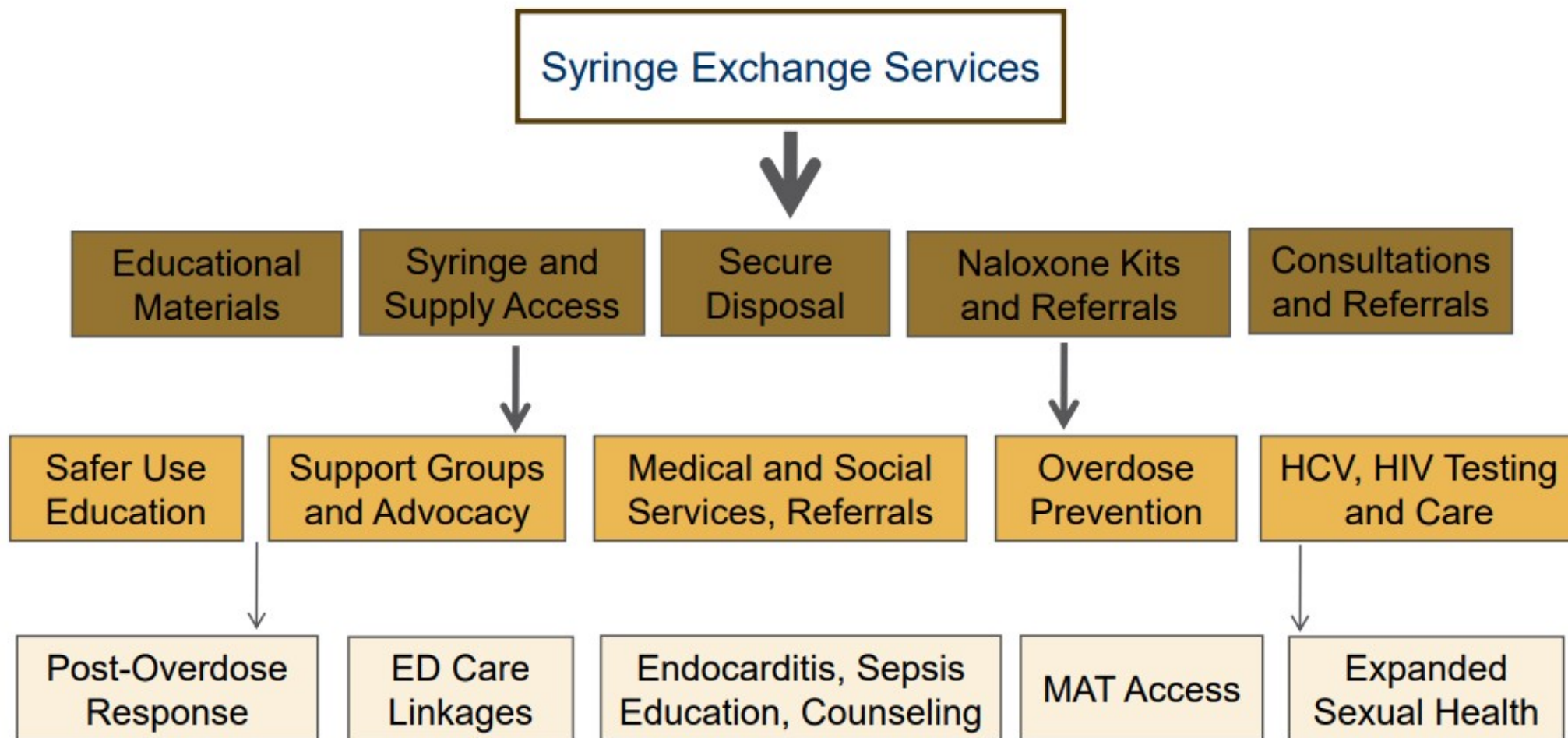
Treatment

Advocacy

Gaining Insite: Harm Reduction in Nursing Practice



## Syringe Exchange Starts a Conversation

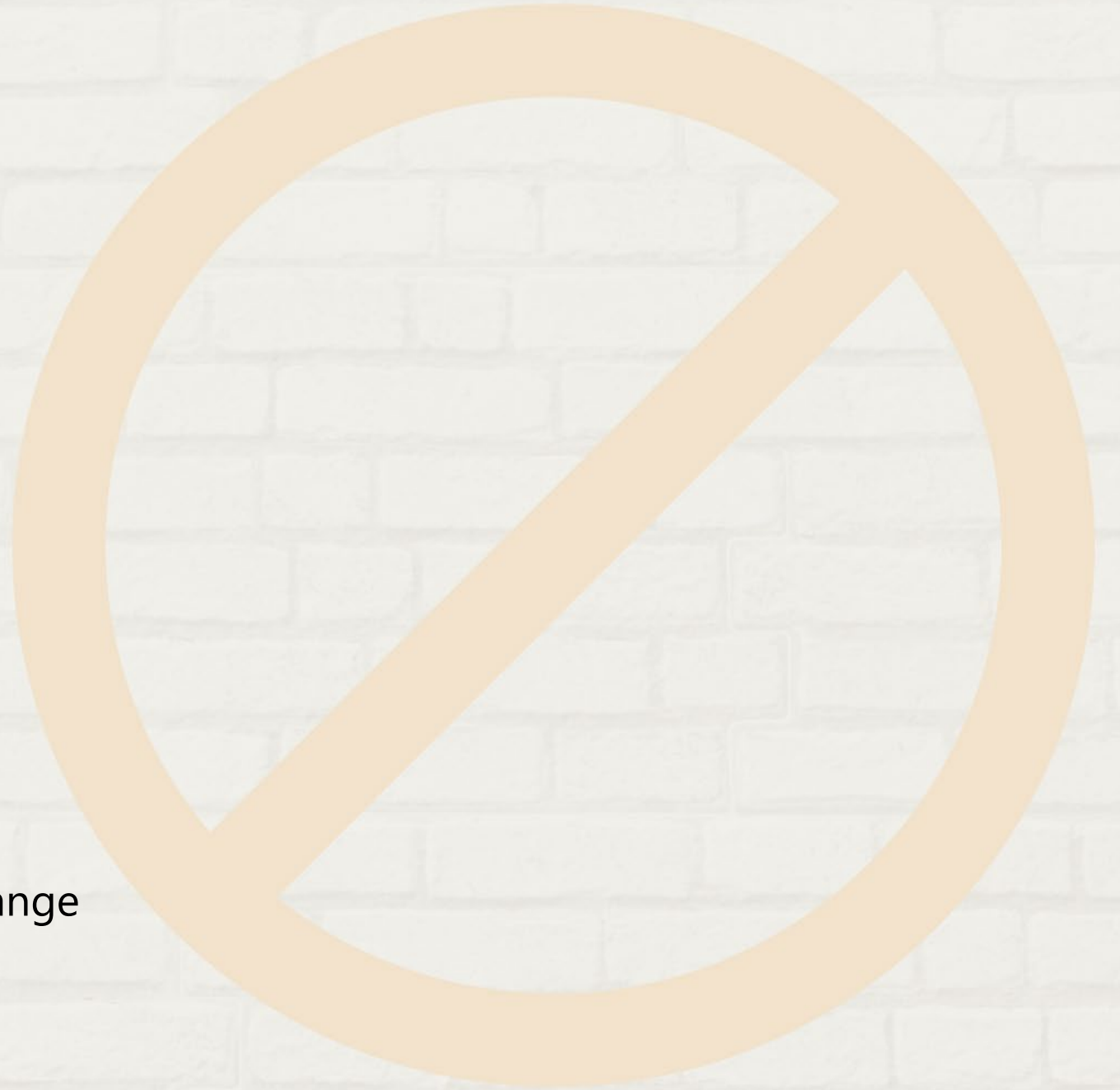


***People who use exchanges care about their health***



# SSP PRACTICES TO AVOID

- Requiring identifying documents
- Restricting frequency of access
- Collecting unnecessary data
- Imposing geographic limits
- Limiting syringe access through exchange





# TYING THIS MODEL INTO TIC & HARM REDUCTION

## RESOURCE PROVISION

- Easy to access
- Anonymous
- Low administrative demands

## COLLABORATION

- We take our cues from people accessing the service
- Participants are taken at their word
- Responsive to the needs of the people who access, advocate to get those needs met.
- Coordinate with other levels of care

## MUTUAL TRUST

- We are not here to manage the people who access the programs.
- Participants' goals will be heard and respected.
- We provide a space for participants to be heard and respect their autonomy.

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# STEP TN

Syringe Trade & Education Program, known as **STEP TN**, is a harm reduction and education program for injection drug users developed by Cempa Community Care.

STEP TN is designed to reduce the spread of HIV, Hepatitis C, and other blood-borne infections, as well as provide safe disposal of needles and syringes.

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Syringe  
Distribution



Safer Injection &  
Wound Care Supplies



Biohazard  
Disposal



Naloxone  
Distribution



HIV/HCV Testing  
& Treatment



Safer Injection Education,  
Overdose Prevention  
Education, and Treatment  
& Recovery Resources

# STEP TN

## BARRIERS THE STEP TN PROGRAM FACES



Tennessee  
Law



Law Enforcement  
& Service Provision  
Disconnect



Funding



Rurality of  
Opioid Use



Program Access



Community  
Skepticism

**1**

**Giving people resources and trusting them to manage them**

**2**

**Harm reduction is about implementing evidence-based strategies that advocate for the health and human rights of people who use drugs and sex workers.**

**3**

**STEP TN provides a judgement-free environment and focuses on the early steps of the continuum of care.**





# HARM REDUCTION FAQs

## Do SSPs help people to stop using drugs?

Yes. When people who inject drugs use an SSP, they are more likely to enter treatment for substance use disorder and stop injecting than those who don't use an SSP. New users of SSPs are five times as likely to enter drug treatment as those who don't use the programs. People who inject drugs and who have used an SSP regularly are nearly three times as likely to report a reduction in injection frequency as those who have never used an SSP.



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**STEP TN @ The Impact Hub**  
4001 Rossville Blvd  
Chattanooga, TN 37407

**[cempa.org/STEPTN](http://cempa.org/STEPTN)**  
**423.834.7374**



# HARM REDUCTION FAQs

## Do SSPs reduce infections?

Yes. Nonsterile injections can lead to transmission of HIV, viral hepatitis, bacterial, and fungal infections and other complications. By providing access to sterile syringes and other injection equipment, SSPs help people prevent transmitting bloodborne and other infections when they inject drugs.



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# HARM REDUCTION FAQs

## How do Harm Reduction programs impact law enforcement and first responders?

CHR programs promote public health and safety by taking used syringes off the streets and protecting police, fire personnel, and other first responders from needle stick injuries. A study in San Diego, CA showed that nearly 30% of police officers had been stuck by a needle at some point in their careers and a study in Connecticut found that needle stick injuries were reduced by 2/3 after CHR programs were implemented.



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# HARM REDUCTION FAQs

## Why prioritize money for harm reduction when it could go to treatment programs?

Both of things are in dire need of funding, but often harm reduction programs act as a bridge towards treatment programs. SSPs have been proven to reduce risk behaviors related to substance use, and that is an important achievement.



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