

HIV Training & Resources for Substance Use Disorder Programs

People with substance use disorder (SUD) are disproportionately affected by human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). You should know about the risks of infection. People with SUD may participate in behaviors that increase the risk of acquiring and transmitting HIV, such as sharing injection drug equipment or engaging in sexual behaviors that increase HIV risk. SUD can increase the risk of getting HIV and can negatively impact HIV care, treatment and related health outcomes.

HIV Basics

While there is no cure for HIV, it can be effectively managed as a chronic illness with antiretroviral therapy (ART). Individuals can take proper steps to help stop the spread of HIV by knowing their own status and remaining safe.

- HIV is a manageable chronic illness.
- HIV continues to have a disproportionate impact on certain populations, particularly racial and ethnic minorities, transgender women and gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (MSM).

HIV Transmission and Prevention

Understanding how HIV can and cannot be transmitted is at the core of preventing new infections. HIV is a rapidly changing virus, but, it is also preventable.

How is HIV transmitted?

- Unprotected sexual intercourse
- Sharing needles for injection drugs
- Mother to child transmission

What is PrEP and PEP?

- **PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis)** is a once-daily pill that people who are HIV negative take to prevent getting HIV from sex or injection drug use. When taken as prescribed, PrEP is highly effective for preventing HIV.
- **PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis)** means taking medicine to prevent HIV after possible exposure. PEP should be used only in emergency situations and must be started within 72 hours after recent possible exposure to HIV.

Should I test for HIV?

- Testing is the first step in HIV diagnosis and preventing the spread of HIV.
- CDC recommends everyone 13 to 64 years old get tested for HIV at least once as part of their routine care.

What is “Treatment as Prevention”?

- “Treatment as Prevention” refers to a person taking HIV medication to lower their viral load and prevent sexual transmission of HIV.
- People cannot transmit HIV through sexual contact when their viral load is undetectable. (The term “undetectable” means the virus is too low to be measured.)

Substance Use and HIV

Research suggests that substance use, including alcohol, methamphetamine, cocaine, opioids and inhalants, increases sexual behaviors that are associated with increased the likelihood of acquiring HIV (for example, sex without a condom).

How does substance use accelerate the progression of HIV?

- Substances (especially methamphetamine) can activate viral replication, resulting in the increase of viral load in the body.
- People using drugs may decrease their medication adherence (that is, failure to take medicine daily).

Harm Reduction

Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use. Harm reduction is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of people who use drugs. Harm reduction is shame reduction.

Harm Reduction Resources: Substance Use and Sex

- Building Healthy Online Communities - <https://bhocpartners.org/>
- Testing (in person and at home) - <https://together.takemehome.org>
- Hooking up and meth - <https://tweaker.org/home/>
- Nation Harm Reduction Coalition: Opioid Overdose Basics - <https://harmreduction.org/issues/overdose-prevention/overview/overdose-basics/responding-to-opioid-overdose/>

Opioid Overdose Prevention

Naloxone, brand name “Narcan,” is a non-addictive, harmless and effective medication that can reverse an opiate overdose. Within minutes after Naloxone is administered, this life saving medication can often allow the affected person to breathe again.

Where can I find resources for support with HIV or SUD?

Minnesota Department of Human Services

- [HIV/AIDS Programs/Services](#)
- [Alcohol, Drug, and Other Addictions Program Overviews](#)

AIDSLine

- [AIDSLine Website](#) & [HIV Resource Guide](#)
- 612-373-2437 Twin Cities Metro area | 800-248-2437 Statewide
- Text AIDSLine to 839863

Fast-Tracker Minnesota

- [Find SUD Treatment Providers](#)

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