

Tool Explainer: Harm Reduction Fidelity & Classification Tool (HR-FaCT)

Version 1.0 | 2026

Developed by

Gregory Berry

Affiliation

Strategic Peer Solutions

Why HR-FaCT Was Developed

Harm reduction is increasingly referenced in research, public health practice, and policy development. However, programs labeled as “harm reduction” can vary widely in philosophy, structure, and implementation. In many cases, interventions are described as harm reduction without clear criteria for determining whether they actually align with core harm reduction principles.

Currently, there is no widely adopted instrument for systematically assessing harm reduction fidelity across different settings.

The Harm Reduction Fidelity & Classification Tool (HR-FaCT) was developed to provide a structured and transparent framework for evaluating whether programs, policies, or interventions reflect the principles and practices associated with harm reduction.

What HR-FaCT Measures

HR-FaCT evaluates interventions across four key dimensions:

- Structural Integrity – Identifies structural elements that may contradict harm reduction principles
- Core Harm Reduction Fidelity – Assesses alignment with foundational harm reduction values
- Operational Implementation – Examines how harm reduction principles are translated into program design and practice
- Outcome Alignment – Evaluates whether program success metrics reflect harm reduction goals

The tool distinguishes between harm reduction classification and harm reduction fidelity, allowing researchers and practitioners to evaluate both whether an intervention represents harm reduction and how strongly it aligns with the framework.

Structure of the Tool

HR-FaCT consists of five sections:

Section A — Integrity Screening

Identifies structural contradictions to harm reduction principles, such as mandated participation with punitive consequences or abstinence-gated services.

Section B — Domain Classification

Categorizes the type(s) of harm reduction represented (e.g., substance use, criminal-legal diversion, housing, mental health, treatment, or structural policy).

Section C — Core Fidelity

Measures alignment with eight core harm reduction principles, including autonomy, voluntariness, pragmatism, dignity, and lived-experience integration.

Section D — Operational Fidelity

Evaluates how harm reduction principles are operationalized within program structure, service delivery, and workforce practices.

Section E — Outcome Alignment

Assesses whether program outcomes reflect harm reduction objectives rather than abstinence-only frameworks.

Scoring Framework

HR-FaCT items are scored on a 0–4 scale based on the strength of available evidence.

Scores are calculated for three domains:

- Core Fidelity Score (CFS)
- Operational Fidelity Score (OFS)
- Outcome Alignment Score (OAS)

These scores are combined to produce the Overall Fidelity Index (OFI):

$$\text{OFI} = (0.40 \times \text{CFS}) + (0.40 \times \text{OFS}) + (0.20 \times \text{OAS})$$

This weighted structure prioritizes alignment with harm reduction principles and their implementation while also considering outcome measurement practices.

Applications

HR-FaCT can be used across a wide range of settings, including:

- Program evaluation
- Implementation science research
- Systematic reviews of harm reduction interventions
- Policy analysis

- Quality improvement initiatives
- Comparative evaluation of harm reduction models

The framework is designed to function across diverse intervention types, including public health programs, criminal-legal diversion initiatives, housing interventions, clinical services, and community-based harm reduction efforts.

Access and Citation

The HR-FaCT toolkit, scoring codebook, and supporting materials are available through the Open Science Framework.

Citation:

Berry, G. (2026). Harm Reduction Fidelity & Classification Tool (HR-FaCT). Strategic Peer Solutions. Open Science Framework.

Version 1.0 | 2026