

The Case for Safe Injection Sites
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Harm reduction for injection drugs users started with community based programs to provide clean needles and has grown to include supervised injection facilities. It is critical to discuss the impacts of harm reduction and supervised injection sites on society and on people with substance addictions. This article examines 'Embraced by the Needle', written by the physician Gabor Mate, examining how the doctor contextualizes addiction and the impacts of safe injection sites. In so doing, this essay will argue the thesis that safe injection sites are necessary because they provide a valuable space where drug users can feel safe, contributing ultimately to a lack of harm to themselves and the wider community as a whole.

The article begins by discussing the psychology of addictions and the case of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, one of the most poverty stricken areas in the entire country. Many who are addicted to drugs and inhabit this area also suffer from mental illness, Mate writes, "like Anna, a 32-year old poet, many are HIV positive or have full-blown AIDS" as well. According to Mate, "the methadone I prescribe for their opiate dependence does little for the emotional anguish compressed in every heartbeat of these driven souls," he writes. The use of methadone as a treatment for opiate addiction is part of what compassionate physicians like Mate describe to help patients wean off opiate addictions. According to Mate, "methadone starves off the torment of opiate withdrawal, but, unlike heroin, it does not create a 'high' for regular users." Mate explains his methodology on the basis that physical and emotion ailments often undermine addiction.

Works Cited

Mate, G. (2013). Embraced by the Needle. Available online:
<http://drgabormate.com/article/embraced-by-the-needle/> (Accessed October 28th
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