



**The United Church
of Canada
General Council**

GC45 WF19: SW04 Harm Reduction Sunday for Summer 2025

True Document Date: August 11, 2025

There was general support for this proposal.

The concerns:

- mainly around the naming of a specific Sunday for the activity in a period of the year when church calendars already have many designated dates.
- one day of the year to highlight harm reduction is not enough
- about funding and implementation.

Suggestions:

- Clergy need to be trained in harm reduction.
- The definition of social harms could be expanded to include other social harms, while not also normalizing substance use.
- There is a need to create (or point persons in the direction of existing) resources to support action at the community of faith level.

Therefore, the Way Forward Team proposes:

That, in response to SW04 Harm Reduction Sunday the 45th General Council, 2025 direct the General Secretary to:

1. **encourage congregations to designate ~~Declare the~~ a Sunday closest to International Overdose Awareness Day (August 31st) as 'Harm Reduction Sunday' in the United Church of Canada, recognizing that some congregations may choose to mark Harm Reduction Sunday at a different time.**
2. **~~Providing~~ provide churches with worship resources to assist in leading worship services that are informed, destigmatizing and sensitive to the experiences of**

those who utilize illicit substances.

- 3. To write a letter to the Prime Minister of Canada and the Minister of Health and Addictions supporting harm reduction practices and the Good Samaritan Act, and its potential to be expanded to ensure that anyone experiencing a toxic drug overdose will be supported by emergency services.**
- 4. To intentionally work with lay and ministry personnel across the country to build training opportunities and education for communities of faiths regarding harm reduction, substance use, and advocacy with people who utilize illicit substances.**

Document Type: [Way Forward](#)

General Council: [GC45](#)

Originating Body: [Way Forward Committee](#)