EXPERIENCES FROM NORWAY

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Hearing in Finnish Parliament: Social and Health Commitee
18.06.2024
KAA 3/2023 vp

THE OPEN DRUG SCENE AS WE KNOW IT, OSLO



Sterke miljøer ønsker å flytte de narkomane fra Brugata. Men hvor til? Foto: Frederik Strindberg

This is recent, from newspapers online



Foto: Stian Lysberg Solum / NTB scanpix **Foto: NTB scanpix**

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THE OPEN DRUG SCENE AS WE KNOW IT, OSLO



This picture is from 50 years ago

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THE OPEN DRUG SCENE AS WE KNOW IT, OSLO



Their body language
tells us that the two passing by finds the behaviour in the right corner provocative

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Harm Reduction

- Harm reduction refers to policies, programmes and practices that aim to minimise the negative health, social and legal impacts associated with drug use, drug policies and drug laws.

- Harm reduction is grounded in justice and human rights. It focuses on positive change and on working with people without judgement, coercion, discrimination, or requiring that people stop using drugs as a precondition of support.

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Prindsen Mottakssenter

–a reception centre for harm reduction in the city center of Oslo



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Background

- Based on research by prof. emeritus Helge Waal & SERAF (centre for substance and addiction research) 2011: «Open Drug Scenes and Overdose Mortality – What to do?»

- Looked at experience from 5 European capitals with open drug scenes (Amsterdam, Lisbon, Wienna, Frankfurt and Zürich)

- What seemed to work?
  - Combining control measures with care measures
  - Establishing a dialogue with people with substance use disorder
  - Lasting, active efforts and political support

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Background

- Established April 1st 2012 as a result of the plan of action in the city center of Oslo
- Part of Oslo municipality and one of the Agency of Welfares institutions
- The target group is people over the age of 18 with problematic substance use of some kind
- With priority for inhabitants of Oslo with major additional problems such as somatic and mental health problems, unstable housing situation, social and economic difficulties as a result of their addiction

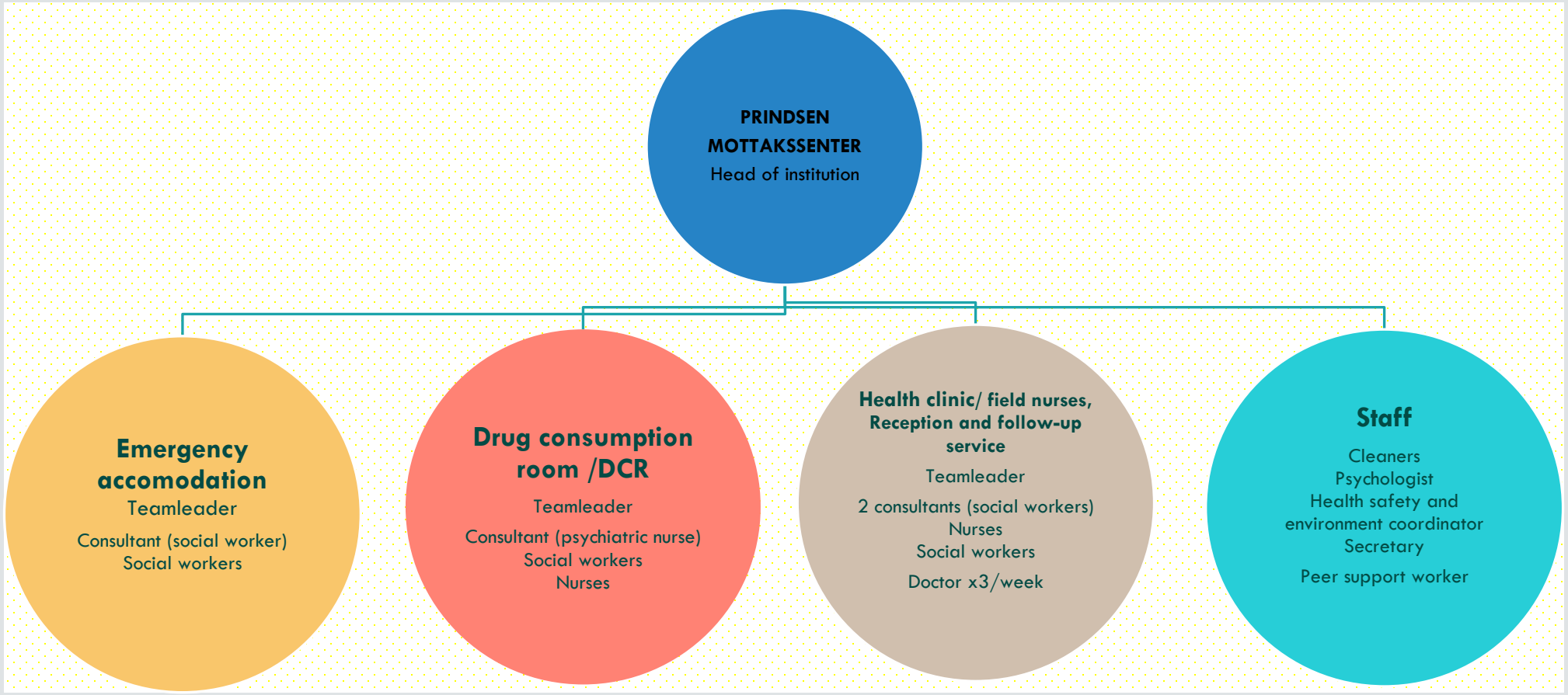
Why a reception centre?

- To connect social – and health services
- To connect (often re-connect) with other social- and health services in the system
- Co-location – the services now located at the centre where already established
- Coordination of harm-reduction work

- Center of expertise
- Develop methods
- Oversight – statistical data
- Part of: Plan of Action, Oslo City Center (2011 and ongoing)

Organization map

-this makes the drug consumption room in Oslo an integrated model (others: mobile, specialized…)



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A DCR is not only about the intakes of illegal substances and the route of administration…

The ground floor offers:

Field nurses:

- ✓ A drop-in clinic, free of charge
- ✓ General health check-up and treatment
- ✓ Wound and abscess care
- ✓ Pregnancy tests & check for STD's
- ✓ Vaccines, prescriptions, medications
- ✓ Doctor x 3/ week

Social workers:

- ✓ Assistance for accommodation
- ✓ Assistance to establish or resume contact with additional social services or others
- ✓ Assistance to return home for those who belong toanother part of the country, train tickets and other

Needle Exchange:

- ✓ Distribution of syringes/ needles: May: 124 863 syringes, 442 visits per day (up to 500 visits/ day)
- ✓ Distribution of foil for inhaling heroin and other paraphernalia for preparing substances
- ✓ Supply of take home opioid antidote nasal spray (naloxone)

HARM REDUCTION IS INCLUSION







This is from last years' local election -we arranged for our guests in the backyard.
No valid ID needed, the staff could verify –great success!

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The Drug Consumption Room / Supervised consumption facility

- Integrated model –others could be single standing/ specialized or mobile units
- Opened because of high number of overdose deaths
- Est. feb 1st 2005 –located at Prindsen reception centre since January 2014
- Offer facility to support inhalation, oral, intranasal and injection methods of consumption





THE DRUG CONSUMPTION ROOM (DCR)

- FOR: PEOPLE ABOVE 18 YEARS OF AGE, WITH LONG-TERM ADDICTION TO SUBSTANCES AND «HARMFUL INJECTION PRACTICES» (PWID'S) –WRITTEN LIKE THIS IN THE LAW
- PROVIDE: SAFE, CLEAN AND SECURE ENVIRONMENT, OVERDOSE PREVENTION, INFORMATION AND NO STIGMA
- STERILE EQUIPMENT WILL PREVENT INFECTIONS SUCH AS HEPATITIS AND OTHERS
- THE INTAKES ARE SUPERVISED BY TRAINED NURSES AND SOCIAL WORKERS ARE PRECENT AT ALL TIME
- LIFE-SAVING FIRST AID IN CASE OF AN OVERDOSE
- FOCUS: «SWITCH» FROM INJECTION TO INHALATION –SAFER USE OF ALL SUBSTANCES

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Key figures:

- Visits per day: 170, up to 200
- Mostly heroin –but we allowed only heroin the first 14 years (due to risk of overdose, specified in the law that regulates) -then amphetamine, benzodiazephines or a combination, most intakes are by injection
- Use of facilities for inhalation is increasing (70/ 30)
- Increase also in stimulants –crack use is the newest addition
- Before the pandemic aprox 300 overdoses/ year

43 429

Total number of intakes 2023

2022: 35 106

Now per mont: 4400

0

Number of deaths (ever)

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STAFF TRAINING ON A REGULAR BASIS





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ASSISTED INJECTION IS NURSING, CARE AND A WAY OF ESTABLISHING RELATION



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HE WOULD NOT HAVE LET ME





The opposite of addiction isn't sobriety. It's connection.

JOHANN HARI

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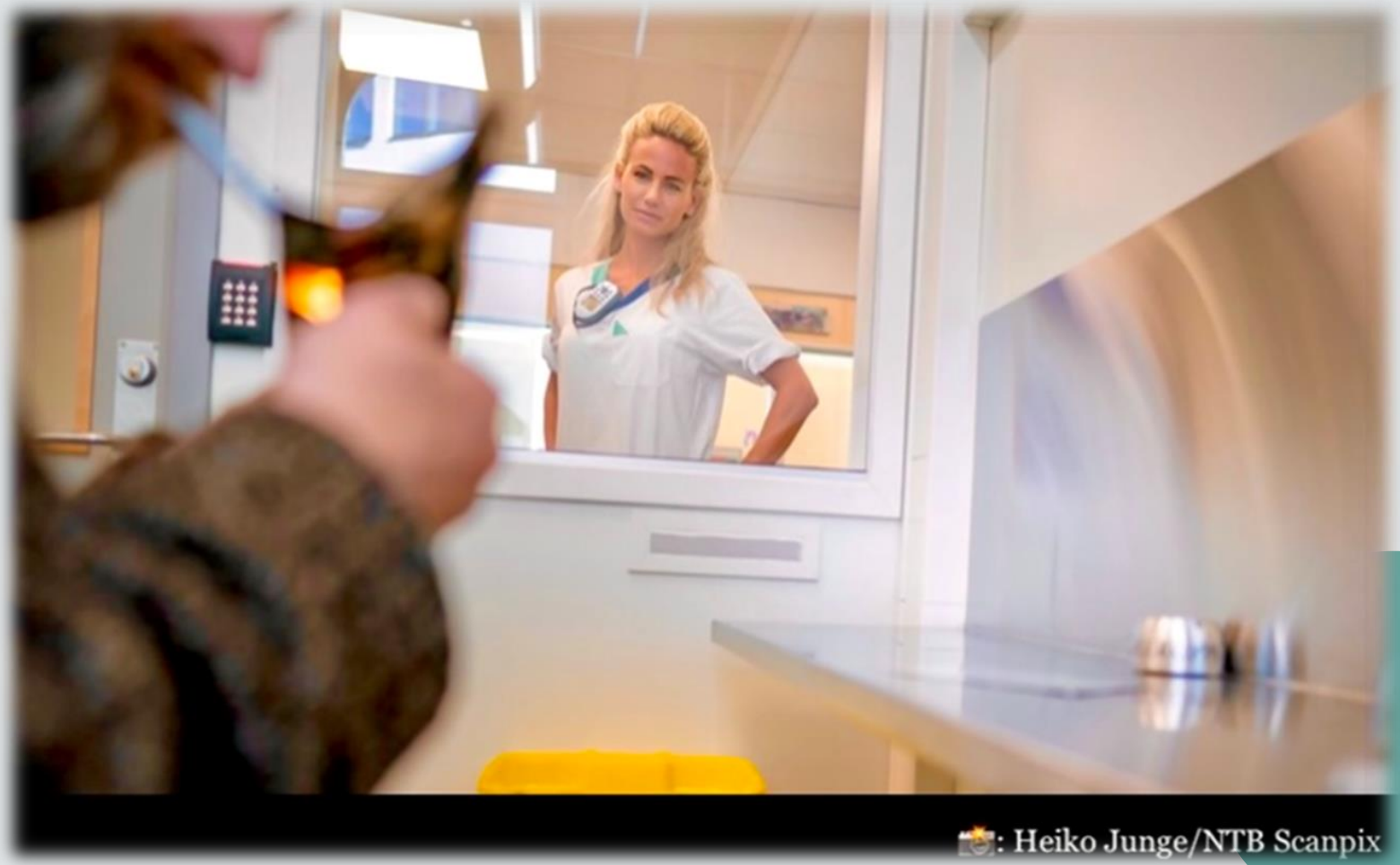
WHY CHOOSE THIS?





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WHEN YOU CAN CHOOSE THIS?



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HIGLY RELEVANT COLLABORATION IS ATTENDING WITH NURSES AT PUBLIC FIRST AID STUNTS LIKE THIS (X2/ YEAR)



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THE AMBULANCE STOPPING BY AT CHRISTMAS SHOWS THAT WE ARE APPRECIATED





Thoughts for the future

I you where to open a DCR, please consider:

- ✓ Marginalized groups within the already marginalized group
- ✓ Group getting older –disabled, somatic disease
- ✓ On the other hand –expected lenght of life
- ✓ Stimulants –crack cocaine in Europe
- ✓ Macro DRC's
- ✓ Safety
- ✓ Turnover
- ✓ Recruiting staff –health personell and nurses
- ✓ Prevention of staff burnout



Thank you

