

What is Harm Minimisation?

Different ways to make sniffing, tobacco, grog and gunja less of a problem



There are three parts to harm minimisation, these three parts work together to reduce the effects of drugs.

1. Harm reduction / Ways to be careful when using drugs

An example of how harm reduction works:

A young fella is getting really skinny, he is happy sometimes but not like he used to be. He doesn't do much anymore. He used to play footy and walk around at night-time. He had fun with his family. Now he is not listening to family and staying in his room all day and all night.



A youth worker might be able to help, by doing *harm reduction*. Things like:

- talking with family about how the youth program can help
- giving information to him and his family and friends about how to make him safer when he is sniffing, see [Harm Reduction](#).
- helping him go to rehab.

2. Supply reduction / making drugs harder to get

Things like grog restrictions, Opal fuel and locking away risky products at the shop.

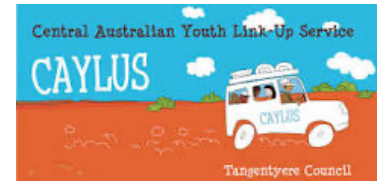


3. Demand reduction / Things that help people not want to use drugs in the first place.

Figure 1 Lockable cabinet in TC

Youth programs running regular and fun activities are a big part of looking after young people and families in Central Australia. Good youth workers listen to what young people and families want, and this means they can run activities which help make young people feel happy and strong. Feeling happy and strong helps people get through hard times. It also means they might be less likely to use drugs and alcohol in dangerous ways.

Youth Programs and Harm Minimisation



Harm minimisation is thinking about how the youth program can help young people be less hurt by drugs, alcohol and smoking. It doesn't mean that they can make the drugs and alcohol go away – just that people are less hurt by them.

Sometimes a young person coming to youth program might be having troubles with drugs and alcohol, sometimes someone in their family might be having trouble.

As a youth worker if you know people who are getting into lots of trouble because they are drinking, smoking or sniffing too much, you might be able to help them. Even though you aren't a health worker you can still help in other ways.

If a young person is having a hard time, something a youth worker can do is help make them feel welcome to come to an activity sometime. This might help the young person to feel strong, and help build a good relationship with the youth workers.

Here is a list of things a youth worker might do to help support this young person,

- Take the team leader to visit the young person's home and say hello to their family.
 - Help them chat about the youth program and ask the family what they would like to see happening at youth program.
 - Ask them if they ever come to youth program, or if they would like to.
 - If it is a good time, talk with the family about any worries they have for the young person.
 - If it is a good time, talk to the family and the young person about [harm reduction](#) strategies.
- On another visit maybe bring the young person something, for example
 - food
 - drink
 - USB with music on it
 - headphones
- Ask who they would like to do an activity with, and when.
- Plan the activity, let them know you're happy to come and pick them up on the day.
- On the day, pick up a few of the people the young person said they would like to do the activity, have some food for snacks or lunch

- Find the young person and invite them to come along.
- Talk to them about what they might like to do for the next activity.

This might not work, or you might need to try a few times. It is not a youth worker's job to force them or growl them. The young person might not be feeling good and strong. The family of the young person might want to talk with the youth program team, to see if they can get some help. The youth workers can get extra help for a young person by talking to CAYLUS or WYDAC (for young Warlpiri people).

Rehab

WYDAC has been looking after young Warlpiri people at Mt Theo for a long time. They have a counselling program in Yuendumu and Lajamanu as well. CAYLUS has been working with young people in Central Australia for a long time too and can help anyone. CAYLUS has a caseworker and other workers who can help families with finding a rehab program that can help, get information, organise paperwork, transport, buying some clothes if they need some, and helping the young person get home again if they travel to go to rehab.

Want to see what rehab looks like? Watch a video of young people at CAAPS rehab [here](#).

