



**DCengage**

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Welcome  
Remarks  
&  
Opening  
Plenary  
Handout

**Inaugural DC Engage  
Harm Reduction Conference**  
AUGUST 25, 2022

**SAMHSA's Approach to Harm Reduction**

Kristin Roha  
Public Health Advisor for HIV  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
*Kristin.roha@samhsa.hhs.gov*



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Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities. – [SAMHSA: Who We Are](#)

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Harm Reduction at SAMHSA

- Overdose deaths have increased since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, driven by the proliferation of highly potent synthetic opioids containing primarily fentanyl and other analogues.
- Provisional data from CDC indicates that there were 100,000 overdose deaths in 12 months from May 2020 to April 2021; a nearly 29% increase compared to the same time the year before.
- SAMHSA recognizes that harm reduction services save lives by being available and accessible in a manner that emphasizes the need for humility and compassion toward people who use drugs.



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### Harm Reduction at SAMHSA

Harm reduction is an important part of the Biden-Harris Administration's comprehensive approach to addressing substance use disorders through prevention, treatment, and recovery where individuals who use substances set their own goals.

SAMHSA-funded harm reduction programming is designed to "meet people where they are" on their own terms, and may serve as a pathway to additional prevention, treatment, and recovery services.

SAMHSA's harm reduction work strives to address broader health and social issues through improved policies, programs, and practices.



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### National Harm Reduction Technical Assistance Center

• SAMHSA, in collaboration with CDC, supports the National Harm Reduction Technical Assistance Center, which provides a comprehensive approach to harm reduction through:

- Syringe Services Programs (SSPs)
- Naloxone distribution and administration
- Safer sex kits
- HIV and viral hepatitis testing
- COVID-19 response
- Community stigma
- Peer-delivered recovery support efforts

• The TA Center strives to expand capacity, increase effectiveness, and strengthen the performance and accountability of harm reduction services. This will be done within a comprehensive prevention strategy at the state and community levels and will provide technical assistance and consultation services to support implementation of effective, evidence-based harm reduction programs, practices, and policies in diverse settings.



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### Thank You

SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

Kristin Roha

[Kristin.roha@samhsa.hhs.gov](mailto:Kristin.roha@samhsa.hhs.gov)

[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) • 1-800-487-4889 (TDD)



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