

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](http://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](http://www.counsellingonline.org.au)

##### Understand Ice

[www.understandice.org.au](http://www.understandice.org.au)

SAFER  
USING **15**

**CUTTING  
DOWN,  
GETTING  
OFF**

Agency details:

Changing drug use can mean big changes in your life and can affect you in ways you might not have thought about.

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 can 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 doctor.](#)

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 likely withdrawals.

A worker at a Needle and Syringe Program (the exchange) can put you in touch with services that can help, or you can call DirectLine 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, including if you've been in detox, 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.

Speak to an NSP worker about where to get naloxone.

---

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

**There is more information on naloxone in this series 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 to support people 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 supports people returning to the community.

The average length of stay is three months to 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 are available. Counselling can range from a single session to long periods of one-to-one or group work.

The 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/groups**

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