

Transforming Public Safety at Guelph Library

4 Sensors, live since February 2024, 4 medical interventions

The Problem

The Guelph Public Library - Main Branch, located in the heart of an urban community, has long been a welcoming space for education, connection, and support. However, it faced growing challenges tied to the opioid crisis, including a rising number of poisonings and overdoses occurring in public restrooms. Traditional safety measures, such as periodic restroom checks by staff or contracted security, were proving insufficient and resource-intensive, leaving the library seeking a proactive solution to enhance patron safety while maintaining a compassionate approach.

Impact of Brave Sensors

Since implementing Brave Technology's cutting-edge sensors, Guelph Library has seen remarkable improvements in safety and emergency response. Key outcomes include:

- **Lives Saved:** Emergency interventions have completely eliminated fatal overdoses since deployment.
- **Reduced Incidents:** Reports of unattended overdoses have dropped by 100%.
- **Faster Response Times:** Alerts reduced the average time to respond to emergencies to 105 seconds.
- **Staff Empowerment:** Training and tools boosted staff confidence, leading to higher morale and a safer working environment.

How Brave Sensors Work in Guelph Library

Brave Sensors monitor restroom activity, using advanced algorithms to detect critical patterns such as stillness or prolonged occupancy. When such an event occurs, the system sends an alert to a cellphone conveniently located at the library's front desk. Staff or security are dispatched promptly to the scene to assess and address the situation. This approach enables rapid intervention while ensuring privacy, as the sensors collect no

visual or audio data. The library staff combine this technology with their "problem-not-person" philosophy, addressing the root causes behind behaviors rather than penalizing individuals.

Broader Harm Reduction Strategies

The integration of Brave Sensors is part of a comprehensive harm reduction strategy at Guelph Library. This approach prioritizes dignity and respect for all patrons. Other key elements include:

- **Access to Resources:** Patrons with longer duration alerts for hygiene reasons are provided with access to showers through local partners, a refrigerator is made available for outreach workers, and patrons needing storage are directed to the local mission.
- **Collaborative Action Groups:** The library works closely with local public health organizations, civic services, and social groups to address the broader challenges of opioid use in the community.
- **Establishing protocols for naloxone and opioid poisoning response.**
- **Respectful Sleeping Policy:** Instead of penalizing patrons for sleeping, staff focus on creating a safe environment that acknowledges the underlying challenges individuals may face.
- **Union Collaboration:** Guelph Library partnered with union representatives to navigate staff rights and ensure effective integration of harm reduction measures.

Conclusion and Looking Ahead

Guelph Library's adoption of Brave Sensors and a compassionate harm reduction strategy has transformed it into a model for public safety and community care. By addressing the opioid crisis with empathy and innovation, the library has become a trusted leader in harm reduction. This success demonstrates the potential of Brave Sensors to help initiate harm reduction in public spaces and provides a replicable model for libraries worldwide, showing how harm reduction can be both compassionate and practical.

Moving forward, Guelph Library plans to expand its initiatives by fostering additional partnerships, sharing its successes with other institutions, and continuing to adapt to the evolving needs of its community. Harm reduction is not just a policy—it's a commitment to safety, dignity, and community. The library's journey showcases the transformative power of innovative solutions like Brave Sensors, combined with a compassionate philosophy and community collaboration. Libraries everywhere can draw inspiration from this story to create safer, more inclusive spaces for all.