



Injury-Free
NC

2025

INJURY-FREE NC ACADEMY

HARM REDUCTION AS TRANSFORMATIVE PRACTICE

MAY 1 & 2 (IN PERSON)
PEMBROKE, NC

JULY 10 & 11 (IN PERSON)
WINSTON-SALEM, NC

AND

- OR -

AND

MAY 6 & 7 (VIRTUAL)

JULY 15 & 16 (VIRTUAL)

Apply to attend the Academy here!
<https://go.unc.edu/HR-Academy>

WHAT IS THE INJURY-FREE NC ACADEMY?

The Injury-Free NC (IFNC) Academy, a collaboration between the North Carolina Division of Public Health's Injury and Violence Prevention Branch and the University of North Carolina's Injury Prevention Research Center, is a training and program development resource for injury and violence prevention practitioners in North Carolina. Each cycle of the IFNC Academy focuses on a timely topic affecting North Carolinians.

The 2025 IFNC Academy on Harm Reduction as Transformative Practice will focus on moving from theory to practice and implementing a variety of harm reduction best practices to serve people who use drugs.

The purpose of this Academy is to provide training to community-based organizations, local health departments, coalitions, and individuals who are planning or have taken steps to establish an overdose prevention or harm reduction program or want to learn more about harm reduction principles and how to incorporate them into overdose prevention work.

What is harm reduction?

Harm Reduction is a framework for reducing the negative impacts of drug use and promoting the health and dignity of people who use drugs. This framework and approach meets people where they are rather than making judgments about where they should be in terms of their personal health and lifestyle.

A harm reduction approach means understanding that people using drugs, even if they are not seeking treatment, should be given the care, resources, and information necessary to reduce health risks associated with drug use, and improve their general health and well-being. Harm reduction based programs provide helpful information, tools, and services for people and empower them to use risk-reducing strategies.

Harm reduction programs do not have abstinence requirements for participants or use abstinence as a measure of success. Rather, programs operating with a harm reduction framework consider a person's happiness, stability, and overall wellbeing as metrics to gauge successful recovery.

Harm reductionists also recognize that issues like untreated mental health conditions, homelessness or insecure housing, involvement with the criminal justice system, inadequate employment, and other social determinants of health can exacerbate risks associated with harms substance use, misuse and substance use disorders. Lack of access to these basic necessities can make it harder for people to effectively and sustainably address changes that they may be seeking. Addressing these influential systems are vital to areas of health, wellness, and justice.

TIMELINE

JANUARY 8, 2025

Application Opens

Applicants must choose which session they want to attend (Pembroke or Winston-Salem).

Each session lasts four days:
2 days in-person AND 2 days virtual

JANUARY 29
APPLICATION CLOSES

FEBRUARY 14
ACCEPTANCE NOTIFICATIONS
SENT OUT TO APPLICANTS

PEMBROKE ACADEMY SESSION

MAY 1 - 2 AND 6 - 7

MAY 1 - 2
IN PEMBROKE, NC

AND

MAY 6 - 7
HELD VIRTUALLY

WINSTON-SALEM ACADEMY SESSION

JULY 10 - 11 AND 15 - 16

JULY 10 - 11
IN WINSTON-SALEM, NC

AND

JULY 15 - 16
HELD VIRTUALLY

Academy Learning Objectives

- ✓ Learn the history and philosophy of harm reduction and discuss what applying a harm reduction framework looks like in practice
- ✓ Describe how we can work to prevent harm for participants, our colleagues, and ourselves
- ✓ Acquire comprehensive practical skills and knowledge in harm reduction and the implementation of evidence-based overdose prevention programs
- ✓ Examine the roles and intersections of drug-related stigma and social determinants of health, such as housing, poverty, lack of education and unequal access to health care, as underlying, contributing factors of health inequities.
- ✓ Gain an understanding of the history and intersections of drug use, harm reduction and safety considerations for those involved in sex work
- ✓ Identify tools to support and improve staff and program participant mental health and emotional wellbeing
- ✓ Apply the framework provided in this academy and strengthen skills through case studies and adult learning methods
- ✓ Analyze the importance of centering lived experience in our work and how to do it meaningfully
- ✓ Describe current substance use trends, including polysubstance use and harm reduction strategies related to a range of consumption methods (e.g. snorting; smoking) and substances (e.g. Stimulants)
- ✓ Explain how stigma related to substance use is a major barrier to addressing the overdose crisis and identify strategies for addressing this stigma
- ✓ Understand currently available tools that are offered by NCDHHS, UNC IPRC, and others, and how these tools can be accessed
- ✓ Understand how harm reduction, social justice, and equity intersect
- ✓ Analyze the current laws and policies impacting PWUD and harm reduction services, identifying areas of concern as well as opportunities for advocacy

WHO SHOULD APPLY?

- People with lived or living experience who are interested in or are currently involved with a syringe service program (SSP) or other organizations providing harm reduction services
- Staff from organizations who serve people who use drugs (PWUD) (PSSs, PORT)
- Healthcare providers, including primary care, mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and pharmacists
- County Opioid Settlement Coordinators
- Community organizers/mobilizers
- Social service providers, including housing and employment support, reentry services, child and family welfare services, HIV/AIDS services, and recovery support
- First responders with experience or interest in working with PWUD, including emergency medical services, and fire departments

READY TO APPLY?

Application opens
January 8, 2025

This is a free training opportunity. If accepted into the Academy, we will ask you to confirm your participation and commit to attending the full training.

Applications are due at
5pm on January 29, 2025

Selected participants will be notified February 14th.

If you need assistance completing the application for any reason, please email

[**HarmReductionAcademy@unc.edu**](mailto:HarmReductionAcademy@unc.edu)

to contact the Overdose Prevention Team and receive technical assistance.

APPLY HERE