Drug abuse and addiction have been strongly linked with HIV/AIDS since the beginning of the epidemic. While intravenous (IV) drug use is well known in this regard, less known is the role that drug abuse plays in the spread of HIV by increasing the likelihood of high-risk sex with infected partners.

Nearly one-quarter of AIDS cases stem from IV drug use. One in four people living with HIV/AIDS from 2005 through 2009 reported use of alcohol or drugs that required treatment.

Drug abuse and addiction can also cause HIV to become worse, especially in the brain. In some studies, drug use increased the amount of HIV virus in the brain and caused greater brain injury and impairment compared to non-drug users (NIDA).

When thinking about alcohol or drug use, including prescription drug use other than prescribed, respond to the following four questions.

1. Have you ever felt you should cut down on your drinking or drug use?
2. Have people annoyed you by criticizing your drinking or drug use?
3. Have you ever felt bad or guilty about your drinking or drug use?
4. Have you ever had a drink or used drugs first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover (eye-opener)?

If you responded yes to one or more questions, help is available. Contact your care manager.

Give Acupuncture a Try!

If you’ve never tried acupuncture, you might want to give it a try! Acupuncture can be helpful for cravings, anxiety, and insomnia.

Some people can be afraid of the acupuncture needles, but they are very tiny—maybe the size of a couple of strands of hair—and of course, they are sterile.

You have lots of options with acupuncture. You can get a full body acupuncture treatment, or a NADA treatment (stands for National Acupuncture Detox Association). A NADA treatment is only done in the ears, or just with ear magnets. They are placed on the back of your ears.

Are you interested in trying acupuncture? Talk to your care manager.
Prevention Tips

Here are a few quick tips to keep yourself healthy! Remember: It is up to you maintain your good health and to protect yourself.

- **Use a condom** when engaging in sexual encounters. This includes during oral and anal sex. Female condoms are available and easy to use as well.

- **Lubrication is key!** Lubricant is available at most drugstores and free at many community based organizations. Lubricant helps provide a smooth surface to minimize skin tearing. Remember: your skin is the first barrier against bacteria and viruses entering your body.

- **Visit your doctor regularly.** Your medical team is on the frontline of your wellness. Attend all scheduled appointments and be open and honest. No medical concern is too big or too small!

- **Take all medications regularly.** This includes medications that are not specifically for HIV. Other illness may be more difficult to deal with because of your HIV. It is important to take all medication that you are prescribed. Report any side effects.

- **Immunizations are important.** There are many immunizations that you can get besides a “flu shot”. Talk to your doctor about your risk for pneumonia, meningitis and shingles. The best way to be safe from illness is to prevent it!

- **Eat well and exercise!** Your body is a machine, and like a machine it needs premium fuel. Exercise has shown to decrease feelings of depression and anxiety, so it is not only good for your body, but feeds the mind as well.

Take Good Care of Yourself!

When living with a chronic illness, you can improve your quality of life by taking good care of yourself. By changing behavior, you can manage symptoms and increase well-being. Here are six possibilities!

1. **Get rest:** It’s important to sleep 7 to 8 hours a night, at least! If you can, take a short nap during the day. Say to yourself, “I’m resting now” at least once a day.

2. **Eat nutritious food:** It’s easy to eat junk food when you’re tired or don’t have much time or space to prepare food. But it’s important to eat healthy food as much as possible to fuel and heal your body. Try to eat a lot of vegetables, healthy fats, and enough protein. And drink lots of water!

3. **Move your body:** Exercise reduces stress and can lift your mood. You don’t need to sweat it out in the gym! Take short walks, take the stairs, or dance to a favorite song to get moving.

4. **Take time for stillness:** Each day, try to take 10 minutes to get quiet, centered, and grounded. Try deep breathing, affirmations, visualizations, or prayer.

5. **Speak up:** Sometimes we may need something, yet we expect others to know it without us saying so. But people can’t read our minds! Try to ask for what you need. Don’t hold it all in!

6. **Enjoy yourself:** Try to do something fun every day. Talk to friends, join in on an enjoyable activity, do something that puts you in contact with the things you value.

Looking for an enjoyable upcoming activity? Join us for AIDS Walk Colorado on August 15!

Write for us!

We would love your submissions for future WAP Newsletter content! We are looking for poems, artwork, and content related to living with HIV and AIDS. Contact us for more information and to contribute: marybeth-faccioli@empowermentprogram.org
We’re Hiring!

Project Manager for Denver-Aurora HIV Prevention Project

The Empowerment Program is seeking a full-time Project Manager to work with community sub-contractors to plan and implement HIV prevention activities, focusing on both people living with HIV/AIDS and people at high risk for HIV infection.

The person in this position will oversee day to day activities and services of the Denver-Aurora HIV Prevention Project (DAHPP), including the establishment of work groups and advisory boards, coordination with sub-contractors and QA staff, providing training and technical assistance to DAHPP members, and much more.

Qualifications include a Bachelors or Masters Degree in a behavioral health field, experience working in community focused HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care, proficiency with project implementation and over-sight, experience working with African-American, Native American, Latino/a, and transwomen, and more.

For a full job description, visit http://www.coloradononprofits.org/careers/career-center/project-manager-for-denver-aurora-hiv-prevention-project/

Upcoming WAP Events

Open to WAP Participants Only

Fabulous Fridays!
Crafts, games, yoga, creative writing, and more! Every Friday from 3:00—5:00 at Empowerment.

Day at the Nature and Science Museum July 24th at 10am
RSVP only

AIDS Walk Colorado Aug 15 OPEN TO ALL

Day at the Zoo Aug 21 at 10am
RSVP only
Meet Your Team

Staff Spotlight: Mary Beth Faccioli, MSW

Mary Beth Faccioli joined the WAP team in June after receiving a Master of Social Work degree from the Metropolitan State University of Denver. She interned at Empowerment this past year with the Women’s Community Reconnection project, facilitating groups and providing additional support for women transitioning from jail to the community. Becoming a social worker was a career change for Mary Beth, after working as a librarian for many years.

Mary Beth is excited to join the WAP team and to support the strong, empowered, resilient women who participate in our program!

Tips on Speaking with Your Provider

Communication is an important part of good health care. Here are tips to help with speaking with your health care provider:

- **Prepare for an appointment.** Plan your time by making the best of each opportunity to communicate with your health care provider. Take a few minutes to think about what you need to know, what your concerns are, and who might be the best person to help. Think about how much time you will need to address your concerns and questions, or ask if you can book two appointments to get all your questions asked.

- **Make a list of everything you want to ask or tell your doctor.** Decide which are the most important to you just in case your visit is not long enough to cover every item. Setting priorities lets you deal with the most important issues first, to be sure they get discussed. Share your list with your doctor at the beginning of the visit. Your doctor may be able assist you with the list you prepared by discussing the most important items first based on your medical information.

- **Bring information or anything else you may need.** Bring all of your medications or a list of them if you take many medications. Make sure you include the amount you take of each medication and how often you take it. This list should include all supplements, natural herbs and vitamins. Some of the medications you take may interact with or change the effectiveness of treatments that your doctor is prescribing. Be ready to talk about your symptoms.

- **Fill out a symptom diary** a few days before your appointment. Keep notes of any and all troublesome symptoms: how severe, how often it occurs, what makes it worse, what makes it better, the medication you use to find relief and if it helps.

- **Consider bringing a family member, friend, volunteer or your Care Manager with you to your appointments.** It often helps to have someone with you who can listen and even take some notes. It can be difficult to remember and also overwhelming with everything your doctor says in one visit.

- **Bring an Interpreter** if needed. If you speak another language than your doctor, this way you and your doctor can be sure to exchange information without difficulty or struggling to get your point across. It may also make it easier to talk about sensitive subjects or difficult emotions.

- **Remember that not all questions have answers**, but sometimes it helps to talk about important subjects.

If you are having difficulty with writing your questions and concerns down, please contact your care manager to assist you.