Support Services in the care of HIV/HCV Patients

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Overcoming Barriers to Treatment Initiation

- Substance Abuse Counselors
- Opioid Dependence Treatment
- Patient Education
- Peer-Based Counseling
- Group Counseling
- Clinic Based Injections
Principles for managing health-care relationships with substance-using patients.

Establish a climate of mutual respect
Maintain a professional approach that reflects the aim of enhancing patients’ well-being; avoid creating an atmosphere of blame or judgment
Educate patients about their medical status, proposed treatments, and their adverse effects
Include patients in decision making
If possible, establish a multidisciplinary team consisting of primary care physicians, HIV specialists, psychiatrists, social workers, and nurses
Have a single primary care provider coordinate the care delivered by such a team, to maximize consistency and continuity
Define and agree on the roles and responsibilities of both the health-care team and the patient
Set appropriate limits and respond consistently to behavior that violates those limits
Minimize barriers to participation (e.g., allow flexibility in adherence to appointment schedules and allow drop-in visits, to the extent possible)

While recognizing that patients must set their own goals for behavior change, work with patients to achieve commitment to realistic goals for healthier behaviors
Acknowledge that abstinence is not always a realistic goal; emphasize measures to reduce risks for patients who continue to use drugs
Acknowledge that sustaining abstinence is difficult and that success may require several attempts
Be familiar with local resources for the treatment of drug users
Pitfalls to avoid
- Unrealistic expectations
- Frustration
- Anger
- Moralizing
- Blame
- Withholding therapy

NOTE. This table is adapted from [102] and is reprinted with permission from Wiley.

Opioid Dependence Treatment

• methadone maintenance treatment
  – diminishes and often eliminate opioid use
• buprenorphine
  – office-based pharmacotherapy for opioid addiction
  – Physicians who complete a defined training can apply for a waiver to the Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000


Center for Substance Abuse Treatment Buprenorphine physician training events. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, US Department of Health and Human Services; Available at:http://buprenorphine.samhsa.gov/training.html
Alcohol Use Intervention

• Brief interventions by medical providers focused on problem use of alcohol
  – client-centered counseling
  – reflective listening
  – nonjudgmental demeanor
  – Core elements include:
    • assessing current levels of consumption
    • providing education regarding risks
    • assessing and facilitating motivation to alter alcohol consumption

Patient Support Services

- Providing essential support services helps improve patient retention:
  - case management
  - transportation
  - housing for the homeless

Patient Support Services

- Specialized tools to improve adherence:
  - electronic reminder system
  - directly observed therapy
  - cash incentives for attending scheduled medical appointments
