

# BASIC PRINCIPLES

## **Basic Principles for Treatment and Psychosocial Support of Drug Dependent People Living with HIV/AIDS**



**World Health  
Organization**



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**Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse  
Department of Ethics, Trade, Human Rights and Health Law  
Department of HIV/AIDS**



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# Content

Acknowledgements	2
Foreword	3
The Principles in Brief	5
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Principle 1</b>	
Human rights of drug dependent people with HIV/AIDS	10
<b>Principle 2</b>	
Evidence-base for treatment, care and psychosocial support	13
<b>Principle 3</b>	
Appropriate treatment and psychosocial support	16
<b>Principle 4</b>	
Equitable access to HIV/AIDS care and treatment including antiretroviral therapy (ART)	19
<b>Principle 5</b>	
Supportive environments to enable and facilitate treatment, care and psychosocial support	21
<b>Principle 6</b>	
Client participation	23
<b>Principle 7</b>	
Participation of community and other stakeholders	25
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>27</b>
Key documents	28

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## Foreword

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Over the past two decades, HIV infection has been added to the serious risks of injection drug use, and the diffusion of HIV associated with drug injecting not only creates medical and social problems for the millions of injecting drug users worldwide but for society at large. Yet many drug dependent people living with HIV/AIDS do not enjoy equitable access to HIV/AIDS treatment, care and support services for HIV/AIDS as a result of stigma and discrimination, of their own reluctance to seek treatment, and of the unavailability of HIV/AIDS treatment in programmes for injecting drug users.

This guidance document, built on expert advice and developed in consultation with UNAIDS, articulates the central principles for treatment and support of HIV-positive injecting drug users. It is addressed to policy makers, treatment planners and service providers, particularly those who deal with substance-dependent populations, and to patient organizations. It is intended not only to help ensure that this population has fair access to anti-retroviral and other HIV-related treatment—in line with that available to persons who are not substance-dependent—but to stimulate coordination and communication among healthcare providers in different delivery systems. Building on existing guidance documents for HIV prevention and treatment in a wide variety of settings, this document also describes components and concrete actions to promote these principles in practice. While the principles and implementing steps are interrelated and interdependent, in the interest of promoting a broad view of the unique problems posed by the group at hand, each principle is treated separately.

On behalf of the World Health Organization, we express gratitude to all those, both the expert consultants and the dedicated staff, who provided advice and assistance in the preparation of this document, with the aim of ensuring that people living with drug dependence and HIV/AIDS are not deprived of their right to the highest attainable standard of health and the treatment of life-threatening conditions that this entails. We hope that this document will prove helpful in overcoming the fragmentation of health-care and social services which results in injecting drug users not receiving adequate ongoing care.

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