



# Engaging Individuals who Inject Drugs to Reduce Harm

## Establish yourself as a resource for people who inject drugs (PWID)

**Open conversations**  
support people "where they are at" <sup>1,2</sup>

Encourage risk reduction and highlight opportunities for education <sup>2</sup>

Keep people engaged in health care to increase access to substance use services <sup>2</sup>

Ensure PWID are comfortable returning for care or additional resources <sup>2</sup>

**Minimize assumptions,**  
be open to everyone's unique experience <sup>2</sup>

PWID are interested in and capable of making changes to improve their health and safety <sup>2</sup>

Strong provider relationships lead to honest discussions, advice adoption, and seek timely care <sup>3</sup>

Have compassion as PWID's health care experiences may include betrayals of trust, denial of care, or engagement of police <sup>4</sup>

**Accept ambivalence,**  
untimely pushes for abstinence are alienating <sup>1</sup>

Readiness is key to substance use treatment efficacy <sup>1</sup>

Conversations about reducing harm do not condone drug use, but demonstrate compassionate pragmatism <sup>2</sup>

PWID who feel judged or condemned are unlikely to honestly discuss drug use <sup>1</sup>

## Overdose Prevention

**ASK** "Do you have naloxone (Narcan) available in the case of an overdose?"

Good Samaritan laws in NH protect those that call 911 for an overdose <sup>5</sup>



Naloxone is available in NH at:  
• The Doorways Recovery Organizations  
• Pharmacies (no prescription needed)  
• Syringe Service Programs



Syringe Service Programs in New Hampshire

## Accessing Sterile Syringes and Safe Supplies

**ASK**

"Are you able to get clean supplies including syringes, cookers, and cottons?"



Syringe, cooker, and cotton reuse or sharing have a risk of infection including viruses (Hepatitis C and HIV) and bacteria (abscess and endocarditis) <sup>7</sup>



Syringe Service Programs (SSPs) provide clean supplies. A list of New Hampshire SSPs can be found at: [www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/bchs/std/documents/sspregistrations.pdf](http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/bchs/std/documents/sspregistrations.pdf) <sup>8</sup>



NH pharmacies can sell syringes (any amount) without a prescription <sup>9</sup>. Contact your local pharmacies to ensure they are providing this important service



1 Needle + 1 Syringe + 1 Time = 0 Infections <sup>10</sup>



Clean syringes and cookers if reuse is required:  
1. Rinse the syringe with water until no blood is seen  
2. Rinse the syringe with bleach  
3. Rinse again with water <sup>11</sup>

## Safer Needle Disposal

**ASK**

"Are you able to safely get rid of syringes and needles?"



Syringe disposal in NH: <sup>8,12</sup>  
Some NH hospitals  
Syringe service programs

### Dispose of a household sharps container when it is 2/3 full:

**1** Close lid and tape shut. Label container.



**2** Dispose using a sharps collection or mail-back program.



**DO NOT** put sharps containers in RECYCLING!

Or use an empty household container <sup>11</sup>



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## Safer Use

ASK

"What steps do you take to keep yourself safe when using?"

Never use alone <sup>13</sup>

Have someone who can call 911 in case of an overdose <sup>13</sup>

Use caution with new drug sources <sup>13</sup>

Test drugs or ask around about overdoses <sup>13</sup>

Start with a small amount (test shot) <sup>13</sup>

More can be injected but, the drug can never be taken back <sup>13</sup>

ASK

"How do you prevent infections and injury to your veins?"

Prevent Infections <sup>13</sup>



Wash hands with soap and water



Disinfect injection site with alcohol



Tourniquet use = fewer sticks



Needle bevel up = less skin damage



Remove tourniquet before injection

## Preventative Health Care Screening, Testing, and Education

HIV testing is recommended at least annually for PWID

- Include HIV 1/2 antibody and HIV 1 p24 antigen testing (positive 21 days after infection)<sup>14</sup>
- Consider discussing PreExposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention<sup>14</sup>

Hepatitis C antibody testing is recommended periodically for PWID

- If exposure may have occurred within 6 months consider HCV RNA testing<sup>15</sup>

Keep up to date with immunizations

- Check Tdap, HPV, Hepatitis A and B vaccination status and immunize as needed<sup>16</sup>

Discuss safe sexual practices

- Provide condoms if applicable<sup>16</sup>
- Review pregnancy prevention options if applicable<sup>16</sup>

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