

Harm Reduction in Congregate Settings: Opening Doors for Vulnerable Populations

Emily Dakers

Director,

Good Shepherd Barrett Centre

Hamilton, ON

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Barrett Centre for Crisis Support

Who We Are and What We Do?

- Downtown Hamilton
- 15 bed Residential Program
- 16+, all Gender Identities
- Mental Health and Substance Use Crisis
- Peer Support and Harm Reduction Programs

- Emily Dakers
- B.A., B.S.W., M.S.W.
- Director, Barrett Centre

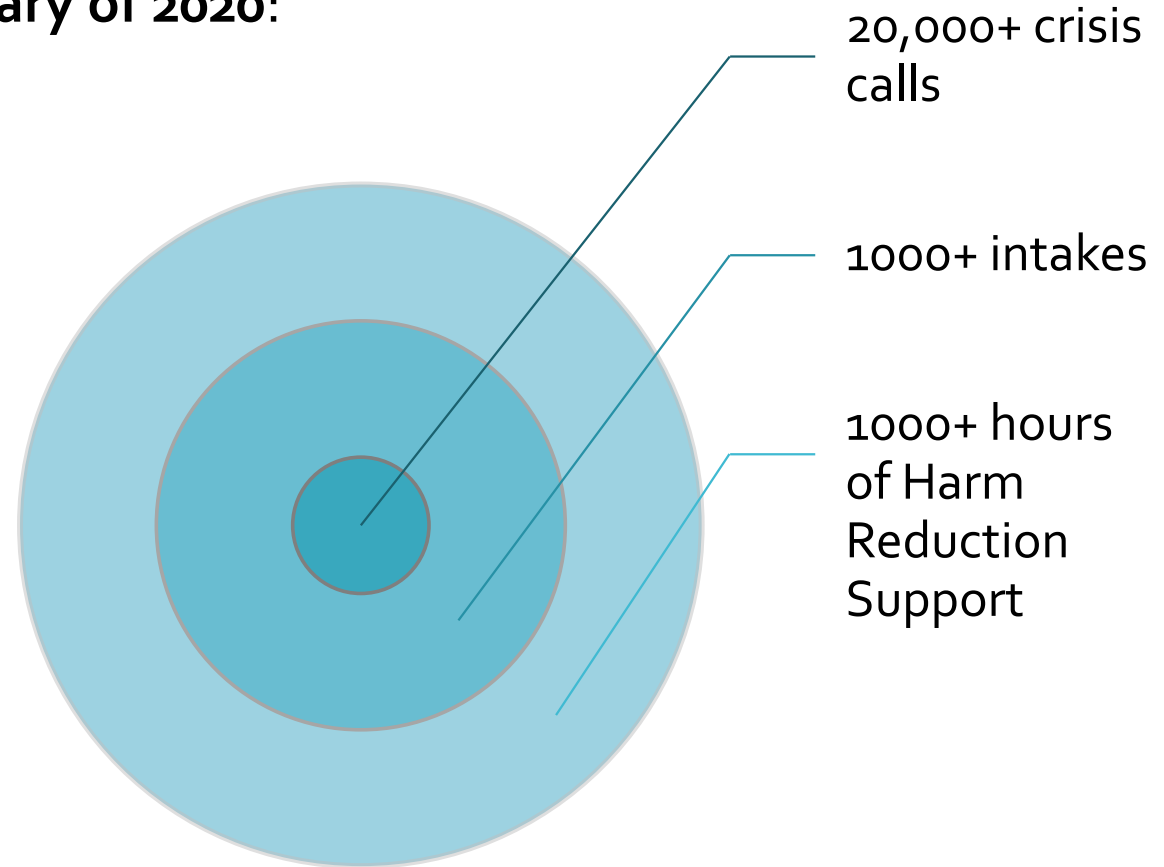


Good Shepherd
Faith in people.



Barrett Centre for Crisis Support

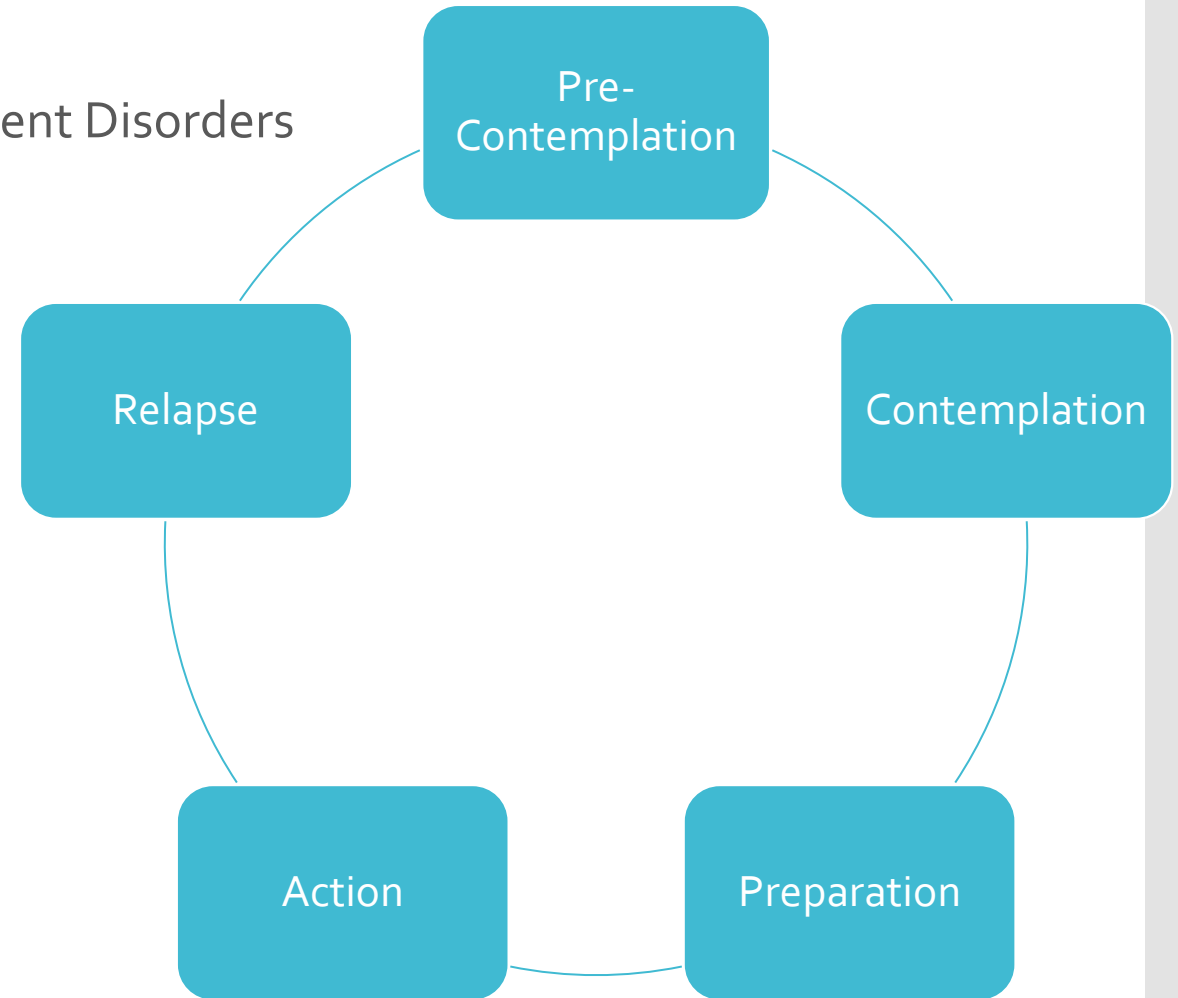
Since January of 2020:



Substance Use Trends at Barrett I

Who are we seeing?

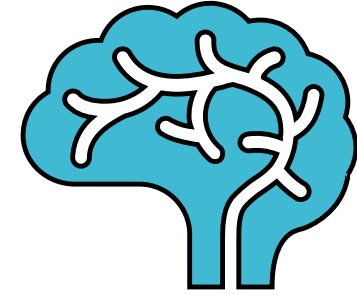
- High rates of Concurrent Disorders
- All stages of change



Substance Use Trends at Barrett II

What Substances?

- Generally high rates of:
 - Crystal Meth
 - Alcohol use
 - Prescription mis-use
- Increasing rates of Opiates
 - Fentanyl
 - Mixing opiates and stimulants



Mental Health and Substance Use

- Exacerbating or onset of psychosis
- Affects on sleep and appetite
- Ability to engage effectively



Harm Reduction

Principles:



- Respecting the rights of those who use drugs
- Commitment to evidence-based practice
- Commitment to social justice
- Avoid Stigma

Goals:



- Keep people alive and encourage positive change
- Reduce harms of drug law and policy
- Offer alternatives to approaches

Harm Reduction International

<https://www.hri.global/what-is-harm-reduction>

Harm Reduction: How do we do it?

Goals and Principles in Practice:

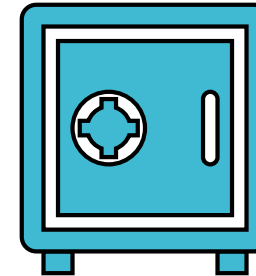
- Trauma-informed medical and mental health care
- Consumption Treatment Sites
- Safe Supply
- Decriminalization of drugs
- Client-centered and person-first care



Barriers to Harm Reduction in Practice

Current systems in Congregate Settings:

- Abstinence, or attached to detox
- Bathroom use
- No storage
- Bag checks
- Unsafe access
- Unsafe use
- Punitive policies
- Criminalization of drugs
 - Legal vs. illegal substances



Staffing: Barriers, Needs, and Wishes

Staffing Models and Capacity:

- Varied understandings and experience
- Staff education
 - Fear
 - “liability”
 - Documentation
- Skills vs Comfort
- Change in role expectations



Congregate Setting Specifics

Things to Consider in Congregate Settings:

- Potentially triggering other residents
- Risk of onsite overdose in guest rooms
- Punitive policies related to Substance Use
- Staffing models, capacities, and baseline understandings



Strategies at Barrett |

What can a guest who uses drugs expect?

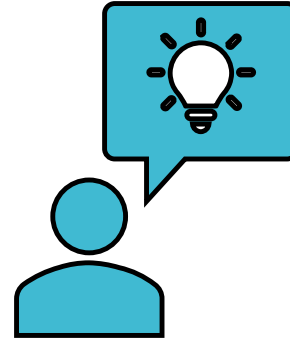
- Open and honest conversation re: substance use
- New and safe supply of gear and kits, as well as disposal
- Addictions and Harm Reduction counselling
 - Safety Planning
 - Goal Setting
 - Ongoing care in community
- Modelling and Direction to Culture Shift



Strategies at Barrett II

What's Next?

- Safe storage onsite
- Ongoing culture shift to integrate Harm Reduction
- Ongoing advocacy with community partners



Lessons Learned from COVID

At a time when we had to stay inside...

- Shelter emergency CTS
- Addition of 2nd CTS at The AIDS Network
- Integrating safe storage onsite
- Addictions Medicine



What's Next?

Next in the Community?

- How to do better by folks who use substances
- More CTS sites and safe supply
- Addictions staff available
- Community and peer based supports available



Closing & Questions

Questions?



Emily Dakers (She/Her)

Director

Barrett Centre for Crisis Support; Early Intervention Health & Wellness Centres

T 905.529.4343 ext. 2254 | F 905.529.3993

edakers@gsch.ca

www.goodshepherdcentres.ca

Barrett Centre for Crisis Support

126/128 Emerald St. S.

Hamilton, ON

T: 905-529-7878 F: 905-529-3993