



Mental health

Harm reduction, PWUD, Civil society, Stigma reduction, Thailand

Background: The Thailand Drug Users Network (TDN) operates in the northern and southern regions of Thailand, serving populations of people who use drugs (PWUD), particularly those who inject drugs. In collaboration with government agencies, TDN has implemented mental health services targeting men, women, and LGBTQ+ individuals. The services focus on mental health screening, care, and the introduction of innovative assessment tools to address the unique needs of this population.



Methods: TDN provides community-based mental health services, bringing professionals into local settings to offer confidential support. This approach is crucial for women who use drugs, as they often face social stigma and are reluctant to seek help. The establishment of trust and confidentiality allows women to openly discuss personal concerns in a safe environment. TDN also provides care for those with severe emotional distress, ensuring that high-risk individuals, including those with suicidal tendencies, receive urgent intervention.



Results: The collaboration between TDN and local hospitals has facilitated access to formal healthcare services for PWUD, particularly vulnerable women. Regular behavioral assessments and follow-up appointments ensure that clients receive continuous care, addressing both their mental health and substance use challenges. This partnership has proven effective in reaching marginalized populations, providing comprehensive care and reducing community stigma.

Conclusion: By working together, civil society organizations like TDN and government health agencies are delivering essential mental health services to PWUD, ensuring safety, reducing stigma, and promoting long-term mental well-being. The community-based model fosters trust and supports individuals in a culturally sensitive manner, helping integrate PWUD into formal healthcare systems while addressing their mental health needs.

