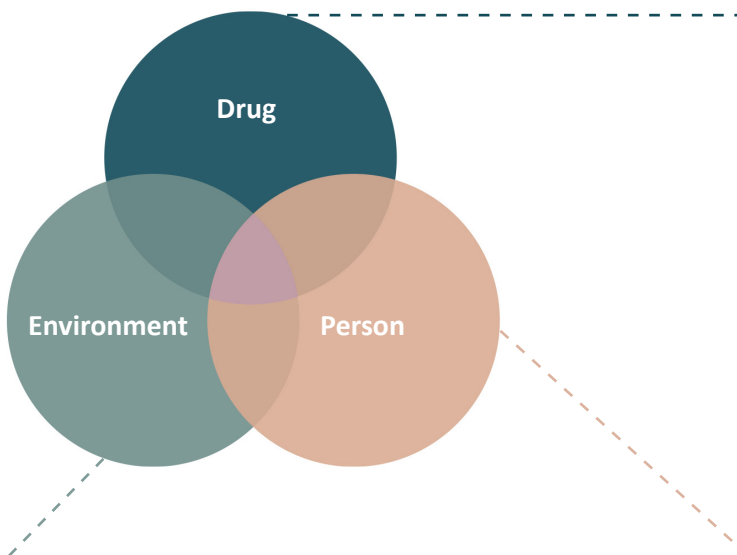


This resource is for workers who support people using or intending to use alcohol or other drugs (AOD). It accompanies the video: [Universal harm reduction advice](#). The goal of harm reduction is to prevent or reduce harms associated with substance use. The strategies provided are general in nature and using professional judgement is advised.

Workers seeking specialist or substance-specific harm reduction information are encouraged to use reputable sources (e.g., [Hi-Ground](#)) or contact your local AOD service, and in Queensland [Adis 24/7 Alcohol and Drug Support](#), [Insight](#) and [Dovetail](#).

Our approach to AOD harm reduction is based on respectful, genuine enquiry and collaboration with the person.

Substance use behaviour and situations can be understood by the interaction between three key factors: the substance (**Drug**), the individual's characteristics (**Person**), and their surroundings (**Environment**). This framework can assist workers to collaborate with the person to identify AOD-related risks and strategies to reduce harm. Below are some example strategies:



Drug – The substance and how it is used

Encourage the person to:

- learn about the substance(s) they use including dosage, effects and signs of overdose
- use their own sterile utensils such as snorting straws and injecting equipment
- avoid using more than one substance at a time
- set limits such as delay use, pace it, or reduce frequency of overall use
- consider changing to safer routes of administration (e.g., swallowing vs injecting) or implement strategies that reduce risk for route of administration
- understand the legal implications of substance use, possession and supply to support informed decision making.

Environment – Places and people where drugs are acquired and used

Encourage the person to:

- use in safer environments and where help is available
- use with trusted people who will call for help if needed
- have access to food, water and phone
- develop strategies to manage other risks including safer sex practices, not driving while intoxicated
- have options to leave a place if needed and plan for getting home or to a safer environment
- keep substances out of reach from children and pets and avoid sleeping next to infants and children while intoxicated
- learn how to manage overdose including naloxone for opioid overdose reversal, recovery position, call Triple Zero (000).

Person – Individual characteristics and experience with the substance

Encourage the person to:

- learn about substance dosage based on their size, physical health and level of tolerance
- learn about interactions between substances including prescribed medications
- consider their current mood and mindset before using, e.g., “what’s the likely effect going to be?”
- have contact details for support services, including 24hr services (in Queensland [Adis 24/7 Alcohol and Drug Support](#))
- take breaks from use for physical, social and emotional wellbeing.

For harm reduction strategies to be effective consider the person's insight, ability and motivation. These factors will guide the focus of harm reduction planning with an individual.

Insight – Do they understand the risk and how to implement the harm reduction strategy?

Ability – Can they access the resources/social supports required, and do they have the internal skills to undertake the strategy?

Motivation – Is the person motivated to implement the harm reduction strategy? What motivation strategies might help?