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r/Drugs Discord

Discord Moderator Training

Basic Harm Reduction Guide (Version 1.1)

Summary of Key Harm Reduction Principles

- Approach with Empathy:** Always be compassionate, recognizing members may feel vulnerable. A non-judgmental tone helps create a safe space.
- Promote Safety & Self-Care:** Gently encourage members to prioritize hydration, nutrition, rest, and setting boundaries to protect their well-being.
- Drug Testing Encouragement:** Suggest testing as a harm reduction measure. Provide links or resources to reputable testing options, emphasizing benefits without requiring it.
- Stimulant Use Support:** Hydration, light nutrition, and supplements (like magnesium) are helpful. Encourage breaks, suggest calming activities, and remind them that “the sesh has to end” gently.
- Opiate Use Support:** Reminder about testing, stress the importance of Naloxone if they have access, ask them to try to never use alone – and if so consider using a hotline, start small with new batches or presses, **always** get them to call emergency services if they believe they have taken too much.
- Post-Psychedelic Support:** Reassure members of temporary feelings, encourage restful reflection, and avoid complex tasks until fully grounded.
- Dissociative Use Support:** Emphasize physical safety, comfort, grounding techniques, hydration, and rest.
- Prolonged Use Tips:** Remind members to sleep, stay in a safe space, and respect their limits. Offer gentle guidance without pressuring them.
- Encouragement for Mental Health & Substance Use Support:** Normalize seeking help, encourage honesty with medical providers, and remind them about confidentiality. Gently provide links to support groups or local resources.

Additional Tips for Moderators:

- List Key Resources:** Familiarize yourself with local helplines, drug testing options, and mental health services for easy linking.
- Use Commands for Crisis:** For serious situations, follow protocols like the `/userincrisis` command to ensure members receive the proper help quickly.

1. General Harm Reduction Principles

- **Be Empathetic:** Approach all interactions with compassion. Many people may be experiencing vulnerability or distress, so a calm, non-judgmental tone is essential.
- **Promote Safety and Self-Care:** Encourage members to prioritize their well-being, take breaks, hydrate, eat, and rest.
- **Set Boundaries:** Offer guidance but recognize the limits of what you can provide. Moderators are not healthcare professionals, and it's essential to recommend seeking help from trained providers if needed.

2. Encourage Drug Testing

Promoting Testing for Safety:

- **Encourage Testing Kits:** Remind members that testing their substances can be a vital step in reducing harm. Many testing kits are affordable and accessible and can help identify potentially harmful adulterants – some countries also offer free testing of drugs.
- **Inform on Testing Methods:** Share basic information on types of drug testing kits (such as reagent kits) if members inquire. Emphasize the importance of following instructions carefully for accurate results.
- **Highlight Benefits of Testing:** Remind users that testing promotes safer use, allowing them to make informed decisions about their intake.

However:

- Avoid pushing or requiring testing but gently suggest it as a safety measure if relevant – remember we already have a timed message!
- Provide links or references to reputable organizations or resources that offer information about drug testing kits and methods (+testing, etc.)

2. Supporting Members Using Stimulants

- **Hydration:** Gently remind members to drink water, as stimulants can lead to dehydration. Suggest to them they avoid sugary or caffeinated drinks – especially if they are already anxious
- **Food and Nutrition:** Suggest that they eat something, even if they don't feel hungry. Simple, nutrient-dense snacks like fruit or nuts can be helpful – so can protein shakes, meal replacement drinks (Huel, Soylent etc.) and yogurts or smoothies.
- **Rest and Downtime:** Encourage taking short breaks to help mitigate anxiety or overstimulation. Suggest calming activities, like deep breathing, to ease tension.
- **Vitamin and Mineral Support:** If appropriate, recommend they look into supplements like magnesium to help reduce muscle tension, or multivitamins if they've been without nutrition for a while.
- **Gentle reminder that sometimes, the sesh has to end!**

3. Helping Members After Psychedelic Experiences

- **Reassure Safety:** Let members know that their feelings are likely temporary and that they're not alone. Remind them that they're in a safe space.
- **Encourage Rest and Reflection:** Suggest they take some time to rest, journal, or talk to a friend if they feel comfortable. Reflecting can help them process and integrate their experience.
- **Avoid Complex Tasks:** Suggest they avoid major decisions or complex activities until they feel fully grounded and present again.

4. Supporting Members Using Dissociatives

- **Physical Safety:** Remind members to avoid activities requiring physical coordination or awareness, such as driving, as dissociatives can impair motor skills and perception.
- **Stay in a Safe Space:** Suggest remaining in a comfortable, familiar environment where they feel secure. Being in a controlled setting can prevent accidental injuries and provide mental reassurance.
- **Grounding Techniques:** Dissociatives can lead to detachment from reality, so encourage grounding activities. These might include holding a comforting object, listening to familiar music, or focusing on slow, intentional breathing to maintain a connection with their surroundings.
- **Hydration and Rest:** Encourage drinking water and resting. Dissociatives can sometimes interfere with normal hydration and sleep patterns, so attention to these basics is helpful

6. Opiate Use Support & Harm Reduction

- **Naloxone Awareness and Access:** Inform members about the availability of naloxone (aka Narcan) and its life-saving potential in overdose situations. Enquire if they have access to it and provide directions to instructions on its proper use if they do, this can be done with the `/narcan` command on r/Drugs Sapphire. Narcan is distributed to users & non-users in many countries and different local areas – encourage them to look for local resources in their area if they do not personally have access to it. Also always remind them that a single dose of Narcan does not mean the overdose is over – they still need emergency medical attention.
- **Avoid Using Alone:** Encourage members to have someone they know & trust nearby when using opiates and that if possible people they are around are using – this can help them to get early help in the event of an overdose. If being alone is unavoidable, suggest they use overdose prevention hotlines or safety apps – you can use the command `/never-user-alone` from r/Drugs Sapphire to show them this support.
- **Test their Substances:** Stress the importance of testing for fentanyl/zenes or other adulterants using fentanyl&zene test strips if they can access them to reduce the risk of an overdose. Remind them they are cheap & widely available and they may also be resources local to them that will test for free or provide such testing strips. `/buy-fentanyl-tests` using r/Drugs Sapphire will bring up a list of where to acquire test strips & discount codes.

- **Start Small:** Try to encourage users with starting with a smaller dose, especially if what they have is from a new dealer, new presses etc. to minimize the risk of overestimating tolerance and unintentionally overdosing – not every press is the same even if it looks identical, it can contain much more active ingredients.
- **Safe Injection Practices:** The command `/iv-guide` on r/Drugs Sapphire shows a guide on how to IV correctly as well as other information on IV use. Try to promote the use of clean needles each time they use and as well as the having proper supplies to prevent infections or the transmission of blood-borne diseases from sharing or re-using needles. Try to suggest accessing needle exchange programs if available in their area.
- **Hydration and Nutrition:** Remind users to stay hydrated and try to consume small, nutrient-dense meals to combat dehydration & energy loss if they are struggling to eat. Suggest things such as protein shakes, meal replacement drinks, oatmeal, porridge etc.
- **Always Seek Medical Attention Early:** Always encourage users who may have consumed too much to seek medical attention **early** as they may not be able to if they fall unconscious – ***follow the /overdose flowchart if necessary and if you suspect someone is having an overdose, alert all staff using that command so the user can receive the best possible support.*** Also remember to encourage members to seek medical care as soon as possible if experiencing signs of infection from IV related use – such infections can lead to loss of limbs or life.

5. General Tips for Prolonged Substance Use

- **Sleep and Rest:** Encourage members to sleep or nap if they haven't in a while. Sleep is crucial for recovery.
- **Seek a Safe Space:** If possible, suggest they stay somewhere safe and comfortable; ideally with supportive people around.
- **Recognize Their Limits:** Remind them that everyone has limits and that it's okay to slow down, take a break & ask for help.

6. Encouragement to Seek Help (Mental Health)

- If someone appears in crisis or mentions harm, remind them that professional support is available. Normalize reaching out to local mental health or substance support services if needed. If they appear to be in a crisis situation that cannot be managed, use the `/userincrisis` command.

Also remember to use Sapphire HR reduction commands if necessary to give out helplines or other information!

8. Encouragement to Seek Help (Drug Use)

- **Normalize Professional Help:** Remind members that seeking support for substance use is a positive, proactive choice – and one that does require strength but they can do it! Seeing a healthcare professional or counsellor can provide valuable insights, personalized care, and links to local resources to manage or reduce use safely.
- **Try to Encourage Transparency with Medical Providers:** Suggest that if members feel comfortable that being honest with their doctor about substance use can be beneficial for their health. Most Doctor's will offer non-judgmental support and can help monitor health factors affected by a users drug use.
- **Local Resources and Support Groups:** If a member expresses interest, gently direct them to local support groups or services that provide counselling, medical assistance, or harm reduction support. Organizations like Narcotics Anonymous, SMART Recovery, and local harm reduction centres often offer free resources and community support.
- **Highlight Confidentiality:** Remind members that most healthcare professionals are bound by confidentiality and are there to help, not judge. Assuring members of this can reduce fears around stigma.

Additional Tips

- Avoid pushing; instead, say that professional support is a safe, empowering choice.
- Provide a list of reputable resources, including hotlines or websites that can help connect them with support – try to familiarize yourself with some of these resources so you can easily link them!
