



Harm reduction





Prevention and treatment of addictions

Main Principle

Preventing is better than Curing

Curing is better than Harm Reduction

Harm Reduction is better than doing nothing!



Harm reduction

Background:

Supply of and demand for illicit drugs have not been reduced (in the NL nor globally). Complete ban of drugs is unrealistic. Drug dependence is a disease with a kind of chronic disorder, often accompanied by psychiatric disease, social, financial and/or criminal problems.

Starting point for HR policy:

- Prevent and reduce risks of drug use for (potential) users
- Reduce negative effects for society

Public health considerations (medical and social) are prioritised above punishing offences



Harm reduction

- Methadone treatment (since late 1960s)
- Drug consumption rooms (since 1970s)
- HIV/AIDS prevention (since early 1980s)
- Needle exchange programmes (since early 1980s)
- Drug testing services (since early 1990s)
- Medical co-prescription of heroin (since late 1990s)
- Sheltered Housing (hostels, since 2000)
- Low threshold facilities
- Court-ordered treatment; compulsory placement of addicted offenders for up to two years in government-designated secure facilities (ISD)
- PM Coffeeshops (separation of markets for soft drugs and hard drugs)



Harm reduction in the nightlife scene

- Presence of First Aid services at parties/festivals
- Water provision
- Peer support (Unity)
- Information stands
- Chill out rooms
- (prior) drug testing

