

There are things you can do that will help if you want to make changes to your drug use.

If you want to:

- + Cut down
- + Stop for a while or altogether
- + Gain more control.

MAKING CHANGES TO YOUR DRUG

USE CAN TAKE TIME

It can take a few attempts and might mean trying different things until you find what's right for you. Don't be too hard on yourself if things don't work out the first time.

INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

A Needle and Syringe Program (NSP or the exchange) worker can give you information, help you find services and make appointments for you.

DirectLine

1800 888 236 • www.directline.org.au
24-hour. If you want to talk to someone about your drug use or find a support service.

Counselling Online

www.counsellingonline.org.au

Understand Ice

www.understandice.org.au

SAFER
USING **15**

**CUTTING
DOWN,
GETTING
OFF**

Agency details:

Cover: stock photo
posed by model

© Penington Institute, June 2019. Email: info@penington.org.au

Changing drug use can also mean big changes in your life. It might affect you in ways you don't expect.

It's best to get as much support as you can – doing things by yourself is harder and could be dangerous, as withdrawal can have serious health effects.

Think about who you want to support you – family, friends or workers. Remember that people may have different views on what you need to do about your drug use. Make sure the decisions you make are right for you.

[Before you make any changes, speak to a drug and alcohol worker or other health professional such as a GP.](#)

They can help you:

- Focus on the reasons you want to make changes. This will help when things get tough
- Set goals for yourself so that you're not trying to do too much too quickly
- Create a plan to reach your goals
- Manage any withdrawals.

A worker at a Needle and Syringe Program (NSP or the exchange) can put you in touch with services that can help, or you can call DirectLine on 1800 888 236 for details for drug and alcohol services in your area.

RISK OF OVERDOSE

If you have had a break from using even for a couple of days, your tolerance will have dropped and so could you!

If you use after a break, start with a small taste.

There's always more risk when you use alone, especially after a break or detox.

Speak to an NSP worker about where to get naloxone.

Naloxone temporarily reverses the effects of opioid overdose, which will allow the person to breathe again.

There is more information on naloxone in the brochure titled 'Overdose'.

Opioid Replacement Therapy (ORT)

ORT – also known as pharmacotherapy or Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) – is medication that is given to people who want to stop using drugs like heroin.

There is more information on this in the brochure titled 'Methadone and Suboxone®'.

TYPES OF SERVICES THAT CAN HELP

Non-residential withdrawal

Community programs which support people to reduce or stop their alcohol or drug use with the support of medical professionals.

Most services will want you to have a friend or family member around to support you because withdrawal can be hard to go through.

Residential withdrawal

Programs that support people to withdraw from alcohol or drugs in a supervised residential facility or hospital. You usually stay for 6–12 days, depending on your situation.

Residential services have:

- Medicated and non-medicated withdrawal
- Information sessions and discussion groups
- Planning for when you leave.

Therapeutic day rehabilitation

Non-residential treatment with an intensive program over a period of weeks. It includes counselling and activities to build life skills and promote general wellbeing. There are activities about things like managing money and eating well.

Residential rehabilitation

Provides a safe and supportive place for people who are not able to reduce or stop using drugs through other programs. Residential rehabilitation provides individual and group counselling with a focus on peer support, and guides people returning to the community.

Many people stay between three months and a year. Some residential rehabs accommodate couples and families.

Counselling

Face-to-face, online and telephone services for individuals and, in some instances, their families, as well as group counselling and day programs.

Counselling can range from a single session to long periods of one-to-one or group work.

A counsellor can help you develop ways to reduce the risk of relapse and can help you find positive ways to deal with what's going on in your life.

Care and recovery coordination

Helps people with multiple needs access treatment and services. It can also support a person through exiting treatment and help them find other services like housing, training, education and employment, or other support that can help prevent relapse.

Peer support workers or groups

People with personal experience of alcohol and other drug use provide mutual support and information to a person who is having, or who has had, difficulties with their alcohol and other drug use.