



Harm Reduction and HIV/AIDS

The Board of Directors of the AIDS Committee of York Region (ACYR) acknowledges its support of the following definition and basic principles of **harm reduction**:

"Harm reduction can be defined as a set of practical strategies with the goal of meeting people 'where they are at' to help them to reduce **harm** associated with engaging in risk taking behavior".

Basic Principles of Harm Reduction:

- **Harm reduction** philosophy considers risk taking behavior as a natural part of our world and suggests that our work should be focused on minimizing the **harmful** effects of these behaviors rather than focusing on the cessation of the behavior.
- **Harm reduction** philosophy supports the involvement of individuals in the creation and/or delivery of programs and services that are designed to serve them. These programs and services must be offered in a non-judgmental and non-coercive manner.
- **Harm reduction** philosophy recognizes the impact of issues such as poverty, classism, racism, homophobia, social isolation, past trauma, and other social inequities on both people's vulnerability to and capacity for effectively dealing with risk taking behavior.

The passing of this definition and basic principles of **harm reduction** comes from our research and we acknowledge the definition currently used by Canadian AIDS Society. This definition most appropriately reflects the work done by AIDS Committee of York Region.