



**Department
of Health**

Deconstructing Stigma and Public Health Programs for Women/Pregnant/Parenting People Who Use Drugs

The journey to providing public health in the gaps

Objectives & Background

Workshop Objectives

- Understand why people use drugs
- Understand Harm Reduction
- Understand Why Women, Pregnant, Parenting people who use drugs are falling through the cracks and what we can do

I am using the term women as an all-inclusive term which includes non-binary, trans-experience, and non-men folks



My Background

Health Care Facility
Buffalo, NY 2015

Director of Harm Reduction

- Syringe Exchange
- Drug User Health Hub

NYSDOH ODUH HRU
Buffalo, NY
May 2023

Fellow

- Contract Management
- Women, Pregnant, Parenting People Who Use Drugs Workgroup



Navigating a vast project with limited resources

Goals

1. Build Capacity within the Traditional Health Care System
2. Build and Strengthen Relationships
3. Provide Technical Assistance and Resources

Objective

Develop comprehensive supports for Women, Pregnant, and Parenting People Who Use Drugs in NYS



Values, Beliefs & Attitudes

Attitude-Based Questionnaire

What do you think about each statement?

Give your honest opinion
there are no right or wrong answers

Read each statement carefully and assign
it a numbered response from the scale
below.:

- 1: Totally disagree
- 2: Disagree
- 3: Unsure
- 4: Agree
- 5: Totally agree

1. Addiction is a disease.
2. The War on Drugs is based on racist drug policies.
3. Drug use can be a useful way to cope with stress, depression, and mental illness.
4. It is possible to have a healthy baby that is born dependent on opioids
5. Most people who inject drugs don't consider their health a priority.
6. Sometimes I feel sorry for people who inject drugs.
7. Abstinence is the ultimate goal of harm reduction activities.
8. It should be a crime to expose a fetus to harmful or addictive substances.
9. Harm reduction does not promote drug use.
10. Child Protective Services should be contacted if someone who is pregnant tests positive for opioids, methamphetamine, or other illicit drugs

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- How did it feel to think about the statements?
 - How often do you examine these opinions?
 - Were there statements that were more (or less) meaningful for you?
 - Were there any statements that you got stuck on, or had a harder time with?

Harm Reduction

Harm Reduction



Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use. Harm Reduction is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of people who use drugs.

Language Matters

INSTEAD OF THIS...

SAY THIS...

Addict / junkie / druggie → Person with a (serious) substance use disorder

Addicted to X → Person with a (serious) X use disorder

Alcoholic → Person with a (serious) alcohol use disorder

Clean screen / clean test → Testing negative for substances

Dirty screen / dirty test → Testing positive for substances; actively using

Drug habit → Substance use disorder; compulsive or regular substance use

Drug / substance abuser → Person with a substance use disorder

Drug offender → Person arrested for drug violation

Former / reformed addict or alcoholic → Person in (long-term) recovery

Relapsed → Had a setback / resumed use

Stayed clean → Maintained recovery



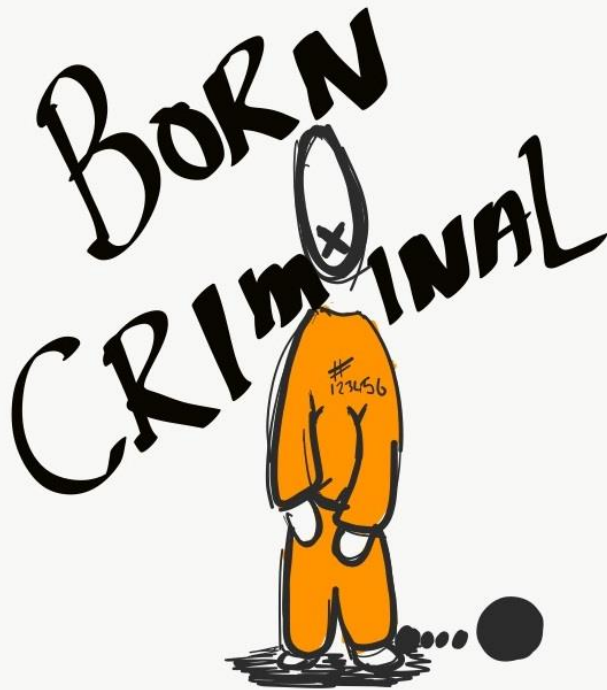
Public Health Acronyms

PWID	Person who Injects Drugs
PWUD	Person who Uses Drugs
PLWH(A)	Person Living with HIV(/AIDS)
SSP	Syringe Services Program
SAP	Syringe Access Program
NEP/NEX	Needle Exchange Program, Needle Exchange
HAV, HBV, HCV	Hepatitis A, B, C Virus
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
SSTI	Skin & Soft Tissue Infection
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
SUD	Substance Use Disorder
ODU	Opioid Use Disorder
MOUD/MAT	Medications for Opioid Use Disorder/Medication-Assisted Treatment

Why Do People Use Drugs?



Stigma



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What is a Syringe Exchange Program?

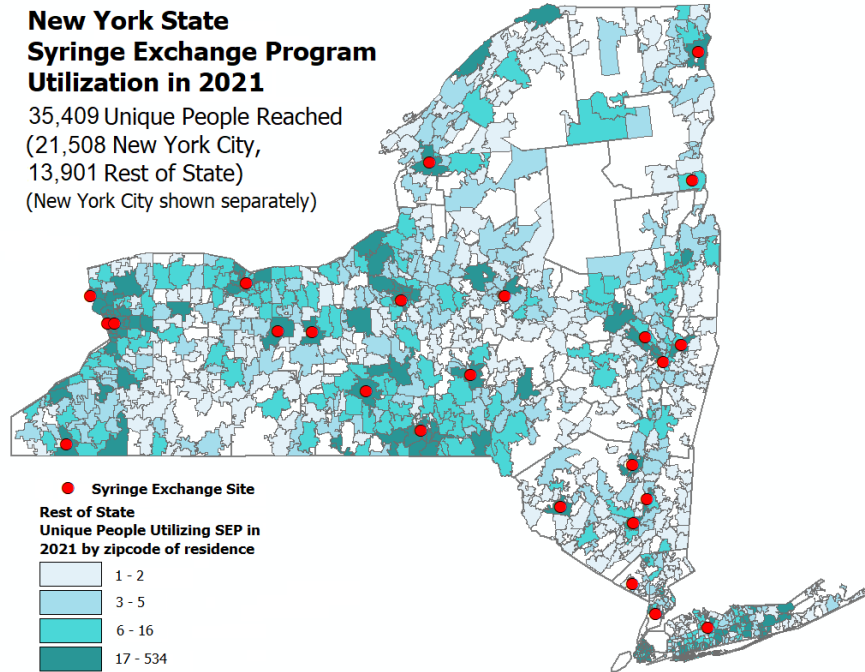
- Grew out of HIV/AIDS epidemic
- Friendly & non-judgmental space
- Opioid Overdose Prevention
- HIV/Hep C screenings
- Wound care
- Referrals to other services
- Participants of SEPs of more likely to attempt Substance Use Disorder Treatment than non-participants



NYS Syringe Exchange Utilization

New York State Syringe Exchange Program Utilization in 2021

35,409 Unique People Reached
(21,508 New York City,
13,901 Rest of State)
(New York City shown separately)



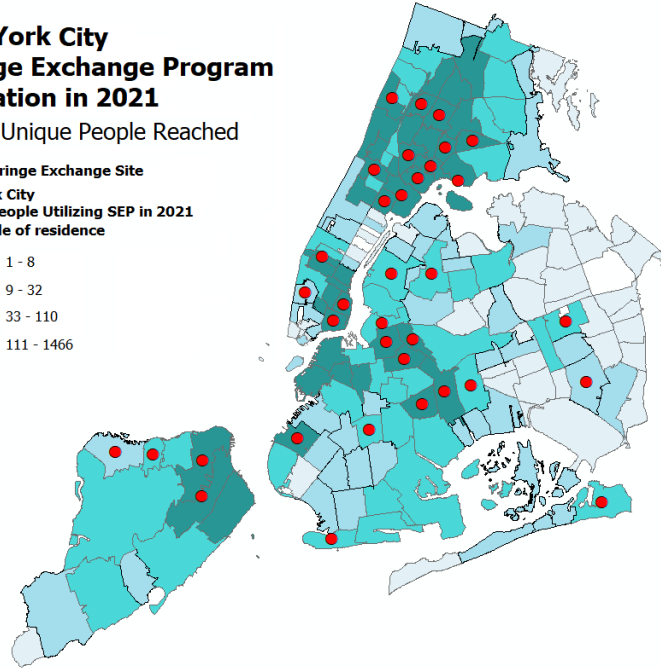
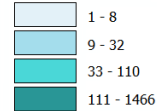
NYC Syringe Exchange Utilization

New York City Syringe Exchange Program Utilization in 2021

21,508 Unique People Reached

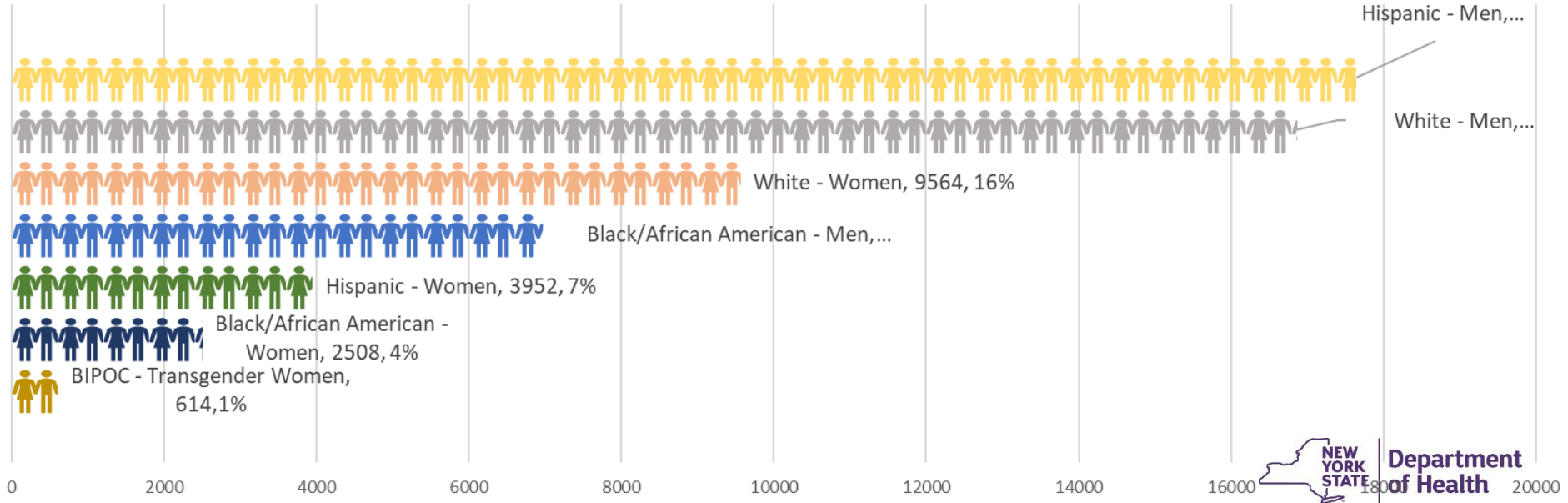
● Syringe Exchange Site

New York City
Unique People Utilizing SEP in 2021
by zipcode of residence



Mind the Gap

Unique SEP and Hub Participants by combined Gender and Race/Ethnicity
n=59,224 (groups with >1% shown)



The Margins

People who use drugs

People without equitable healthcare access

Poor people

LGBTQ+

Indigenous people

People who have experienced incarceration

Women

Black and Brown people

Black women

Elderly people

People with disabilities

Black and Brown people who use drugs

Women/Pregnant/parenting people who use drugs

And many, many more...

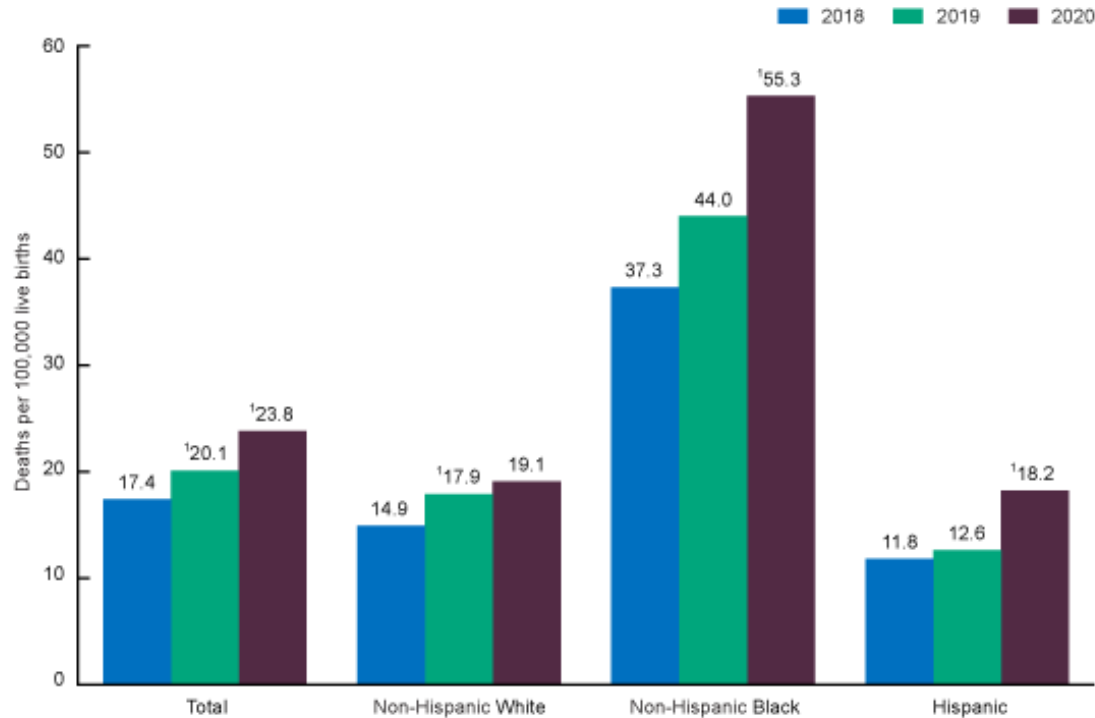


The Racist Drug War

- History-family separation
- Experimentation on bodies of enslaved Black women
- Forced sterilization
- War on people who use drugs

Women, Pregnant, Parenting People who use Drugs

Maternal mortality rates, by race and Hispanic origin: United States, 2018–2020



The Project



Build & Strengthen

- Establish best practices
- Warm hand-offs
- Trauma-informed



TA & Resources

- Monthly Presentations
- Develop/Conduct trainings



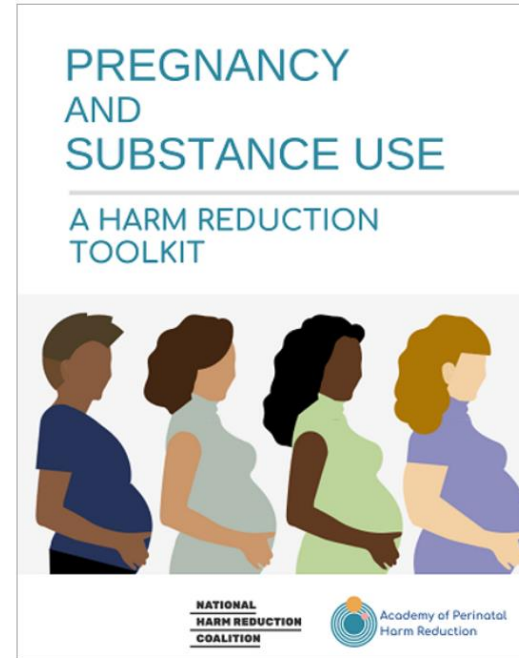
Build Capacity

- Holistic healthcare
- Physical supplies
- Harm Reduction champions



Additional Resources

- National Harm Reduction Technical Assistance Center
- Academy of Perinatal Harm Reduction
- National Harm Reduction Coalition



Sources

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2. <https://www.pwn-usa.org/issues/policy-agenda/ending-criminalization/harm-reduction-factsheet/>
3. <https://harmreduction.org/about-us/principles-of-harm-reduction/>
4. <https://www.firstaidarts.org/about-us>
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6. Earnshaw, V.A., Watson, R.J., Eaton, L.A. et al. Integrating time into stigma and health research. *Nat Rev Psychol* 1, 236–247 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44159-022-00034-2>
7. <https://www.npr.org/2022/03/28/1089062082/statue-celebrates-mothers-of-gynecology-at-black-womens-birthing-conference>
8. <https://harmreductionhelp.cdc.gov/s/>

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