

# HARM REDUCTION

## HELPING THOSE ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

### What is harm reduction?

Harm Reduction is a set of strategies that meet people where they are in their recovery to improve health and quality of life outcomes. Services are provided with a nonjudgmental approach and continue to engage individuals regardless of their use status. Harm reduction acknowledges that abstaining from drug use is not realistic for everyone depending on their stage of recovery.

### BENEFITS OF HARM REDUCTION



- Reduced rates of HIV, Hepatitis C, and other infections
- Prevention of unintentional overdoses
- Navigation of clients to the appropriate recovery services
- Safer neighborhoods and reduced crime

### WHAT IS HARFORD COUNTY DOING?



**Community-Based Naloxone Distribution:** In an emergency situation, naloxone can be administered to quickly reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. The Harford County Local Addictions Authority provides naloxone kits to first responders and any community member in need.

**Peer Recovery Specialists:** Peers are available to assist clients in overcoming barriers on the road to recovery, identifying potential problems and finding solutions, and providing appropriate & helpful recovery information.

**HIV and STI Testing and Treatment:** The health department offers low-cost screening options to those with private insurance, Medicaid, and the uninsured.

**Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT):** MAT is the use of medication, in combination with therapy, to treat substance use disorders (SUD). Currently the Health Department uses Vivitrol to prevent relapses into alcohol and substance use.

### BEST PRACTICES IN THE FIELD



**Syringe Services Programs:** These programs offer sterile syringes to injection drug users, collect used syringes, and link clients to clinical and mental health services.

**Fentanyl Test Strip Distribution:** Test strips quickly and reliably detect the presence of fentanyl and many of its known analogs in a drug sample. Fentanyl is a highly potent synthetic opioid largely responsible for a dramatic increase in heroin-related fatalities.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- National [Harm Reduction Coalition](#)
- Baltimore County's [Harm Reduction Program](#)
- CDC's Education on [Syringe Services Programs](#)