

## Worksheet: Creating a Harm Reduction Plan

A harm reduction plan is a practical strategy designed to minimize the negative consequences associated with substance use. It focuses on reducing the risks and harms rather than solely aiming for abstinence. Here are some key components of a harm reduction plan:

1. **Identify specific risks and harms:** This includes physical health problems, mental health issues, relationship problems, legal trouble, financial difficulties, overdose, and unsafe injecting practices.
2. **Set short-term goals:** These goals aim to reduce the identified risks. Examples include reducing alcohol consumption to a specific number of drinks per day or week, switching to a lower-alcohol content beverage, avoiding high-risk situations, using substances in a safer environment, and accessing harm reduction services like needle exchange programs.
3. **Set long-term goals:** These goals are related to overall well-being and may include achieving and maintaining abstinence, improving health, repairing relationships, securing stable housing, and finding employment.
4. **Develop specific steps:** Outline actions to achieve the goals, such as keeping an alcohol diary, practicing drug refusal skills, setting limits on spending money on substances, seeking support from friends, family, or support groups, and engaging in alternative activities.
5. **Identify resources and support:** Determine what resources or support are needed to implement the steps, such as information on harm reduction strategies, contact information for harm reduction organizations, support from a therapist or counselor, connection with a support group, and assistance with accessing medical care, housing, or financial assistance.
6. **Create a plan:** Outline specific actions, timelines, and resources needed to achieve the goals. For example, starting an alcohol diary today and tracking for the next two weeks using a notebook or smartphone app.
7. **Seek help and support:** Identify who can provide help and support, such as friends, family members, therapists, support groups, or harm reduction organizations.
8. **Celebrate successes:** Recognize and reward progress, no matter how small, to help maintain motivation.

## Worksheet with prompts

This worksheet assists clients in developing a practical plan to minimize the negative consequences associated with their substance use.

**Instructions:** Think about your substance use and the risks or harms that you are concerned about. Use this worksheet to create a personalized harm reduction plan.

1. **Identify specific risks and harms associated with your substance use.**

*These may be ...*

- Physical health problems (liver damage, heart disease, infections)
- Mental health issues (anxiety, depression, psychosis)
- Relationship problems

- Legal trouble
- Financial difficulties
- Overdose
- Unsafe injecting practices

**1. What are your short-term goals to reduce these risks?**

These may be...

- Reducing alcohol consumption to a specific number of drinks per day or week
- Switching to a lower-alcohol content beverage
- Avoiding high-risk situations (e.g., certain social settings, times of day)
- Using substances in a safer environment
- Accessing harm reduction services like needle exchange programs

**1. What are your long-term goals related to your substance use?**

*These may be...*

- Achieving and maintaining abstinence
- Reducing and controlling substance use
- Improving overall health and well-being
- Repairing relationships
- Securing stable housing
- Finding employment

**1. What specific steps can you take to reduce those risks and achieve your goals?**

*These may be...*

- Keeping an alcohol/drug diary to track consumption patterns
- Practicing drug refusal skills
- Setting limits on spending money on substances
- Seeking support from friends, family, or support groups
- Engaging in alternative activities that you enjoy
- Attending counseling or therapy sessions

**1. What resources or support do you need to implement these steps?**

*These may be...*

- Information on harm reduction strategies and local services
- Contact information for harm reduction organizations
- Support from a therapist or counselor
- Connection with a support group (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, SMART Recovery)
- Assistance with accessing medical care, housing, or financial assistance

**1. Create a plan outlining specific actions, timelines, and resources.**

*These may be...*

- **Action:** Begin keeping an alcohol/drug diary to track substance habits.
- **Timeline:** Start today and continue tracking for the next two weeks.

- **Resources:** Use a notebook or a smartphone app for tracking.

1. **Who can you ask for help and support?**

*Consider friends, family members, therapists, support groups, or harm reduction organizations.*

2. **How will you celebrate your successes, no matter how small?**

*Recognizing and rewarding your progress can help maintain motivation.*

## **Additional Notes:**

- These worksheets are based on the information from the book *Solution Focused Harm Reduction: Working effectively with people who misuse substances*.
- They are intended to serve as examples and can be adapted to fit the specific needs of individual clients.
- Additional information and resources may be necessary to provide comprehensive support for individuals seeking to reduce harm related to substance use.
- It is essential to work collaboratively with clients, respecting their autonomy and honoring their expertise in their own lives.