WHAT IS REHABILITATION?

Rehabilitation is:
• Any service that can address or prevent a range of health related challenges (or disabilities) that people living with HIV and/or Hep C face.
• An important part of good care for many common chronic conditions such as arthritis, heart disease and diabetes.
• Not only used as a treatment but also for prevention of certain conditions or worsening of current health problems.

*There are different types of rehabilitation providers who can help you with the different types of health-related challenges that you may face. Ask your doctor for a referral to a Rehabilitation provider.

DO YOU KNOW...

How to deal with fatigue, pain and other physical symptoms? Yes ☐ No ☐
Where to get support to help with:
- Personal care, work or leisure activities? Yes ☐ No ☐
- The impact of HIV and/or Hep C on your life (e.g. financial situation, sex drive)? Yes ☐ No ☐
- Feelings (e.g. anxiety, stress) about having HIV and/or Hep C? Yes ☐ No ☐
- Your family and friends respond to HIV and/or Hep C? Yes ☐ No ☐
- How your partner and you deal with HIV and/or Hep C? Yes ☐ No ☐
- Types of exercises that can improve your overall health? Yes ☐ No ☐
- Assistive devices or types of equipment that can help your activities of daily living? Yes ☐ No ☐

How rehabilitation can help manage your health, including side effects to medications? Yes ☐ No ☐
How rehabilitation can help prevent HIV transmission? Yes ☐ No ☐
How HIV and/or Hep C can impact your employment, income support and extended health care benefits? Yes ☐ No ☐
How to talk about HIV and/or Hep C to your employer and colleagues at work? Yes ☐ No ☐

If you answered NO to any of the above questions, then you may benefit from rehabilitation services. Speak with your Doctor to learn more!

This information sheet outlines some of the health-related challenges that you might experience living with HIV and hepatitis C (Hep C) and how rehabilitation services may help you to address these challenges. Effective rehabilitation can:

• Assist you with some of the challenges of staying on HIV and Hep C medications
• Address negative side effects of medication (e.g. pain, neuropathy, fatigue, depression, cognitive problems)

*Staying on HIV treatment keeps 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)
Physiotherapist can help you:

- Manage your daily activities
- Manage or reduce your pain, numbness or tingling sensations
- Feel less tired
- Strengthen your muscles
- Improve movement in your joints
- Maintain or improve your flexibility, balance and coordination
- Build your activity tolerance
- Learn to use a cane or walker if you need one

An Occupational Therapist can help you:

- Manage your daily activities
- Reduce feelings of stress, depression and/or isolation
- Change your living or work space to accommodate any physical limitations you have
- Organize your activities to assist with focus and memory
- Organize your days to conserve your energy
- Use helpful aids or equipment
- Help you manage complex medication schedules
- Determine how your family or other services in the community can support you

A Speech-Language Pathologist (speech therapy) can help you:

- With issues affecting communication (speech, language, or thinking) and swallowing
- Improve reading, writing, public speaking and other communication skills for staying at, or returning to work

A Physiatrist is a doctor who specializes in physical medicine and rehabilitation and can help you:

- Address chronic pain
- Regain and/or improve movement or physical functioning you have lost
- Access any special tests or procedures needed
Staying in the workforce, or returning to the workforce after a period of illness, is often hard if you have HIV and/or Hep C:

- You may be worried about how you will be treated if people find out about your disease(s).
- You may not know if or when to tell your employer about your HIV and/or Hep C status.
- You may not want to leave your HIV medication in the refrigerator at work.
- You may not have the energy to work fulltime and your workplace might not be able to give you part-time hours.

If you have been on long-term disability benefits and return to work, you may be worried about income or health benefits if you get sick again.

Occupational therapists, work related rehabilitation programs and some AIDS service organizations provide:

- Training and employment counselling
- Counselling about income support, health and disability benefits
- Information about your legal rights
- Job search and interview support
- Advocacy on your behalf

People living with HIV and/or Hep C can experience stress, anxiety, depression, changes in sleep and appetite and reduced sex drive (libido). Self-esteem and relationships can also be affected.

Psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists, occupational therapists and other mental health counsellors can help:

- Provide therapy or counselling to help you cope with HIV and/or Hep C
- Suggest strategies and methods to relieve depression, anxiety and stress
- You reduce feelings of stress and isolation
- Connect you with peer support groups
- Improve your self-esteem, keeping personal relationships and support networks
- Prescribe medication, if needed (psychiatrists only)

Mental Health and Cognitive Rehabilitation: What Can Your Rehabilitation Team Do for You?

Work Related Rehabilitation: What Can Your Rehabilitation Team Do for You?

Complementary Therapies

Some people living 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
- Chiropractic
- Traditional healing
- Massage therapy
- Yoga, meditation, tai chi
HOW CAN YOU ACCESS REHABILITATION SERVICES?

Ask your doctor for a referral. Rehabilitation services are provided in many different settings. This depends on the nature of your illness, what you are looking for, and what services are available in your community. Some of the most common settings are:

- Hospitals
- Public health departments
- Local AIDS service organizations
- Private practices of health care professionals
- Outpatient centres and clinics
- Vocational work settings
- Community Care Access Centres
- Hospices
- Wellness centres

HOW CAN YOU BOOK AN APPOINTMENT FOR REHABILITATION?

You will need an assessment and referral by a doctor to access many rehabilitation services. This is especially important if they are being paid for by your province’s health plan or private insurance. If the service is provided by your local AIDS service organization, you probably won’t need a referral.

WHAT DO REHABILITATION SERVICES COST?

Rehabilitation services may be partially or fully covered by provincial health plans, provincial disability support programs or private insurers. Some rehabilitation providers have a sliding fee scale for people without insurance while local AIDS organizations and community health centres may provide some rehabilitation services for free.

Talk to your doctor, rehabilitation provider, human resource department, insurance company, and/or local AIDS service organization to find out what is covered for you.

On-line HIV and rehabilitation resources:

- Canadian Association for Occupational Therapists [www.otworks.ca](http://www.otworks.ca)
- Canadian Physiotherapy Association [www.physiotherapy.ca](http://www.physiotherapy.ca)
- Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists & Audiologists [www.caslpa.ca](http://www.caslpa.ca)
- Episodic Disabilities Employment Network (EDEN) [www.EDENCanada.ca](http://www.EDENCanada.ca)

To find out more, please visit [www.HIVandRehab.ca](http://www.HIVandRehab.ca)

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Promoting quality of life through research, education and cross-sector partnerships

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