

Legal System Involvement: A Barrier to Harm Reduction

Of 100 released
individuals



3% will face overdose
risk upon release



11% of these will result
in fatal events

Barriers

Examples

Individual

- ❖ Workforce size
- ❖ Staff knowledge of harm reduction

Programmatic

- ❖ Restriction of MAT availability to special populations
- ❖ Zero-tolerance policies

Attitudinal

- ❖ Staff and administrator stigma
- ❖ Preference for full abstinence-only

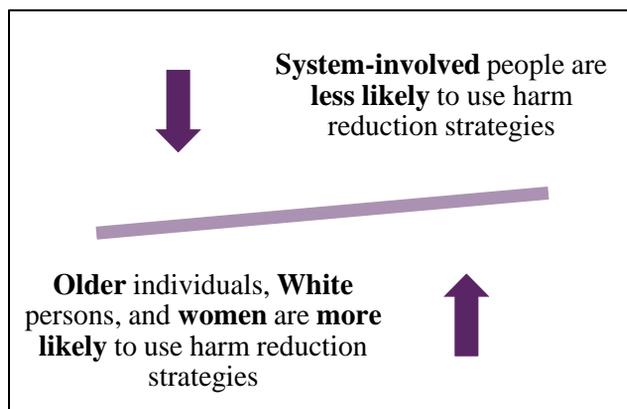
Service

- ❖ No connection between institutional- and community-based treatment

To address overdose risk among members of the legal-system-involved population, research highlights the importance of developing **overdose education** and **naloxone distribution programs** in correctional facilities, providing **medically assisted treatment**, developing **overdose risk screening tools**, and **interagency collaboration**.

Who Uses Services?

Victor and colleagues (2024) collected data from people who have an opioid use disorder. They asked participants to describe whether they use harm reduction strategies to avoid overdoses and how they use them.



Sources: Brinkley-Rubinstein, L., Cloud, D., Davis, C., Zaller, N., Delaney-Burmsey, A., Pope, L., Martino, S., Bouvier, B., & Rich, J. (2017). Addressing excess risk of overdose among recently incarcerated people in the USA: Harm reduction interventions in correctional settings. *International Journal of Prisoner Health*, 13(1), 25–31. Grella, C., Ostile, E., Scott, C., Dennis, M., & Carnavale, J. (2020). A scoping review of barriers and facilitators to implementation of medication for treatment of opioid use disorder within the criminal justice system. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 81. Hartung, D., McCracken, C., Nguyen, T., Kempny, K., & Waddell, E. (2023). Fatal and non-fatal opioid overdose risk following release from prison: A retrospective cohort study using linked administrative data. *Journal of Substance Use and Addiction Treatment*, 147. Victor, G., Ray, B., & Watson, D. (2024). Use of harm reduction strategies by individuals with a history of incarceration: A short report using baseline data collected from the STAMINA clinical trial. *Journal of Substance Use and Addiction Treatment*, 162, 1–6.