

# CARE, CONSENT, & COMMUNITY

HARM REDUCTION & CHEMSEX ♡



## CARE

Look after yourself and each other.

- 💧 Stay hydrated
- ♡ Check in
- 🚑 Look after your physical & mental wellbeing
- 💬 You matter.

## CONSENT

Clear is kind.

- 💬 Ask
- ✅ Respect boundaries
- 👥 Enthusiastic consent
- 🔒 You can change your mind

## COMMUNITY

We're stronger together.

- 👥 No judgement
- 🤝 Share info, not shame
- 🏠 Build safer spaces
- ♡ Look out for each other

REDUCE HARM. SHOW CARE. BUILD COMMUNITY. SAVE LIVES. ♡

HARM REDUCTION SAVES LIVES  
♡ Use less  
♡ Test your drugs  
⚠️ Don't mix  
⌚ Go slow  
👤 Know your limits  
📝 Have a plan  
♡

YOU ARE NOT ALONE ♡

NALOXONE SAVES LIVES

Different drugs  
Different ways  
Same respect  
Same care  
♡



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# Welcome & Grounding

We gather on the ancestral homeland of the **Ohlone people**, whose stewardship of this land continues today. SOMA is not just a neighborhood — it is a historic site of queer liberation, built by generations of leather and kink communities who fought for the right to exist openly.

We are NOT here to...

Police behavior, shame sexuality, or moralize substance use

We ARE here to...

Talk about staying alive, staying connected, and staying empowered

**What does safety mean to you in these spaces?**

# What Is Harm Reduction?

Harm reduction offers practical, evidence-based strategies to reduce the negative consequences of behaviors, without requiring abstinence or judgment. It starts by meeting people exactly where they are.



## Autonomy

Respecting each person's right to make their own choices



## Dignity

No shame, no lectures. Only support



## Community Care

We look out for each other. Carrying Narcan, using with trusted people, negotiating consent clearly

## The Core Reframe

Harm reduction is not about stopping behavior. It's about **increasing safety and agency**. Non-judgment is not neutrality; it is an act of care.

# Why This Conversation Matters Here

SOMA sits at a powerful intersection: **Leather culture, queer nightlife, and sexual freedom.** That combination creates both remarkable strengths and real vulnerabilities.

## Our Strengths

Strong norms of consent, community accountability, and a long tradition of showing up for each other

## Real Risks

Substance use in sexual contexts, shifting power dynamics, and physical vulnerability in intense play



We refuse to pathologize queer spaces. The real story is structural: criminalization of drugs, gaps in affirming healthcare, and systemic stigma place our community at greater risk. Not our desires.

# Physical Safety in Leather & Kink Spaces

Kink culture has always prioritized safety. Safe words, pre-scene negotiation, and aftercare are built into our traditions. Harm reduction extends these values further.

## Know the Risks

Circulation issues from tight gear or rope, falls and impact injuries, and breath restriction in high-intensity scenes

## Stay Connected

Check in with partners during scenes — verbal or nonverbal signals both count

## Build Skills

Learn proper technique through classes and demos. Never mix substances with high-risk play.

**What safety norms do we already do well in this community?**



# PHYSICAL SAFETY IN LEATHER & KINK SPACES

SAFER SPACES. CONSENSUAL POWER. RESPECTED BODIES.

OUR COMMUNITY  
OUR RULES  
OUR RESPONSIBILITY

CONSENT  
IS SEXY



## BE AWARE



Know your surroundings. Check in with yourself and others.



Look out for others. See something? Say something.



Know the space, its rules, and emergency exits.

## COMMUNICATE



Clear communication prevents harm.



Ask. Listen. Respect answers.



Use scene safewords and check-ins.

## CONSENT



Consent is ongoing, informed, and enthusiastic.



You can change your mind at any time.



No means no. Silence is not yes.

## PRACTICE SMART PLAY



WASH YOUR  
HANDS



USE PROTECTION  
& LUBE



KNOW BASIC  
FIRST AID



CHECK YOUR  
BODY



DON'T PLAY  
UNDER THE  
INFLUENCE



LOOK OUT.  
SUPPORT.  
BE ACCOUNTABLE.

## TAKE CARE



Stay hydrated. Take breaks. Know your limits.



Aftercare is important. For you and your partners.



Report incidents to staff or trusted people in the space.

## WHAT TO EXPECT



Respect for all bodies, genders, races, and identities.



Zero tolerance for harassment, racism, transphobia, sexism, or ableism.



Staff and community are here to help keep you safe.

## YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

FEEL SAFE.  
BE RESPECTED.  
SET BOUNDARIES.  
ENJOY YOUR KINK.



YOUR SAFETY MATTERS.  
WE LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER.

# Consent as Ongoing, Not One-Time



## Active

Consent is something you do, not something that happened once



## Reversible

Anyone can change their mind at any point — and that must be respected



## Informed

All parties understand what they're agreeing to




## Enthusiastic

Absence of "no" is not a "yes"

## When Substances Are Present

Impaired judgment and memory gaps make clear consent harder. Community responsibility means checking in with others and intervening when something feels off.

 **Remember:** If consent can't be clearly given, it can't be assumed.

# What Is Chemsex?

Chemsex refers to the intentional use of substances to enhance or prolong sexual experiences.

Understanding it honestly, (without shame) is the foundation of any meaningful harm reduction approach.

## Common Substances

Methamphetamine,  
GHB/GBL, cocaine, and  
MDMA are most  
frequently involved

## Why People Engage

Pleasure, connection,  
disinhibition — and  
sometimes as a way of  
coping with trauma,  
stigma, or loneliness

- ❏ **The Reframe That Matters** We don't ask "*Why are you doing this?*" We ask "*What need is this meeting?*" This shift moves us from judgment to genuine care and opens the door to real support.

# Chemsex: Risks & Realities

## Physical

Overdose (especially with GHB's narrow dosing window), severe dehydration, dangerous sleep deprivation

## Sexual Health

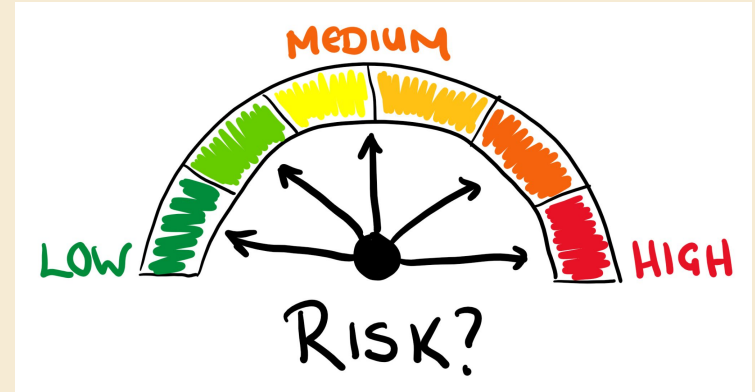
Elevated STI and HIV transmission risk; impaired ability to negotiate condom use in the moment

## Mental Health

Post-use crashes, anxiety, and paranoia are common — especially with stimulants

## Social

Vulnerability to exploitation, erosion of personal boundaries, and isolation from community



# Chemsex Harm Reduction Strategies

Practical, non-judgmental steps can meaningfully reduce risk at every stage.

1

Before

Know your substances — test if possible. Set intentions. Go with trusted people who know your plan.

2

During

Dose carefully (especially GHB timing). Hydrate and eat. Take breaks. Use a buddy system.

3

After

Prioritize sleep and nutrition. Schedule emotional check-ins with people you trust.

✔ **Using alone increases risk — community is protection.** Knowing where someone is and having a check-in plan can save a life.

# Guide to Drug Combinations

| Legend                    |                                 |                                 |                         |                        |                                |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Low Risk & No Effect<br>● | Low Risk & Decrease Effect<br>↓ | Low Risk & Increase Effect<br>↑ | Caution: Some Risk<br>! | Unsafe: High Risk<br>∅ | Dangerous: Very High Risk<br>⊗ |

|                 | Cannabis | Ketamine | Amphetamines | MDMA | Cocaine | Alcohol | GHB | Opioids | Tramadol | Benzodiazepines | SSRIs |                 |
|-----------------|----------|----------|--------------|------|---------|---------|-----|---------|----------|-----------------|-------|-----------------|
| Cannabis        | Cannabis | ↑        | !            | ↑    | !       | ↑       | ↑   | ↑       | ↑        | ↓               | ●     | Cannabis        |
| Ketamine        | ↑        | Ketamine | !            | ↑    | !       | ⊗       | ⊗   | ⊗       | ⊗        | !               | ●     | Ketamine        |
| Amphetamines    | !        | !        | Amphetamines | ↑    | !       | !       | !   | !       | ⊗        | ↓               | ●     | Amphetamines    |
| MDMA            | ↑        | ↑        | ↑            | MDMA | !       | !       | !   | ●       | ⊗        | ↓               | ↓     | MDMA            |
| Cocaine         | !        | !        | !            | !    | Cocaine | ∅       | !   | ⊗       | ⊗        | ↓               | ●     | Cocaine         |
| Alcohol         | ↑        | ⊗        | !            | !    | ∅       | Alcohol | ⊗   | ⊗       | ⊗        | ⊗               | !     | Alcohol         |
| GHB             | ↑        | ⊗        | !            | !    | !       | ⊗       | GHB | ⊗       | ⊗        | ⊗               | ●     | GHB             |
| Opioids         | ↑        | ⊗        | !            | ●    | ⊗       | ⊗       | ⊗   | Opioids | ⊗        | ⊗               | ●     | Opioids         |
| Tramadol        | ↑        | ⊗        | ⊗            | ⊗    | ⊗       | ⊗       | ⊗   | ⊗       | Tramadol | ⊗               | ⊗     | Tramadol        |
| Benzodiazepines | ↓        | !        | ↓            | ↓    | ↓       | ⊗       | ⊗   | ⊗       | ⊗        | Benzodiazepines | ●     | Benzodiazepines |
| SSRIs           | ●        | ●        | ●            | ↓    | ●       | !       | ●   | ●       | ⊗        | ●               | SSRIs | SSRIs           |
|                 | Cannabis | Ketamine | Amphetamines | MDMA | Cocaine | Alcohol | GHB | Opioids | Tramadol | Benzodiazepines | SSRIs |                 |

# Overdose Awareness & Response

## Recognize the Signs

- Unresponsive or unconscious
- Slow, shallow, or irregular breathing
- Blue or grayish lips and fingertips
- Gurgling or choking sounds

## What to Do

1. Call emergency services immediately
2. Administer naloxone (Narcan) if opioids are suspected
3. Place the person in the recovery position
4. Stay with them — do not leave



**Carrying Narcan = Community Care.** It is one of the most powerful acts of mutual aid available to us.



# Community Accountability & Bystander Intervention

Safety is not just an individual responsibility. Everyone in the room plays a role.

## When to Intervene

- Someone appears too intoxicated to consent
- Consent seems unclear or absent
- Someone is isolated or appears distressed

### Check In Directly

"Hey, are you doing okay? Do you want to step out for a minute?"

### Bring Others In

Involve a friend, a dungeon monitor, or event staff

### Create a Pause

Interrupt the situation gently — you don't need a perfect script

"Awkward is better than unsafe."

# A Trauma-Informed Lens

Many community members carry **sexual trauma, racial trauma, and minority stress**. Leather and kink spaces — and chemsex — can serve as sites of healing, re-enactment, or both simultaneously.

## Self-Awareness

Knowing your own triggers, limits, and needs before entering a scene or substance experience

## Slowing Down

Giving yourself permission to pause, check in internally, and change course

## Accessing Support

Connecting with affirming therapists, peer support, or community care networks

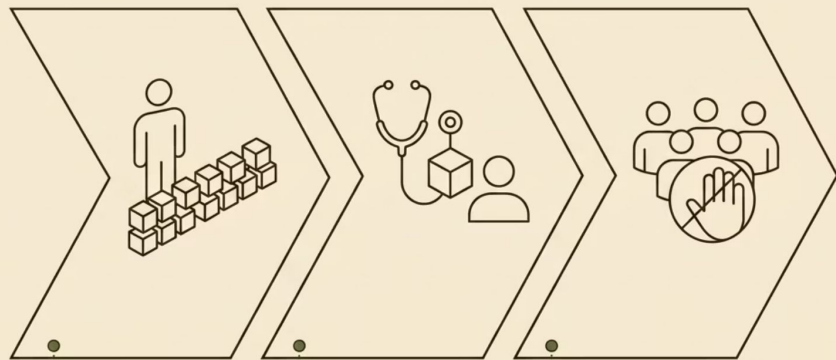


# The Structural Context

## CRIMINALIZATION OF DRUGS

## LACK OF AFFIRMING HEALTHCARE

## STIGMA WITHIN LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES



LEGAL CONSEQUENCES  
DETER HELP-SEEKING

LGBTQ+ PEOPLE  
FACE BIAS AND  
REJECTION

SHAME PREVENTS  
OPEN CONVERSATION

People Aren't the Problem. Systems Are.

Harm reduction becomes necessary precisely because the systems designed to protect people have consistently failed queer and leather communities.

Criminalization forces harm underground. Healthcare stigma keeps people from disclosing. Internal community shame silences honest conversation.



Naming these structures is not an excuse. It's an accurate diagnosis that points toward real solutions.



# Resources & Community Support

You don't have to navigate this alone. The Bay Area has a network of organizations built specifically to support communities like ours without judgment.



Harm Reduction Orgs

Needle exchanges, Narcan distribution, drug checking services, and peer outreach programs throughout the Bay Area



LGBTQ+ Clinics

Affirming sexual health services, PrEP access, STI testing, and mental health care that honors your full identity



Peer Support Spaces

Community-led groups, sober socials, and mutual aid networks where lived experience is the credential

**Build your network of care. Share what you know. Knowledge shared is harm reduced.**





# Resources & Community Support



## Strut Health Center (Castro)

- PrEP/PEP, STI testing, sexual health care
- Specifically serves gay, bi, queer men & trans communities
- Chemsex-aware clinicians

## Lyon-Martin Community Health Services

- Trans-inclusive primary care, mental health, sexual health
- Historically rooted in queer women & trans communities

## Tom Waddell Urban Health Clinic

- Primary care + behavioral health
- Serves many LGBTQ+ and unhoused folks



# Resources & Community Support



## Magnet

- STI/HIV testing, PrEP navigation
- Walk-in friendly, low-barrier access

## UCSF Alliance Health Project

- LGBTQ+ affirming therapy, substance use support
- Strong integration of mental health + identity-affirming care

## Mission Neighborhood Health Center

- Inclusive care, PrEP, behavioral health
- Spanish-language access + culturally responsive services



# Resources & Community Support

 Peer Support Spaces

Castro Country Club

- Sober social space rooted in recovery community
- Harm reduction adjacent (not strictly abstinence-only culture)

Crystal Meth Anonymous (SF meetings widely available)

- Peer-led support for stimulant use
- Important presence in queer community spaces

SMART Recovery

- Non-12-step, evidence-informed recovery groups
- Increasing LGBTQ+ participation in SF

Trans Lifeline

- Peer support by and for trans people
- Not SF-specific but widely used locally



# Closing Reflection

## Pleasure

We deserve joy, sensation, and erotic freedom

## Consent

Every time, with every person, at every stage

## Care

For ourselves and for each other. That's what community means

## Survival

Staying alive is the prerequisite for everything else

"We deserve spaces where we can be free and safe enough to come back."

***What's one thing you'll do differently, or more intentionally, after today?***