

HEPATITIS SEE – LOW LITERACY HEPATITIS C GUIDE FOR PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS

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Available resources for Hepatitis C (HCV) require high literacy skills and are not directly targeted towards people who inject drugs (PWID). A HCV resource that is accessible and discreetly distributed with up to date information on testing and treatment, targeting PWID who may not access health care is urgently required. A Cohealth innovation grant was utilised to develop a low literacy HCV resource for PWID, in conjunction with the Hepatitis Nurse Consultant from Alfred Health. Themes were identified through consultation with service providers-clinicians, nurse specialists, primary health peer workers (PHPW), people with lived experience as well as low literacy experts. Four themes emerged and these became the basis of the resource - transmission, treatment, engagement and stigma and discrimination. Artists with a lived experience of HCV and long term service involvement were employed to provide a visual interpretation of the themes, under the direction of the PHPW. Ongoing reviews were conducted by the steering committee and focus groups were held with clients to ensure the resource was credible and acceptable to the target audience.

We anticipate the release of the resource in late July. Following this release a formal review will be undertaken by the steering committee to assess the usefulness of the resource. The review will also evaluate any increase in client engagement with the current community specialist HCV services. Provision of up to date information on HCV monitoring and treatment targeted to PWID must be made a priority by health services and state based hepatitis organisations, if the roll out of new HCV treatment is to be a success.

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