

É DE LEI DROP-IN CENTRE



The É de Lei Coexistence Center is a non-profit civil society organization that has been working since 1998 to promote the harm and damage reduction and damages, both social and health related, associated with drug use.

Our **purpose** is to promote an ethical perspective of care in the field of drugs, expanding people's possibility of choosing and deconstructing prejudices, as well as encouraging a culture that guarantees rights and differences.

Our **mission** is to co-create and disseminate references and practices of care and harm reduction strategies based on the work with people who use drugs, with those working in the intersectoral network, with the academia and the public management, aiming at a political incidence that transforms the logic of war to people.



What is Harm Reduction?

Harm reduction is an approach to the drug phenomenon that aims to minimize social and health damages associated with the use of psychoactive substances.

In Brazil, HR dates from the late 1980s with the exchange of used syringes for sterile ones in the scenes of injecting drugs use, in order to contain the spread of Hepatitis and HIV/AIDS, since the sharing of syringes was a constant practice.

Since then, harm reduction strategies have been extended to different drugs and different forms of use. The work in HR today has a broader perspective, promoting individual and social rights of drug users.

There is no formula to be followed when it comes to harm reduction. Invention and creativity are the organizing principles of action on the HR. Hearing about a person's pattern of use, their complaints about it and thinking together about strategies that make sense so that the use minimizes the harm related to consumption is the big challenge. Undressing judgments, prohibitions, moralisms and being with those who want to talk about their life and the relationship established with psychoactive substances.

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Our actions are aimed at the development of citizenship and the defense of the Human Rights of people who use drugs, especially in contexts of vulnerability. These actions are concentrated in five cores:



Strategic Management and Operational Management Core

It aims to take care of the integrity, health and institutional sustainability of É de Lei, monitoring the current projects. This core starts from a global and strategic vision of the Institution, guaranteeing a direction aligned with the purposes of É de Lei, the political context and the strategies agreed between all of the teams.



Teaching and Research Core

We consider it essential to broaden the debate and exchange practical and theoretical experiences in the field of harm reduction. Based on É de Lei's experience in working with harm reduction, especially in contexts of vulnerability, and for the ethical and political commitment to promote health care and the guarantee of rights for people who use drugs, our Teaching and Research Core offers training in harm reduction, technical and scientific events on drugs and HR, partnerships with university internship programs and collaboration with scientific research.



Communication and Advocacy Core

É de Lei believes in the power to politically influence decisions that affect people who use drugs. In addition, we believe that expanding the debate on the topic and disseminating good care practices are effective ways to guarantee rights. For us, these are ways to strengthen the organization and the collaborative construction of strategies, together with people who use drugs and the associated network, contemplating common needs and fighting for a drug policy that guarantees rights for all people. In this way, the core is responsible for representing É de Lei in events, articulating institutional partnerships, conducting conjuncture analyzes and defining the advocacy strategies in the different spheres, in addition to guiding public dialogue for the dissemination of Harm Reduction.

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Harm Reduction Practices Core

We offer reception, guidance and referral for people who use drugs and their social interaction network at the Coexistence Center, we carry out interventions in the field, and we develop projects to promote harm reduction in various contexts, including the creation and testing of inputs and preventive strategies for people using different drugs in different **contexts**:

Festivities

The ResPire Project, by É de Lei, carries out harm reduction interventions in the context of parties.

The aim of this project is to encourage reflection, self-care and knowledge about drug use in the context of parties, aiming the promotion of health.

In addition to the therapeutic follow-up actions of people who are having negative experiences related to drug use at parties, ResPire also promotes prevention, training and dissemination of information on the use of psychoactive substances.

People living on the street

Since the beginning of our work, we started from the understanding that a person living on the street is exposed to an increased risk in relation to drug use, due to facing situations of vulnerability in several spaces, mainly in accessing basic rights, from food and water to public health and social assistance facilities.

These situations are aggravated depending on social markers that often overlap: women, mothers, LGBTQIAP +, black people, migrants, people in psychological distress, people who went through the criminal justice system, people who work with sex, people living with HIV and people who use drugs.

For É de Lei, the drugs, instead of being the root of the problems, usually show themselves as a possible remedy, given the context of vulnerability. For this reason, harm reduction is presented as an ethics of care coupled with a set of several possible interventions to break the cycle of vulnerabilities that involves the majority of people attended by É de Lei.

Women

The presence of more women applying harm reduction in recent years has promoted a significant increase in the approach to women and LGBTQIAP + populations.

As a result, two new initiatives were adopted by the harm reduction team: the Female Field and the Coexistence for Women. In them, we seek to open a safe space where women who are cisgender, trans, transvestites and non-binary people can share the particularities of the intersections with the use of drugs among a group closer and more sensitive to the particularities related to gender.

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Field

In the field activities, we access people who use drugs in their contexts of use. We operate historically in the region of Luz, known as “Cracolândia”, where many crack users are concentrated, however, we operate in several territories where there are situations of vulnerability.

Our proposal is that, through the bond established with the users, we can work on the notion of self-care, in addition to thinking together about strategies of care regarding the risks and damages related to the use of different substances.

We have as prevention inputs: silicone **cigarette holders**, which have the goal of encouraging the individual use of the pipe (in the cases of use of smoked cocaine/crack); **lip protectors**, which protect and collaborate in the healing of fissures and burns caused by the constant use of the aluminum pipe; **internal and external condoms and lubricating gel**, to reduce risks of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV/AIDS and Viral Hepatitis, in addition to **folders** with information on each of the most common substances in the lives of the people we work with: cocaine/crack, alcohol and marijuana. In addition to these materials having the function of concrete prevention, they bring them closer to the harm reduction team, and present the purpose of our work: to think about effective forms of care.

In the field work, we also invite users to visit the Coexistence Center, where we can better understand their demands and provide appropriate referrals.



Coexistence Center

É de Lei is considered the first Coexistence Center for people who use drugs in Brazil. It is a space for social interaction that promotes reflection and a change in posture in the face of little or no sexual prevention practices and the misuse of legal and illegal drugs, in addition to promoting self-care with health, autonomy and citizenship.

The proposal of "Coexistence", as a service of low requirements, is a democratic space, open to all, in which minimum rules of respect and sociability predominate. Since its foundation, the activity called "Lily Tea" happens in É de Lei, which consists of a conversation circle in which cohabitants and invited people discuss various topics related to the institution's work, that is: harm reduction, health, citizenship, drug policies, gender, public policies, stigmas and prejudice etc.

We carry out preventive workshops that include the distribution of informational materials, inputs and referrals and follow-up to social and health services for the population in vulnerable contexts.

Between structured activities and “free” moments of spontaneous interaction, coexistence is a space where exchanges take place respecting the time of each and every one. In it, it is possible to ask for help in a referral or guidance to access public health and assistance services, for example, access computers, listen to music, play dominoes, cards, or simply have a coffee and socialize with other people.