

Providing targeted public health messaging and activation

This overview is part of the NZ Drug Foundation's acute drug harm community response guide. It makes recommendations on how organisations can proactively respond to drug harm.

Different audiences need different information

People need tailored information on drugs. It depends on:

- who they are
- what the substance is
- the situation or context
- what you are trying to stop or change.

It is safest not to use psychoactive substances at all. And people who aren't using drugs don't need much detail. But if someone is around people using drugs or already using them (especially those at risk of acute harm), they need information about safer use and how to access help.

Abstinence can be a long-term goal, but short-term goals to reduce harm (using less or in a less harmful way) can be more attainable for some. The table on the next page details the tailored harm reduction information and messaging that can be provided to the public, people at-risk or people currently using drugs.

Messaging must be combined with other actions to be effective. The way information is disseminated or what intervention is provided alongside them is crucial. So the table also details how this information can be activated to get the best uptake.

Activate different parts of the community to get involved

Identify different groups that can lever change, and empower them with practical skills to reduce harm in someone's life. Peers, friends and whānau can be a vital population to engage with.

Case study: Training friends and whānau in CPR

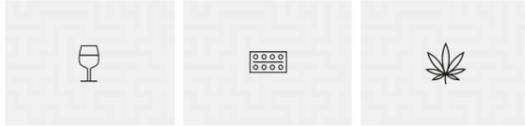
The Porirua Basin has been very affected by acute drug harm, particularly methamphetamine and synthetic cannabinoids. People most affected are often extremely disenfranchised and their friends and whānau not knowing how to help. More specifically, people didn't know how to respond to medical emergencies related to acute drug harm.

Wellington Free Ambulance worked alongside Regional Public Health to provide community training. This training focused on:

- identifying a person in cardiac arrest
- performing CPR
- using an automated external defibrillator.

There was also additional First Aid training on serious clinical conditions that could be experienced from drug harm (e.g. seizures and accidental overdose).

The training was delivered to a local mother's group that had members who used or were around people using drugs. The training received excellent feedback and participants felt able to help in an emergency.

Target population	Information to prioritise	Audience	Activation / Intervention	Examples of existing resources
People at risk of acute harm	How to prevent an overdose, responding in an emergency and specific advice about reducing the risk of acute harm.	People at risk of acute drug harm Peers, friends and whānau Bystanders to people who are using drugs in public places (e.g. outreach staff, shop owners and members of the public).	Having a one-on-one conversation can make all the difference. People are more likely to feel able to respond and take information on board if you talk through the information with them.	How to help someone after they use synthetic cannabinoids  Available from: https://www.drugfoundation.org.nz/resources
People using drugs who want to be safer	Detailed harm reduction advice and how to access support.	People who are using regularly and/or heavily but want to be safer Frontline services Support workers	Make sure frontline staff are trained to deliver a substance-specific screening and brief intervention to people. If appropriate, frontline staff can help people make a harm reduction plan that fits their situation. They need to make sure people know what local services are available and how to get help when they need it.	Harm reduction pocket cards – available for methamphetamine, alcohol, synthetic psychoactive, MDMA, LSD and cannabis Available from: www.drugfoundation.org.nz/resources MethHelp: drughelp.org.nz/a-bit-about-drugs/meth DrugHelp: drughelp.org.nz Tripsit (tripsit.me) and Erowid (www.erowid.org) are also volunteer-run websites that provide substance-specific harm reduction advice. 
People who are experimenting	Harm reduction advice and how to access support.	People who are experimenting with drugs	Talk through the harm reduction advice, and if appropriate, help them make a plan that fits their situation. Make sure they know what local services are available and how to get help when they need it.	Drug Foundation Drug Index  Available at: https://www.drugfoundation.org.nz/info/drug-index/
Young people who are thinking of using	Prevention messaging.	Young people Parents Schools Youth workers	Every young person will make a decision about whether or not to use alcohol or drugs. Many will try them. Some will experience short-term harms. A few will develop long-term problems. An early conversation could make all the difference. So adults need to have a constructive conversation with young people about drugs. This conversation could happen at school, at home, or a youth service.	Drug Foundation/AOD Collaborative Did you know video, comicstrips and conversation planner. Available for alcohol, cannabis, meth, synthetics and volatile substances. Adults can use the conversation planner to get the most out of these conversations. Available at: www.drugfoundation.org.nz/info/did-you-know 
Communities who want to prevent harm	Prevention messaging and information on how people can get help.	All relevant community groups, e.g. frontline services, support agencies, schools, DHBs etc.	Work with communities to disseminate prevention messaging to vulnerable populations.	Drug Foundation synthetics community response toolkit: THE KEY MESSAGES <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Synthetic cannabinoids are unpredictable and very addictive.2 If someone appears unconscious after smoking synthetic cannabinoids, ask loudly if they are ok. Shake them gently. If they are not responsive, dial 111 and request an ambulance.3 People who experience harm from these substances should be provided with care and support. Use non-stigmatising language Use people-centred language to make it easier for people to seek support, such as: Drug users People who use drugs Addicts People struggling with their drug use Drug problem Risky, heavy use, unhealthy drug use Available at: https://www.drugfoundation.org.nz/assets/uploads/2018-uploads/Synthetics-crisis/2018-updated-toolkit/Synthetics-community-response-toolkit-Dec-2018.pdf
Communities where an incident, overdose or death has happened	Practical advice and support that will help people respond to future incidents. For example, how to help in an overdose. Any advice should always be paired with contact information for support agencies. If the information is available, give media and others a description of the dangerous substance, so people know what to avoid.	The general public Friends and whānau who may have witnessed or know someone who is at risk of acute drug harm	Distribute a joint media release which updates the community with facts, harm reduction advice, and where to go for help.	Drug Foundation synthetics community response toolkit <i>Example of harm reduction information and support service information to accompany a media release:</i> HELPING SOMEONE AFTER USING SYNTHETIC CANNABINOIDS: If someone appears unconscious after smoking synthetic cannabinoids, ask loudly if they are ok. Shake them gently. If they are not responsive, dial 111 and request an ambulance. MORE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT: Alcohol Drug Helpline: 0800 787 797 Need to talk? Free call or text 1737 any time to chat with a trained counsellor. DrugHelp.org.nz NZ Drug Foundation https://www.drugfoundation.org.nz/info/synthetic-crisis/