



Harm Reduction Project

Undergraduate Drugs, Alcohol and Society Course (SBS 1105)

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ISSUE: College students demonstrate a wide range of substance use patterns and consequences that can include distressing events such as getting in a fight with a friend, blacking out and not remembering part of an evening. They may also experience adverse social, academic, or personal consequences.

CONTEXT: The teach-back method is a way of assessing the students' abilities to apply, in this case, what they know about how to reduce harm among college students who are using substances. This assignment is grounded in problem solving, universal design learning and student agency in that it allows students to address a problem (i.e., substance use that causes harm) by a means that they are more comfortable with. This project falls under the discipline of "Diversity, Equity, Inclusion in Education" as it respects the lives of people who use substances, and is accommodating to different student skills (whether that be video or Zine creation).

INTRODUCTION: What is Harm Reduction?

This course is grounded in the foundation of the harm reduction movement, which was built on a belief in and respect for the rights of people who use drugs, demanding equity and justice (NHRC 2021). Harm reduction is a community-based practice that relies on a resilience among groups of people who work together to reduce the negative consequences associated with drug use and push back the inequitable systems (NHRC 2021). Harm reduction is meeting people where they are at and incorporates a spectrum of principles and strategies to address safer use, managed use, abstinence, conditions of use, and the use itself (NHRC 2021).

PROJECT DIRECTIVE

For this assignment, students choose to create a short PSA video (i.e., 30 to 90 seconds) or a 1 page Zine, "Zine" being defined as a self-published document, either made digitally or by hand, that communicates a desired message with appropriate texts and images using an 8-page Zine template. The goal of the project is harm reduction - in other words, students are not saying simply 'don't do this, it's bad', they are saying, 'if you do this, consider these harm reduction measures'. Students may address alcohol, cannabis, psychedelics or prescription drug use in your project (not opioids).

GOAL: To empower students to play an active role in reducing harm caused by alcohol, cannabis, or psychedelic drugs among college aged students. This is done by giving students a choice on the medium for their health communication public service announcement.

REAL WORLD APPLICATION: Distributing these Zines and PSA videos to those beyond the classroom can increase the spread of harm reduction practices and reduce the harm college aged individuals may experience from substance use.

STEPS

- 1. Goal**—to reduce harm caused by any one of the before-mentioned substances (because all three can be used in ways that do not cause harm).
- 2. Target audience**—college aged/attending students.
- 3. If you are making a video**—it should be 30 to 90 seconds long. Students will have audio and visual—they can use images, people and text in the video OR Zine. They should include a contact number or web address for more information/help. Students are instructed to think... "What is likely to engage a person like yourself?"
- 4. If making the Zine**—it should be 8-panels and address the criteria in the outline below. Students will upload a pdf or word file that is foldable if it were to be printed.
- 5. Consider this outline:**
 - Show and say your name
 - Provide an opening fact about the use of the chosen substance- eg # of college students who use [x] daily or # of college students who suffer [adverse outcome] consequences because of [x]. (you want some attention-grabbing statistic.) Include a full APA citation in the slide with the fact/statistic.
 - Promote a harm reduction strategy (what do you want the viewer of your message to do/not do?)
 - Give the viewer a way to get more info
 - End with a final thought - something powerful that stays with the viewer eg 'don't let the party derail your train.' (ESP if you've used train imagery and talked about binge drinking at some party!)



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