

Implementation Science for Harm Reduction: History, Frameworks, and Methods

Facilitator

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Description

Harm reduction is a public health and policy approach centered on human rights and respect for bodily autonomy to addressing substance use. In contrast, to traditional approaches, harm reduction seeks to minimize negative outcomes associated with substance use by focusing on evidence-based, community and participatory interventions and supportive policies grounded in social justice (see *Harm Reduction International*: www.hri.global).

Students will learn how implementation frameworks can be used to strengthen program implementation, adaptation, and evaluation to fit different contexts. Lectures with case studies, and small focus group discussions will facilitate students to examine how interdisciplinary, intersectoral data sources and methodological approaches can generate actionable evidence for harm reduction programs.

The course is designed for students interested in public health, global health, health policy, implementation science, social determinants of health, and health equity.

Objectives

Objective 1: Critically assess and appraise harm reduction policies, programs, and interventions by identifying key strengths, limitations, implementation challenges, and evidence gaps across diverse settings.

Objective 2: Apply and evaluate implementation science frameworks and interdisciplinary approaches to analyze, adapt, and promote harm reduction interventions in different social, political, and health system contexts.

Date

2 November 2027, 14:00 – 17:00

Eligibility

The course is open to PhD and MD students of the SSPH+ Inter-university Graduate Campus and to postdocs with a SSPH+ Faculty Member as line manager.

Course Structure

Hour 1 – Introduction to harm reduction

Describe the core tenets and principles of harm reduction and **Appraise examples** of current and past harm reduction programs around the globe. Small group exchange of your area of interest based on your background (i.e., key population, location, substance)

Hour 2 – Implementation science to appraise harm reduction initiatives

Introduce key implementation science frameworks and methodologies and **Identify opportunities** to apply implementation science to foster harm reduction in your area of interest. Small group brainstorming of most impactful indicators and which framework best represents your vision of conducting implementation science for harm reduction

Hour 3 – Stakeholders and application in the real world

Present in small groups potential gaps in current harm reduction practices in your area of interest and how implementation science can be used to fill these gaps. **Propose** key actors, methods, and data sources to plan/adopt/ evaluate a harm reduction program for a specific context or key population using an implementation science framework

Workload

Preliminary Work: 2 hours
Contact time: 3 hours

Credits

(1 ECTS for active participation in 4 short online courses and 1 passed assessment in 1 course)

Assessment

Optional for ECTS: a 1–2-page outline of a pilot research or evaluation plan, including a few lines on each section: background, research question, methods (i.e., study design, analytical approach, involved roles) and the anticipated outcomes and impact of your project.

Location

Online course

Course Fees

SSPH+ PhD and MD Students and postdocs with a SSPH+ Faculty Member as line manager: 0.- CHF

Registration

<https://www.conftool.com/ssph-phd-courses2027/>

Deadline for registration

2 October 2027

This course is an SSPH+ IGC initiative to provide post-doctoral scientists at SSPH+ network institutions to teach.