



## **WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT RECOVERY**

### **KEY DEFINITIONS**

#### **Addiction**

Addiction is a treatable, chronic medical disease involving complex interactions among brain circuits, genetics, the environment, and an individual's life experiences. People with addiction use substances or engage in behaviors that become compulsive and often continue despite harmful consequences. Treatment approaches for addiction are generally as successful as those for other chronic diseases.

#### **Harm Reduction**

Harm reduction aims to reduce drug-related harms to keep people safe, alive and healthy. Harm reduction plays an important role in decreasing the rate of overdoses among people of all ages. Some examples of harm reduction include counseling people on how to use more safely, giving naloxone (Narcan) kits for overdose prevention, using fentanyl test strips to detect fentanyl in drugs, providing access to clean syringes, condoms, and wound care kits.

#### **Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT)**

Medication-Assisted Treatment describes the use of medications to treat people with substance use disorders, with or without counseling. "Medications for Addiction Treatment" is another term for MAT. Medications significantly improve the health and well-being for many people with substance use disorders and can help people reach their recovery goals. Methadone and buprenorphine treatment reduce the risk of overdose death by 50% in people with opioid use disorder.

#### **Recovery**

Recovery is a process of change through which people improve their health and wellness, live self-directed lives, and strive to reach their full potential. For some, recovery may mean abstinence from substances. For others, recovery means any positive change in their life, such as accessing treatment, reducing use, finding employment, improving relations with family, etc. Recovery is defined by the individual.

(source – National Institute on Drug Use - <https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/recovery>)

### **HOW OPIOID TREATMENT PROGRAMS WORK**

Opioid Treatment programs (OTPs), formally known as methadone maintenance treatment programs, utilize FDA approved medications to treat opioid use disorder. Typical medications

provided at an opioid treatment program include methadone, buprenorphine, buprenorphine extended release injections, and naltrexone extended release injections. These medications are provided to people with other counseling and medical services at an opioid treatment program. Greenwich House MMTP is an OTP.

1. When used under the supervision of a medical professional, methadone and buprenorphine **reduce opioid cravings, suppress withdrawal symptoms, and block some of the euphoric effects of opioid.** Methadone and buprenorphine reduce the risk of overdose by approximately 50%.
2. Over time, taking methadone or buprenorphine can provide pharmacological support so that people can meet their recovery goals, reclaim an active and productive life.
3. Methadone must be given safely to patients. In the beginning of treatment, patients go to the OTP regularly to receive their dose of methadone and to participate in counseling (if desired). Once the patient's dose has stabilized and the person shows an ability to safely take medication without supervision, patients will start to receive increasing amounts of doses to be taken at home, and they may not have to go to the OTP as often.
4. People receiving medications for addiction treatment can choose to stop taking medication for their substance use disorder. Medical providers at the OTP will educate patients on the risks and benefits of stopping medication and will try to help people do so in the safest way possible. Treatment with medication for addiction treatment is voluntary at Greenwich House MMTP.

### **FENTANYL TESTING KITS**

Fentanyl is a very powerful synthetic opioid. It is 50-100 times stronger than heroin. Fentanyl contaminates much of the heroin, cocaine, crack, counterfeit pharmaceutical pills, methamphetamine and other drug supply in the city. Many forms of fentanyl do not have a specific taste, color, odor, making it very hard to detect. Fentanyl is fueling much of the overdose crisis.

Fentanyl Test Strips check for the presence of fentanyl in drugs. Using fentanyl testing kits can help reduce the risk of a person accidentally using fentanyl-laced drugs and may reduce the risk of overdose death. Fentanyl Test Strips are available at many syringe service programs and overdose prevention sites throughout the city. Patients Greenwich House MMTP may receive fentanyl test strips as part of their treatment.

List of Syringe Service Programs in NY

[https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/consumers/prevention/needles\\_syringes/docs/sep\\_hours\\_sites.pdf](https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/consumers/prevention/needles_syringes/docs/sep_hours_sites.pdf)