



NEW MEXICO  
HARM REDUCTION  
COLLABORATIVE

# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

## 2022

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# Things to know as a Harm Reduction Volunteer at NMHRC

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**Overview:** NMHRC's volunteers help to provide a vital service to the Albuquerque area in the form of Syringe Access Services, Overdose Prevention Education and Naloxone Distribution, as well as basic drug education, case management, legal aid, and other forms of Community Engagement. This manual should provide enough information and material to get you comfortable with the duties and experiences a volunteer would engage with NMHRC.

## **Who are our Clients?**

NMHRC works with anyone who uses substances - regardless of their relationship with substances. This means we do not refer to the people who use our services as "addicts" or "drug users" but rather just as participants. This can include people anywhere on the drug use spectrum from those who enjoy recreational use, to those who meet the clinical criteria for a Substance Use Disorder diagnosis.

## **Basics of Harm Reduction Outreach and Syringe Service Program**

- All of our outreaches are guided by a harm reduction perspective – participant self-determination, dignity, non-judgmental, non-coercive services
- On Roving Outreach we must consider that we are entering someone's living space—show respect and courtesy for people and their belongings
- Some people may not want to engage with us—we should respect that. If someone asks us to leave, we leave.
- No one is forced to accept any services, or accept that our interpretation of their needs is correct.
- Collect only the demographic data that is necessary: Many of the data we collect can be considered anonymous or de-identified.
- A good ratio of staff to participants is no more than 2:1—be mindful not to overwhelm clients or make them feel boxed in.
- Clients have a right to tell us when they feel uncomfortable, or if they feel like their voices are not being heard. We are required to respect the feelings of our clients and meet them where they are at that day.

# Safety Protocols

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- Dress appropriately—wear closed-toed shoes and clothing suitable for being outside for an extended period of time. This includes providing your own sunscreen, water, or any other weather related items.
- Don't go alone! Keep another volunteer or staff member with you at all times.
- All Volunteers must be accounted for: please stay within view of the Outreach Team Lead.
- Be aware of your surroundings—including sharp objects on the ground, people in the area whether involved in the SSP or not.
- We do outreach rain or shine, unless severe weather makes it unsafe to be outdoors
- Do not touch clients, their belongings, or their pets
- Always use inclusive language while on outreach
- Take care of yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally. Being on Outreach or SSP can be difficult, and some scenarios can be shocking or hard to process. Always feel free to communicate with the Outreach Lead if you need to debrief or go home for the day.



# What to Expect at Outreach or SSP

## WHEN ARRIVING TO SSP OR OUTREACH

- All Volunteer Scheduling is done online at [SignUpGenius.com](http://SignUpGenius.com) - Ashley or Steph will send you a link once you are approved to volunteer.
  - **Important Contact Information:**
    - **NMHC Executive Director:** Ashley Charzuk 505-730-9795
    - **NMHC Community Line:** 505-235-2847
    - **NMHC Operations Manager:** Steph Charzuk 505-250-7897
    - **Westside Delivery and Outreach:** Kristin Dawe 505-930-2248
- Please arrive around 5-10 minutes before Outreach or SSP begins so that you are able to meet with the outreach team for that day, and check in to see what tasks you will be assigned, or what the overall goals and objectives of that day will be.
- During Outreach make sure to refer clients directly to staff for any questions, concerns, or help.

## Items to become familiar with



Tourniquet



Aluminum Cooker



Clear Twist Ties



Choreboy Pipe Filters



Pipe Cover



BD 28g x 1mL x 1/2"



Fentanyl Test Strips by BTNX

# WHAT ARE INJECTION ALTERNATIVES?

*Injection Alternatives are a category of tools used for the purpose of taking drugs in ways other than injection. This includes smoking, snorting, and boofing. These are a few tools that Harm Reduction Organizations commonly hand out as Injection Alternatives.*



## Oil Burner Pipe (or Bubble)

Commonly used for Methamphetamine or other Crystalline substances



## Chore Boy Filters

Brillo is flattened and rolled to be used in a stem pipe or a hammer pipe as a filter



## Hammer Pipe

Used for Tar or Pills. Primarily Heroin or pressed pills such as "blues"



## Pipe Cover

A rubber spark plug cover can be placed on the end of a pipe and used as a pipe cover to avoid sharing germs with other users of the same pipe or smoking device.



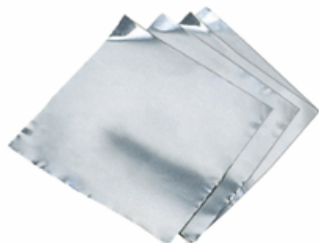
## Stem Pipe (or Rose)

Commonly used for crack or other rock substances



## Metal Tooter

Used in conjunction with smoking foil (see below) this tube goes in the users mouth to suck up the smoke that comes off of the foil.



## Uncoated Foil

Foil sheets that are not coated in cooking oil or other non-stick components are ideal for smoking pills or tar



## Screens

Screens are a safer option than Chore Boy as you do not have to pre-burn them and pieces cannot fall off of them while they are being heated with a torch

# Our Outreach & Client Engagement Strategy

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## Primary Goals and Objectives

1. To provide high-quality harm reduction services to increase health and wellness among people who use drugs, and
2. Uphold the Harm Reduction Principles as both a public health practice and as a social justice movement.
3. To provide the most fair, comfortable, and trustworthy experience possible for every participant.

## Understanding Harm Reduction Principles and Strategies

NMHC accepts the Principles of Harm Reduction upheld and published by National Harm Reduction Coalition. However, NMHC also functions based on anarchist, abolitionist, and pro-drug use values as well. Our decisions and practices will always mirror this.

# PRINCIPLES OF HARM REDUCTION

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## HARM REDUCTION INTERVENTIONS

### (H)arm (R)eduction:

A philosophical and political movement focused on shifting power and resources to people most vulnerable to structural violence

### (h)arm (r)eduction:

The approach and fundamental beliefs in how to provide the services

### risk reduction:

Tools and services to reduce potential harm



**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.**

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### FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES CENTRAL TO HARM REDUCTION

Harm reduction incorporates a spectrum of strategies that includes safer use, managed use, abstinence, meeting people who use drugs "where they're at," and addressing conditions of use along with the use itself. Because harm reduction demands that interventions and policies designed to serve people who use drugs reflect specific individual and community needs, there is no universal definition of or formula for implementing harm reduction.

However, National Harm Reduction Coalition considers the following principles central to harm reduction practice:

# Volunteer Rules and Procedures

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## Volunteer Rules

- All volunteers must be at least 18 years of age to volunteer with Harm Reduction and Outreach
- All volunteers must wear an appropriate mask covering the nose and mouth to prevent the spread of COVID while volunteering. Any volunteer who believes they have had a COVID 19 exposure or who is exhibiting symptoms of COVID 19 should not come to their scheduled shift and should notify NMHRC Staff as soon as possible.
- Volunteers, clients, and interns must be supervised at all times by staff in the building, at outreach sites, and during deliveries.
- A staff member will clearly define and supervise tasks being performed by volunteers and interns, and volunteers should wait for or seek instruction from the supervising staff member before performing new tasks
- Volunteers must follow the established SSP protocols and should not perform duties which require Harm Reduction certification if they have not completed the full certification process
- State Department of Health SSP protocols prohibit the following activities by any clients, staff or volunteers while on outreach—the use or sale of drugs, visibly carrying or displaying any kind of weapon, and threatening or violent behavior of any kind
- Based on state Department of Health guidelines Hepatitis B and COVID 19 vaccines or a documented exemption are required for all volunteers and staff performing Harm Reduction activities. Please ask staff for a referral or talk to your personal physician about receiving this vaccine.
- No volunteer may operate an NMHRC vehicle

# Handling SHARPS and Taking Proper Safety Precautions

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**When handling SHARPS such as discarded syringes and other materials...**

- **Never directly handle or pick up used syringes, sharps containers, items containing biohazards such as blood, or any other tools for substance use—clients should place all used materials directly into the large 19 gallon sharps container. Treat any syringes or paraphernalia brought to a SSP outreach by clients as if they are used and take all the precautions advised in your Bloodborne Pathogen training**
- Do not pick up anything that a participant drops
- Place sharps containers a safe distance from all staff, volunteers, and other clients to avoid accidental needle sticks. Volunteers should not handle 19 gallon sharps containers once they contain used materials
- Never position yourself or reach between a participant and the sharps container
- **If an accidental needle stick or other injury occurs, alert a staff person immediately so that medical care can be arranged**



*\*It is acceptable for volunteers to handle 19 Gallon SHARPS Containers ONLY if they are empty*



# Syringe Service Program (SSP): What to Expect

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## Policy and Procedure

- Our syringe service program (SSP) must be conducted at the same consistent time and place every week that has been approved by the New Mexico Department of Health's Hepatitis and Harm Reduction Program.
- SSP can be conducted outside or in the NMHRC offices with staff and volunteers serving clients one at a time in a designated area to protect client privacy. During an SSP outreach all staff and volunteers are acting as representatives of NMHRC and of the NM Department of Health and must understand and operate within all Department protocols and state laws—as well as explaining and ensuring SSP client compliance with these protocols.
- All people 18 year of age and older are eligible for participation in the SSP. A Harm Reduction staff member or volunteer may not distribute syringes or Narcan to any individual under the age of 18. When a client comes to the SSP outreach, they must be enrolled in the New Mexico Department of Health Syringe Service Program to receive safer drug use or overdose prevention supplies. This enrollment is anonymous and can be completed within a few minutes on-site.

## When Interacting with Clients at SSP as a Volunteer

**HELLO**  
MY NAME IS

NAME  
PRONOUNS  
VOLUNTEER WITH AHCH

**When you arrive at SSP, you will receive a name badge to put your name, pronouns, and decorate. This helps clients to know who you are, how to address you, and the name tag must say "Volunteer" somewhere on it to designate your role.**

### *Helpful ways to Interact with Clients as a Volunteer*

- Write them a SHARPS Card while they're waiting in line
- Provide water, snacks, or basic info
- Show them where items are on the works table
- Point them to staff for questions, concerns, or inquiries
- Have a general conversation and treat them like you would anyone else

# Roving Outreach: What to Expect

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Our Roving Outreaches occur at varied times and locations in order to meet the needs of clients throughout Albuquerque, facilitate access to resources for people experiencing homelessness with the greatest barriers to engagement, and to be responsive to the needs of our community. Our core goal through these outreaches is to build trust and rapport with individuals in our community to increase utilization of services and enhance service navigation. Occasionally, we may also partner with licensed and trained medical or other professionals to provide medical care or other services in the field. Outreach is just the first step in accessing services and resources needed for housing and stability that may help link clients to more ongoing services such as case management, medical care, housing, or other program engagement.

## Roving Outreach: What We Bring

### SSP Bag



syringes + Injection works +  
SHARPS cards + Narcan

- **Roving Backpacks**
- **Water! Lots of water.**
- **handwarmers or sunscreen (seasonally appropriate items)**
- **Injection Alternatives**
- **Literature or info print outs to help spread word about important events or happenings**
- **Cell phones! We want to always be able to communicate or call 911 in an emergency**
- **Snacks! Lots of snacks.**
- **Blankets, tarps, or jackets depending on amount in stock**

# Roving Outreach: What to Expect

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## ***Volunteers who participate in these outreaches may perform the following tasks and responsibilities:***

- Organizing and distributing supplies including hygiene, cold- or hot-weather items, snacks, and other items essential for individuals who are unsheltered
- Engaging clients through open-ended questions about needs, interests, and experiences
- Helping to locate encampments and areas where people experiencing homelessness can be found
- Providing information about NMHRC and other community services, and helping clients make a plan to access desired and appropriate services
- Assist with recordkeeping on client needs and interactions

Remember, though you may be engaging in outreach in public spaces such as parks, when approaching a participant or encampment **you are entering their personal space**. Be respectful of boundaries and expressed preferences. Individuals we meet will have different experiences, preferences, and concerns about interacting with service providers--some clients may refuse services, and it is their right to do so, our engagement should be led by the needs and interests of the people we serve. Volunteers should not share information about individual or the location of encampments beyond the scope of their outreach shift that could violate the community's trust or put them at greater risk of harm from Law Enforcement, the city, or other sources.

# Acknowledgement Form

My signature confirms my reading, understanding, and acceptance of the policy and procedure manual provided to me by New Mexico Harm Reduction Collaborative inc. In addition, my signature acknowledges that I am able to perform the tasks and procedures outlined in this document and others I have been provided as a volunteer. I am of the understanding that my status as an active volunteer of NMHRC can be terminated at any time based on violation of policy, rules, and procedures outlined herein.

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Print Name

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Signature

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Date