Delivering harm reduction outside treatment services to respond to new drug challenges

City Health – Melbourne 2019

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Responding to challenges with harm reduction

1. Synthetic cathinones
2. Synthetic cannabinoids
3. Chemsex
HARM REDUCTION is a BIG DEAL to us! FOR 35 YEARS
NEW WAYS TO RESPOND

Our response has also increased in scope

• FT-IR portable spectrometer
• More informed consumer base
• Vaporisers
• Increased acceptance of harm reduction
SYNTHETIC CATHINONES

Market has become more dangerous

• Falsely sold as **MDMA**
• Reagent testing not comprehensive enough
• Cheap products
• Occasional or new users most impacted
• Much high risk of harm
Pill testing/drug checking

• Partnered with KnowYourStuffNZ 2016
• FT-IR spectrometer and reagent testing
• Festivals 2016 onwards (around 8 a year)
• University events 2019
• Static clinics trialled 2019
SYNTHETIC CANNABINOIDs

Public health crisis with 70+ deaths

• High potency and very cheap
• Lower legal consequences
• Harm highly concentrated
• Coping mechanism for those most vulnerable
• People need a reason to stop
Giving people a reason not to use

• Training frontline services to respond better
• Establishing community of practice
• Civil emergency/disease outbreak model for affected communities with the group able to quickly respond
• Acute drug harm funding for local responses
High risk emergent practice for MSM

• Use of GHB and methamphetamine for sex
• Injecting is common
• HIV, STI and Hepatitis C concerns
• Risk of violence/drug related harm
• High amounts of stigma
Community specific responses

- Information on how to be safer
- **Rewired** support group in partnership with NZ AIDS Foundation
- Improving addiction service *sensitivity*
- Upskilling sexual health for screening and brief advice
REWIRED
AUCKLAND
Changing your relationship with meth
Harm reduction beyond treatment services

- Upskill the services currently serving the population
- Bring together clinical expertise and lived experience
- Involve and include the community to build future peer support and leadership
- Contribute to building a culture of harm reduction for any drug or substance use