Improving Health Care with Drug Users
Explore factors that influence drug users’ access to and experience with health care.

Identify tools and resources to encourage better encounters between drug users and the health care system.

Develop skills for working with drug users on health care issues.
Name

Organization (if applicable)

One word that comes to mind when you think of health care with drug users
Training Guidelines

- Step up, Step Back
- Non-Judgment
- Use “I” Statements
- Agree to disagree
- Confidentiality
- Cell phones/texting
Harm Reduction

- Pragmatic

- Acknowledges reality

- Non-judgmental, non-punitive, non-coercive

- Not hinged on abstinence

- Low-threshold

- User driven
Why drug user health care?

- Drug use is associated with several unique health risks
- Drug users with the most needs are less likely to access health care on a regular basis
- Stigma and mistrust play a large role
Focus on HIV and Viral Hepatitis

- HIV and viral hepatitis prevention, care and treatment must be placed within the broad context of health care.
- Injection drug use accounts for ~16 percent of new HIV infections in the US.
- Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) among IDUs remains high.
Common misconceptions

Drug users don’t care about their health

- Can be proven false by syringe access / decreases in HIV, HCV

Drug users can’t manage medication regimens

- Can be proven false by HIV and HCV treatment experience

Drug users are only interested in getting narcotics

- There are actually much easier ways to get drugs
What are specific qualities that YOU value in your own health care?

What are specific qualities that you value in health care REFERRALS for clients?
Evaluating Referrals: Patient-EASE

- Patient-centered
- Efficient and Coordinated
- Accessible
- Safe and Confidential
- Effective/Competent
Where Do Drug Users Access Health Care?

- Emergency Rooms
- Clinics/Health Centers
- Syringe Exchange Programs (SEPs)
- Methadone/drug treatment programs
- Self-medicating
- 10 minute break -
“Quality Health Care is Your Right”: Workshop Curriculum

- 90-min workshop w/ drug using clients
- Promotes discussion about relationships with health care providers
- Reflects on meeting both drug users & health care providers “where they are at”
- Concepts can be incorporated into everyday dialogue.
GOAL: Practice the small group exercise and explore health care needs from the perspective of both HC providers and drug users.

- Perspectives:
  - Health Care Provider
  - Drug user

- Strategy Session and Reflection
Doctor-Patient Relationships

Doctor Concerns
- Treatment Adherence
- "Demanding" Behavior
- Regulations
- "Drug-seeking behavior"

Patient Concerns
- Insufficient pain management
- Judgment
- Withdrawal
- Getting needs met
- Confidentiality

Trust
Safety
Respect
Health
Time
Tips for Facilitators

- Plan well, know what you hope to get from the session
- Take advantage of “teachable moments”
- Use probing techniques
- Allow for silence/reflection
Strategies Review

- Keep the dialogue open
  - *It’s all bout the relationship!*

- Help participants navigate systems
  - *Make it work for them!*

- Create *information rich* referral guides
  - *Patient-EASE*

- Use a holistic approach
  - *Ex. Housing is health care*