Referral (from a doctor) to a rehabilitation provider can help people with HIV and/or Hep C manage their health problems and provide them with the support to continue to live as independently as possible.

INFORMATION FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS ON REHABILITATION SUPPORTS FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV & Hepatitis C

This information sheet outlines how health care providers and HIV Services Organizations can identify the health-related challenges that their patients/clients may experience and outline the rehabilitation services that can help address these challenges. Effective rehabilitation can:

• Improve treatment adherence through supporting people to stay on HIV and Hepatitis C (Hep C) medications
• Address negative side effects of medication (e.g. pain, neuropathy, fatigue, depression, cognitive problems) that may otherwise make adherence to treatment more difficult.

*Improved adherence to HIV treatment helps to keep viral loads low which in turn can prevent transmission of HIV* (Horn, Tim July, 2011 [http://www.aidsmeds.com/articles/hiv_prevention_hptn_2636_20845.shtml](http://www.aidsmeds.com/articles/hiv_prevention_hptn_2636_20845.shtml))

DO YOUR PATIENTS/CLIENTS...

Experience fatigue, pain and other physical symptoms?

Have difficulty managing:

- Personal care, chores, work or leisure activities?
- The impact of HIV & Hep C on their life (e.g. financial situation, sex drive)?
- Feelings (e.g. stress, anxiety) about having HIV and/or Hep C?
- Their family and friends responses to HIV and/or Hep C?
- How their partner deals with HIV and/or Hep C?

COULD YOUR PATIENTS/CLIENTS BENEFIT FROM LEARNING ABOUT...

Types of exercises that can improve their overall health?

Assistive devices that can help with their activities of daily living?

How rehabilitation can help prevent HIV transmission?

How rehabilitation can help to manage their health, including side effects of medication?

How HIV and/or Hep C can impact their employment, income support and extended health-care benefits?

How to talk about HIV and/or Hep C with their employer and colleagues at work?

If you answered YES to any of these questions, then your patient/client may benefit from accessing a rehabilitation service.

REHABILITATION TEAM

Referral (from a doctor) to a rehabilitation provider can help people with HIV and/or Hep C manage their health problems and provide them with the support to continue to live as independently as possible.

**Physical Health:**
- Physiotherapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Speech-language Pathologists
- Psychiatrists

**Work Related Rehabilitation:**
- Vocational Counsellors
- Rehabilitation Counsellors
- Occupational Therapists

**Mental Health & Cognitive Rehabilitation:**
- Psychiatrists / Psychologist
- Psychotherapists
- Other Mental Health Counsellors
- Occupational Therapists

**Complementary Therapies:**
- Acupuncture
- Massage therapy
- Chiropractic
- Traditional healing
- Yoga, meditation, tai chi
A Physiotherapist can help your patient/client:
- Manage his/her pain and fatigue
- Build endurance and strengthen muscles
- Improve range of motion
- Address gait and balance problems
- Improve functional limitations
- Assess and ascribe assistive devices

An Occupational Therapist can help your patient/client manage everyday activities through:
- Home or workplace adaptation to meet his/her individual needs
- Assistive devices
- Implement cognitive and mental health strategies (e.g. to assist with medication schedules and organizing other activities)
- Support systems in his/her community

A Speech-Language Pathologist can help your patient/client by:
- Assessing and treating communication (speech, language, or cognition) and swallowing issues.
- Maximizing oral and written communication skills for staying at or returning to work

A Physiatrist can help your patient/client:
- Regain and/or improve movement or physical functioning
- Manage his/her chronic pain

Mental Health and Cognitive Rehabilitation
A psychiatrist, psychologist, psychotherapist, occupational therapist or other mental health worker can help your patient/client to:
- Cope with the emotional impact of HIV and/or Hep C through therapy/counselling
- Develop strategies and techniques to relieve anxiety and stress, reduce feelings of isolation, deal with a reduced sex drive and maintain personal relationships and support networks
- Connect with peer support groups and improve self-esteem
- Access prescribed medication if necessary (by psychiatrists only)

Work Related Rehabilitation
Occupational therapists, vocational rehabilitation programs and some AIDS service organizations can help your patient/client stay in or return to the workforce after a period of illness by assessing, evaluating, and managing disability that interferes with his/her ability to obtain and maintain employment, including work site adaptations.

Complementary Therapies
Some people with HIV and/or Hep C also find that complementary therapies are helpful to address the many physical, mental or emotional challenges they face. These can include:
- acupuncture
- massage therapy
- chiropractic
- yoga, meditation, tai chi
- traditional healing

To find out more, please visit www.HIVandRehab.ca

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