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The Vancouver Area

Network of Drug Users is

a group of users and

former users who work to

improve the lives of

people who use

illicit drugs through user-

based peer support and

education.

VANDU consists of a network of groups including:

-MIND BODY LOVE our youth outreach distributes drug information at raves.  
(phone: 604-215-4681)

-the Downtown Eastside User Group meets weekly providing peer support and a voice for people who use drugs.

-the Methadone Committee meets weekly to lobby for the humane and fair treatment of people on methadone.

VANDU's office is located at:  
524 Powell St.  
Vancouver, BC V6A 1G9  
hours are 10 AM to 4 PM  
Mondays to Thursdays  
604-253-5485 (mes: 683-4797)

VANDU is a health initiative and is funded through Lookout Emergency Aid Society by the Vancouver / Richmond Health Board.

VANDU

The  
Vancouver  
Area

Network

of  
Drug  
Users

membership

The Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users was formed in January of 1998 to bring groups of people who use drugs together.

VANDU is committed to *increasing the capacity of people who use drugs to live healthy productive lives.* We do this by affirming and strengthening people who use drugs to reduce harms to themselves and their communities

*We organize in our communities to save lives* by promoting local, regional and national harm reduction education and interventions.

VANDU challenges traditional client/provider relationships and empowers people who use drugs to design and implement harm reduction interventions.

VANDU believes in every person's right to health and well-being. We also believe that *all people are competent to protect themselves, their loved ones and their communities from drug related harm.*

VANDU is committed to *ensuring that drug users have a real voice in the creation of programs and policies designed to serve them.*

VANDU understands that *drug use ranges from total abstinence to severe abuse* -- we recognize that some ways of using drugs are clearly safer than others.

VANDU recognizes that *the realities of poverty, racism, social isolation, past trauma, mental illness and other social inequalities increases people's vulnerability to addiction* and reduces their capacity for effectively reducing drug related harm.

#### WHAT IS HARM REDUCTION?

Harm Reduction is a set of practical strategies with the goal of meeting drug users "where they are at" to help users reduce harms associated with their drug use. Together with the citizens of Vancouver VANDU works to minimize harmful effects of drug use by calling for effective well researched interventions such as: legal maintenance of drugs, housing for users and accessible detox and treatment. We can reduce deaths, illness and crime.

#### HOW DO I BECOME A MEMBER?

1. Come to VANDU sponsored group meetings regularly.
2. Review this pamphlet and see if you agree with VANDU's beliefs and definition of Harm Reduction.
3. Sign up and receive your VANDU membership card.
4. If you are a person who has not used, we welcome your support and involvement but request that you respect that *VANDU gives a voice to users.*

Call 253-5485 for more information.

VANDU respects that many people who are on welfare are unable to participate in volunteer groups without a small stipend for daily expenses.