



What is harm reduction and why does it matter?



Harm reduction as a public health strategy means taking steps to make sex and substance use safer. Since LGBTQ+ people face disproportionate rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and substance use disorder (SUD), **Bee The Vibe** is dedicated to bringing harm reduction resources to the queer community.

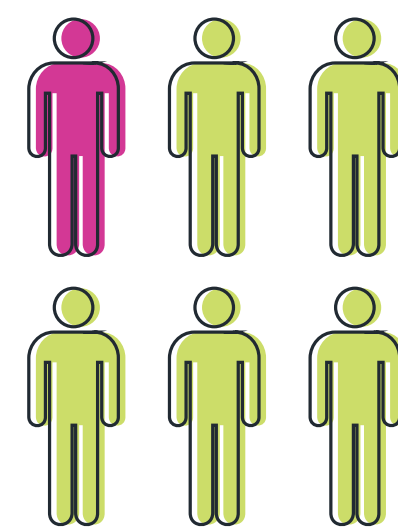
SUBSTANCE USE STATISTICS

The 2020 National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that:

- 41%** of sexual minority adults (defined as lesbian, gay, or bisexual in this study) reported using marijuana in the past year compared to 19% of the overall adult population;
- 7%** of sexual minority adults misused opioids (prescription opioids or heroin) in the past year, compared to 4% of the overall adult population;
- 22%** of sexual minority adults reported having an alcohol use disorder compared to 11% of the overall adult population.¹

RATES OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTION (STI)

- Men who have sex with men (MSM) have a 1 in 6 lifetime risk of HIV infection compared to 1 in 524 for heterosexual men. This disparity is even greater for black and Hispanic/Latino MSM, who have a 1 in 2 and 1 in 4 lifetime risk, respectively.²
- MSM have higher rates of syphilis, and more than half of all new HIV infections occur among MSM. Having other STIs significantly increases risk of HIV infection.³
- HPV (Human papillomavirus), the most common STI in the United States, is also a concern for MSM. HPV infection can cause cancer (anal and oral). MSM are 17 times more likely to get anal cancer than heterosexual men. Men who are HIV-positive are more likely than those who do not have HIV to get anal cancer.³



HARM REDUCTION



Bee The Vibe defines harm reduction as a set of practical strategies and resources aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with higher risk behaviors, like sex and drug use. Harm reduction is a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, everyone's autonomy. Harm reduction is inherently Queer because it's community-based and centers around having PRIDE in yourself to keep you and your community safer.

Harm reduction is all around us. Driving a car is a risky behavior, but we use different strategies to make it safer - like wearing a seatbelt, driving the speed limit, and keeping our vehicle in good working order.

Harm reduction is anything that reduces your risk, big or small. It could be as simple as alternating alcoholic drinks with water, to carrying Naloxone when you go out. Harm reduction can also include things like creating boundaries with others or using someone's pronouns respectfully.

¹ <https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/substance-use-suds-in-lgbtq-populations>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment-guidelines/msm.htm>

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/msmhealth/STD.htm>



Safer sex and STI testing

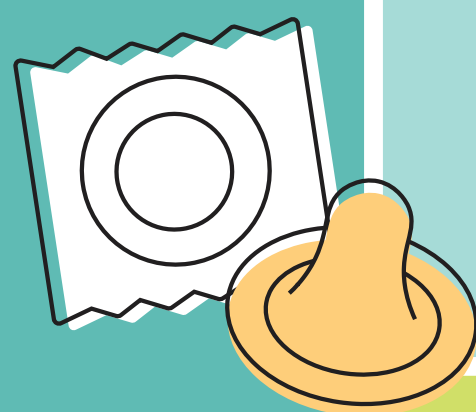


SAFER SEX

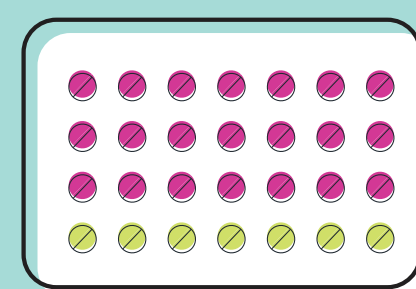
There's no such thing as "safe-sex", but there are proven methods to decrease the risks of STIs and unwanted pregnancies while still enjoying sex!

These include:

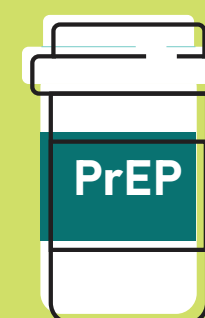
Using condoms and lube (physical barriers prevent both STIs and unwanted pregnancies, lube prevents tears and makes penetrative sex more enjoyable!)



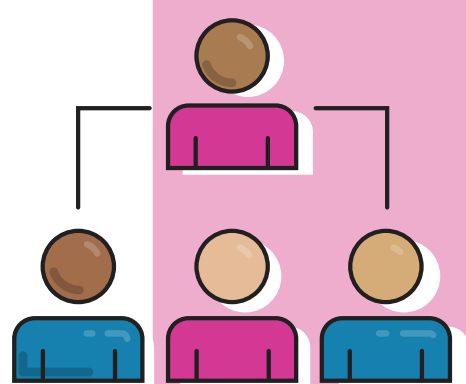
Using birth control



Getting on PrEP to prevent HIV, or getting on ART



Being more selective with sexual partners and communicating about testing frequency



Trying alternatives to penetrative sex like digital sex (fingering), e-sex, mutual masturbation, etc.



Getting tested for STIs. The "golden rule" is after every new partner, which can feel unrealistic for some.



Bee The Vibe recommends a "silver rule", or the "rule of 3." This means getting tested after every 3 partners, or every 3 months.

STI TESTING

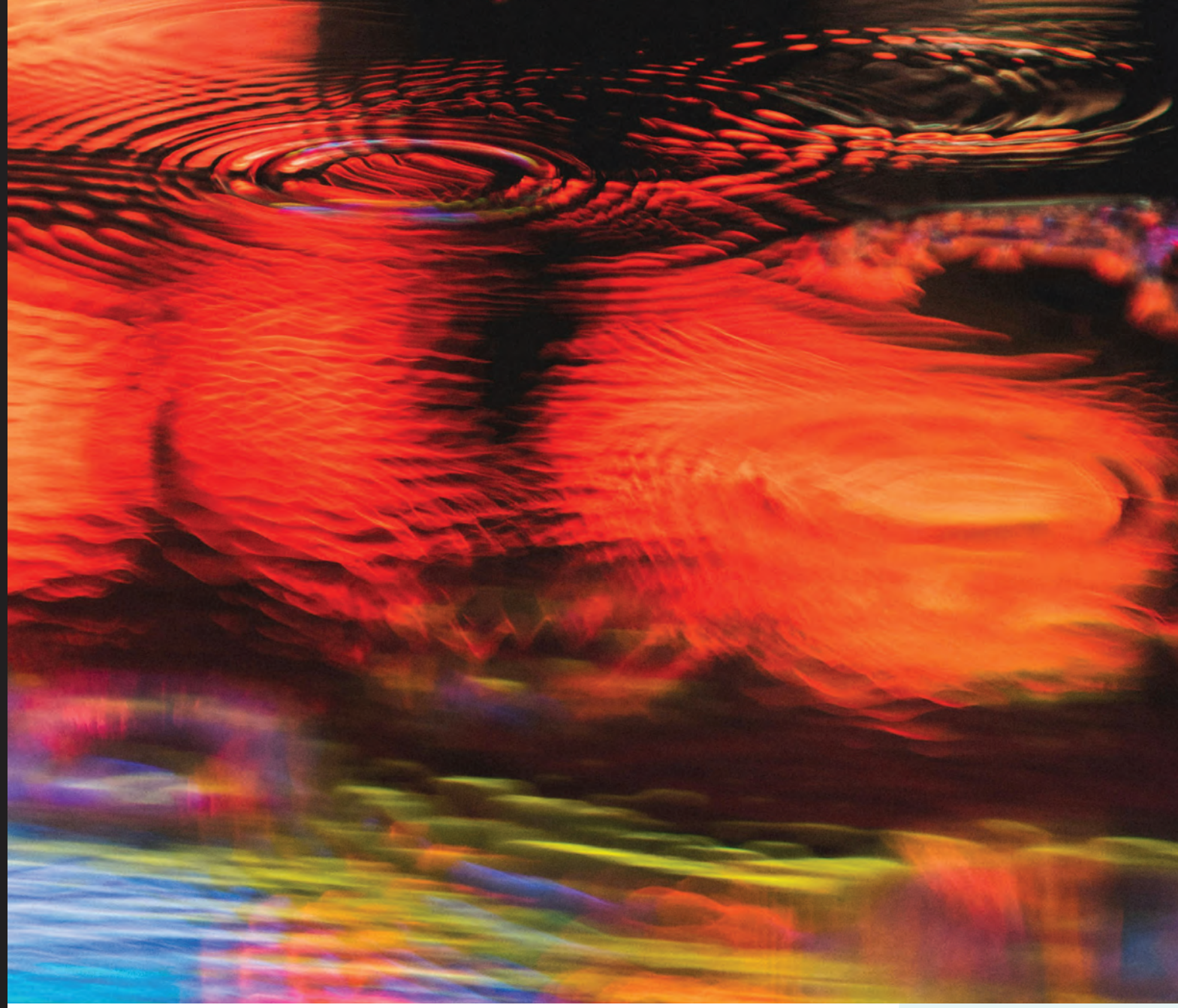
Bee The Vibe offers two STI testing options: at-home test kits and in-person rapid testing.

- The "Big 5" that we test for are HIV, Hepatitis C, Syphilis, Chlamydia and Gonorrhea
- All of these STIs are either treatable (HIV) or curable (all others), so knowing your status is power!

Visit <https://www.beethevibe.org/services> to schedule free STI testing



Overdose prevention basics



RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS OF AN OVERDOSE



Call 911 immediately if a person exhibits ANY of the following symptoms:

- Unresponsiveness
- Shallow, slow, or stopped breathing
- Lips/fingernails turning blue/gray/white depending on skin tone
- Pale/grayish skin
- Very limp body
- Vomiting or gurgling sounds
- Slow or stopped heartbeat

RESPONDING TO AN OVERDOSE

- 1 Get their attention: firmly rub your knuckles up and down the middle of the person's chest.
- 2 If no response, call 911
- 3 Give Naloxone
- 4 If the person has stopped breathing or if breathing is very weak, begin rescue breaths. If trained in CPR, do chest compressions.
- 5 Give an additional dose of Naloxone if there is no response within 2-3 minutes of each dose



TIPS FOR STAYING SAFE



- Always test your drugs ("test before you ingest")
- Never use alone
- Carry Naloxone
- Go low and slow
- Have a designated non-user



Talking on the mic about harm reduction



WHY DOES THIS STUFF MATTER?

KEY POINTS

- We're all having fun tonight, so it's important to make sure we're staying safe.
- It's up to us to keep our community safe!
- Depending on the venue: if you need some condoms, Narcan, etc., be sure to hit up the bartender/performers/me.
- Everyone deserves to be able to do what they want to do, we just want to help keep everyone safer when they do it!

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

I know we're all having fun tonight, drinking, partying, maybe trying to get lucky! No matter what you're doing, we want to stay safe while doing it. So, if you need any condoms for later or test strips for your *cough cough*, then hit up our bar staff/me to grab some. It's up to us to keep our community safe while we have fun!

CONSIDERATIONS FOR DRAG ARTISTS:

- Keep it brief
- Have a clear message
- Keep it simple
- Have a call to action (reach out to me, follow BTV, carry naloxone, etc.)
- Have it match your energy and style

TALKING ABOUT BEE THE VIBE

KEY POINTS

- Local harm reduction program
- Safer-sex and safer-drug use
- By Queer people, for Queer people
- 100% free services
- Offerings: STI testing and Naloxone, the lifesaving overdose reversal tool

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

Who here has ever heard of Bee the Vibe? Well, BTV is a local harm reduction program that's dedicated to all things safer-sex and safer-drug use! It's run by Queer people, for Queer people, and they offer things like free STI testing and free Narcan for everyone. No questions asked! So get out your phones and follow them on Instagram at @beethevibeco!

STI TESTING AND PrEP

KEY POINTS

- Know your status!
- Keeps you and your community safer
- BTV offers free STI testing
- PrEP can prevent HIV
- BTV can help get you on PrEP

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

When was the last time you got an STI test? If you don't remember, it might be time, girl! Getting tested and knowing your status helps keep you and your community safer, and even better, our friends over at Bee the Vibe can get you tested for free!

Where are the baddies on PrEP at, make some noise! If you don't know what I'm talking about, PrEP is a tool that can prevent you from acquiring HIV by up to 99% when taken correctly. It makes great sex even greater and you can get it for free in Colorado! Hit up our friends at Bee the Vibe and they'll get you hooked up for free!

OVERDOSE PREVENTION

KEY POINTS

- Carry Naloxone!
- Naloxone can save someone's life
- It can be a friend or a stranger
- Naloxone is free from BTV and other CO resources



EXAMPLE SCRIPT

Who carries Narcan? Bad bitches carry Narcan, that's who. If you don't know, Narcan is the lifesaving overdose reversal tool, and if you give someone Narcan when they're overdosing it can literally save their life. If you don't have Narcan, come chat with me and I can get you hooked up for free through our friends at Bee the Vibe.

PARTYING SAFER

KEY POINTS

- Test before you ingest
- Never use alone
- Go low, go slow

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

Anybody *nudge* hitting the slopes here in Denver? Did you test your shit before you *nudge* started partying? It's so important to test everything before we ingest it so come by and pick up a fentanyl test strip kit so that you can keep yourself safer while partying it up.

Let's bring back the DD (designated driver), but let's upgrade it to our designated sober person too! When you're partying *nose tap* with friends, it's always good to never use alone and have someone with you to keep you safe. Remember: hot girls use harm reduction!



Talking to venues about harm reduction



EXPLAINING THE IMPORTANCE OF HARM REDUCTION

KEY POINTS

- Harm reduction keeps everyone safe
- It helps protect the venue, too
- Small changes can make a big difference
- Share examples!

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

I'd love to have a conversation about harm reduction here at _____. Harm reduction is an important way to keep people safe when they're here and protect against consequences when people are drinking and partying.

This could be training staff on signs of an overdose and supplying Narcan in the event of an emergency. Not only can that help keep people alive and protect the community, but it also protects the venue, too.



How to Respond to Common Resistances and Misinformation

IF THEY SAY: "By bringing that into this space, we're enabling people to do drugs/have sex on our property."

YOU CAN RESPOND:

- This is already happening in your space, but now you're just making it safer.
- If people are doing it behind the venue's back, these resources will reduce the chance of injury.
- You can encourage people to use the resources outside of the venue.

IF THEY SAY: "This is illegal."

YOU CAN RESPOND:

- Colorado law protects people who distribute Narcan and administer it, and anyone can enter any space with it. It is not drug paraphernalia. <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/prevention-and-wellness/colorado-public-health-harm-reduction-legislation>
- This is perfectly legal and is done already across the state at other similar venues. Even some big names like AEG have implemented harm reduction at their biggest venues and events.

IF THEY SAY: "Our clients/community aren't fentanyl users/'crackheads'/other stigmatizing language."

YOU CAN RESPOND:

- Fentanyl is an issue facing all Coloradans as it's being adulterated/laced in to so many other drugs like cocaine, MDMA, adderall, meth, etc.
- Depending on your relationship, this could be an opportunity to discuss how that kind of language (i.e. 'crackheads') can be problematic or stigmatizing.

IF THEY SAY: "This would never work in our space."

YOU CAN RESPOND:

- Ask about why this wouldn't work, and see if there is a creative solution to make it work in the space.
- Encourage and share examples of other venues (if you have any) to describe could work.
- Share that by starting small, maybe just by training staff, could be a great first step.

IF THEY SAY: "What's in it for us?"

YOU CAN RESPOND:

- A major benefit is the security and knowledge that your venue is a safe space for people.
- The added safety through harm reduction will protect the venue and its reputation in the community.
- We can provide a certificate or form of acknowledgement about the efforts they're making which could help with reputation.

HOW TO REFER VENUES TO BTV

KEY POINTS

- When in doubt, refer out!
- Follow up with connecting
- Encourage them to use this free resource

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

This was such a great conversation, I'm glad you want to incorporate harm reduction into this space. I'll connect you with Zack Jenio, who is the Program Manager of Bee the Vibe, a harm reduction program. He and his team can present to your staff about harm reduction and can even give y'all free resources like Narcan! I'll send an email connecting all of us later today.





Using your platform for good



EVENTS

- Normalize talking about harm reduction while you're on the mic. Refer to the "Talking on the Mic about harm reduction" guide in this Action Kit.
- Book performers who share non-stigmatizing messages, and start conversations about combatting stigma in your social circles
- Sometimes performers might do an act that stigmatizes sex or drug use. When you see that, have a conversation with them and encourage them not to have drug users or others as the butt of a joke.

BRING IN NON-PROFITS/PROGRAMS TO OFFER HARM REDUCTION RESOURCES:

STI testing

Many organizations will come to venues to offer free STI testing. Some provide their services in vans, some require an inside space.

- For van-based testing, you will need space out front for the van to be parked.
- For inside testing, you will need a private, semi-quiet space for people to get tested.

Make a night out of it! Advertise that there's free testing, and see if you can pair it with the show/event, and provide incentives for getting tested.

Sometimes nonprofits have budgets for swag, so don't be afraid to ask!



Resource distribution

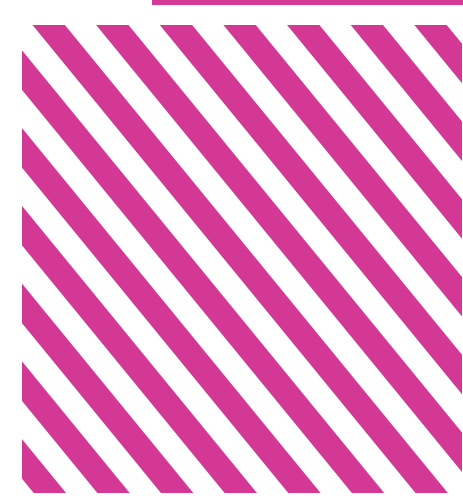
- Bring in a group to pass out free resources like Narcan, fentanyl test strips, condoms, and lube. This is a great way to connect what you say on the mic to a direct deliverable.

General outreach tabling

- Ask the venue if they can set up tables for harm reduction organizations to do outreach in the space during events.
- Refer to the organization list included in this Action Kit to find non-profit/government organizations that want to work with the LGBTQ+ community.
- Reach out and see if they'd like to partner for events and projects, because then you could receive extra support, finances or capacity to do great things!

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Share posts from local organizations that offer resources to the communities that follow you.
- Share collaborative posts and campaigns that educate on important harm reduction topics.
- Create content showing yourself using harm reduction strategies for a more personal message to your audience. For example, if you keep a Narcan in your drag bag, post an IG story carrying your Narcan!
- Avoid perpetuating stereotypes when engaging with "mainstream" or "trending" topics.
- If a post goes viral that makes fun of drug users, take the opportunity to educate friends and followers about the dangers of stereotypes. Use your platform to promote harm reduction messaging.





BEE THE
VIBE

Overdose

A dangerous dose of a substance. Most commonly in harm reduction, we're referring to an opioid overdose (or fentanyl-based overdose, which is a type of opioid).

Licit drug

A drug that is legal or prescribed by a physician.

Illicit drug

A drug that is illegal, obtained illegally or bought on "the street".

Fentanyl

A synthetic opioid that is extremely dangerous if ingested and can quicken the effects of an overdose. Fentanyl can be adulterated, or laced, into many different illicit drugs.

Fentanyl test strips

Small strips of paper that can detect the presence of fentanyl in all different kinds of drugs. The test strips will only indicate if the sample has fentanyl in it or not - it will not say how much.

Drug reagent kits

These refer to chemicals that you can test drugs with to identify what the drug is. For example, it could help differentiate between drugs like MDMA and meth.

Naloxone

The lifesaving opioid overdose reversal tool. If someone is experiencing an opioid overdose, administering Naloxone can reverse the effects and save the person's life until EMS arrives. This is the generic name of the tool.

Narcan

The most common brand of Naloxone (the opioid overdose reversal tool). It's like saying "Kleenex" when you mean "tissue", so it's commonly used as a synonym. It is a 4mg dose given as a nasal spray.

Kloxxado

A name brand of Naloxone (the opioid overdose reversal tool). It is an 8mg dose given as a nasal spray.

Sharps

Refers to anything that is sharp that could stick someone and carry bloodborne pathogens like syringes, needles, lancets, etc. Proper disposal is encouraged (not in regular trash).

Rapid STI testing

This refers to STI testing where people can get results in 30 minutes or less and usually only requires a small finger prick to collect a blood sample. HIV, HCV and Syphilis rapid tests must be confirmed with a blood draw later.

Safer-sex kits

These usually refer to kits that have condoms and lube to promote safer-sex practices that prevent unwanted pregnancies and STIs.

PrEP

PrEP – or pre-exposure prophylaxis, is an HIV preventative drug that can reduce the risk of acquiring HIV by up to 99% when taken correctly.

U=U

Undetectable = untransmittable, meaning that if someone's viral load is undetectable through blood tests, then they are unable to transmit HIV.

ART

Antiretroviral therapy is a treatment that someone living with HIV can take to reduce their viral load so that HIV is undetectable. A person on ART has effectively no risk of transmitting HIV to their partners.