

# EVERYBODY DESERVES A SAFE SPACE

## WHAT ARE OVERDOSE PREVENTION SITES?

OPS are indoor spaces where people can consume their own drugs with immediate access to life saving interventions, medical care, emotional support, and non-judgemental therapeutic relationships.

OPS can be established as stand-alone facilities or integrated into existing services such as drop-in centers, drug treatment facilities, or places of worship.

### SAFETY

#### Reduces overdose deaths

Overdose fatality dropped 35% in the area around a single OPS within 1 year of opening.<sup>1</sup>

#### Increases community safety

The amount of discarded syringes and people using in public decreased by 50% after just 1 site opened in Vancouver, Canada.<sup>2</sup>

### HEALTH

#### Reduces risk of HIV & Hepatitis C

OPS are associated with a 69% reduction of syringe sharing and an increase in condom use.<sup>4</sup>

#### Increases access to drug treatment

Over three years, an OPS helped 67% of participants get into drug treatment services and 23% stopped injecting entirely.<sup>5</sup>

### DIGNITY

#### Compassionate, non-judgmental

OPS are uniquely effective at reaching people who are isolated and at risk of overdose because staff are dedicated to building trust which leads to increased access to health & social services.<sup>3</sup>

### JUSTICE

#### Community-run, justice-oriented

OPS reduce harms of the war on drugs by bringing vulnerable people, particularly drug users of color, inside a warm environment free from excessive police interaction.<sup>6</sup>

## OPS ARE COST EFFECTIVE



A Baltimore-focused study estimated that a single OPS would save the health care system \$7.8 million each year through reductions in HIV and hepatitis C infections, ambulance calls, emergency department visits, and hospitalizations for skin and soft tissue infections and other drug use related issues.<sup>7</sup>

# HOW DO OVERDOSE PREVENTION SITES WORK?

More than 150 OPS exist around the world in 12 countries.

Many have been operating for decades,  
and 25 new sites have opened since 2016.

*There have been zero overdose death in any OPS.*

## WELCOME AREA

- Registration & check in about current needs including physical and behavioral health
- Conversation about intended drug use
- *No illegal drugs are provided*

## CONSUMPTION AREA

- Harm reduction supplies, including naloxone, syringe services, and fentanyl test strips, available
- Safe and clean area to prepare and consume drugs
- Trained professionals available to provide wound care & harm reduction education or to intervene in the case of a medical emergency
- Safe disposal for used supplies

## STABILIZATION AREA

- Peer recovery specialists, social workers, and case managers available to encourage treatment readiness and facilitate access to medical and social services
- HIV and Hepatitis C counseling, testing, and treatment

## FROM ENTRANCE TO EXIT

- All visitors are greeted with a smile and treated with dignity and respect
- Staff are dedicated to building trust and maintaining a safe and supportive space



@bridges4ops



[baltimoreharmreduction.org/bridges-coalition](http://baltimoreharmreduction.org/bridges-coalition)

*BRIDGES is an advocacy coalition working to end overdose and criminalization by promoting safe spaces, dignity, health, and justice for people who use drugs.*

## REFERENCES

- 1) Marshall et al, 2011. The Lancet.
- 2) Wood et al, 2004. CMAJ.
- 3) Potter et al, 2014. Drug and Alcohol Dependence.
- 4) Milloy & Wood, 2009. Addiction.
- 5) DeBeck, et al, 2011. Drug and Alcohol Dependence.
- 6) Mohammed & Shaikh. 2019. *Overdose prevention sites are a tool for racial justice.* Inquirer.com
- 7) Irwin, 2017. Harm Reduction Journal.