



Harm Reduction Statement

Heartwood Healing Centre views harm reduction as a philosophy, belief, value system, practice, and approach that seeks to prevent or minimize harms through the work we do. We follow the lead of the Manitoba Harm Reduction Network that states: “Harm reduction is looking at the big picture, to the systems and policies that create harm for people who use drugs and working to change those systems” (<https://mhrn.ca/harm-reduction>). Heartwood Healing Centre aims to reduce harms and increase access to our organization that is inherently entwined within the historical context of a colonial Canada. We acknowledge this as part of social structures, systems, policies, and practices that make substance use harmful, and that disproportionately harm people who have experienced colonial violence and/or racialization. We commit to advocating to expose and challenge them. We offer support, advocacy, dignity, and respect to all; continuously challenge our personal biases; and meet clients where they are at, without judgement and assumptions. We recognize and affirm that we all have choices and that we all take risks in our lives and understand that complex trauma removes choice at times. As part of our commitment in trauma-informed care, it is important to us to destigmatize coping mechanisms in hopes of reducing shame, recognizing that everyone needs medicine, and it is not up to us to tell people what their medicines are.

- We welcome Sex Workers. We support the decriminalization of sex work, and promote the health and safety of Sex Workers, including access to resources.
- We welcome those who use substances. Folks are not required to abstain from substances to access our services. Access is based on behaviours that reflect respect and safety in shared spaces and remains at the discretion of staff.
- We support the establishment of Safe Consumption Sites, access to safer drug use supplies, safer drugs, and other resources.
- We support the decriminalization of drugs and acknowledge that criminalization of many substances has often caused more harm than the substances or behaviours used to cope.
- We recognize that police may not always be safe for Indigenous folks, Black folks, disabled folks, those with mental health challenges, folks with precarious migratory status, 2SLGBTQ+ folks, and many other groups. We consider alternatives to calling the police in emergency situations.

