

Hormone Injection Supplies Toolkit

A resource for harm reduction service providers and those who offer gender-affirming hormone injection supplies.



TRANS CARE BC
Provincial Health Services Authority

toward
THE **heart**.com
BCCDC HARM REDUCTION SERVICES

 **PEEP**
Professionals for Ethical
Engagement of Peers

Acknowledgments

This resource was developed in partnership by Trans Care BC, BC Centre for Disease Control, Professionals for Ethical Engagement of Peers, and Toward the Heart.

As a provincial program, Trans Care BC operates on the traditional and ancestral land of many Indigenous peoples, and we provide services to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people who live in diverse settings and communities across BC. Trans Care BC's main office is located on the traditional and ancestral territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. With the use of this guide, it is important to note that historical and ongoing colonialism and racism can affect and interrupt Indigenous people's identities, and their ability to access care.

We would like to thank all of the peers, harm reduction providers, and community partners who provided input and guidance on this resource.

We encourage you to share this resource with your networks and with anyone you think would benefit from this resource.

If you would like to provide feedback, or if you have questions, please contact transcarebc@phsa.ca

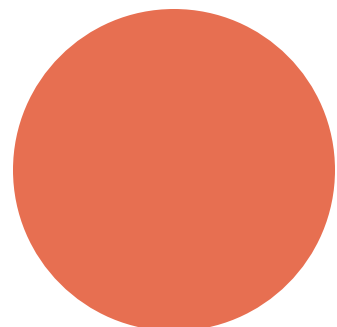
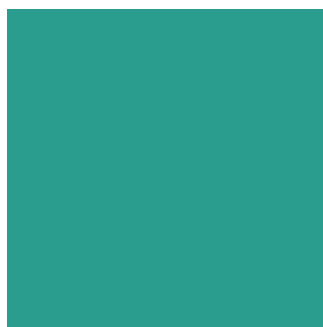


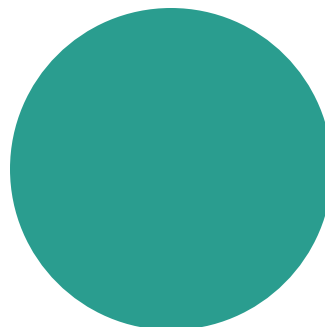
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Introduction

This Hormone Injection Supplies Toolkit is for harm reduction sites, organizations and/or programs interested in offering hormone injection supplies and inclusive harm reduction services for trans, gender diverse, and Two-Spirit community members.

"Harm reduction involves a range of services and strategies to empower and support people to be safer and healthier."

One aspect of harm reduction is reducing the possibility of injury or infection from re-using or sharing injection supplies. Guided by research and experiential evidence, the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) and Trans Care BC promotes harm reduction as an integral component of the care continuum.

Additionally, Trans Care BC and the BCCDC recognize that trans, gender diverse, and Two-Spirit people often face unique barriers and inequitable access to gender-affirming health care services, including services that support hormone therapy. This includes access to subcutaneous (SC) and intramuscular (IM) injection supplies for self-injection of hormone therapy. See section on [injection supplies](#) for more information.



Introduction

Increasing access to sterile injection supplies has been a public health priority to reduce harms from re-using or sharing supplies. A recent [Needs Assessment](#) identified limited access to lower barrier/no-cost injection supplies for hormone therapy for gender diverse and trans people across British Columbia (BC).

Two key recommendations to enhance equity-based services for people seeking lower barrier hormone injection supplies are:



1. Programs and registered sites should **carry supplies consistently** for subcutaneous (SC) and intramuscular (IM) injections based on community-specific needs (see section on ‘[Hormone Injection Supplies Details](#)’). Sites that carry hormone injection supplies can be found on Toward the Heart’s [Site Finder](#).



2. [Enhance efforts](#) to create safer, inclusive, and affirming spaces for all genders.

Feedback welcomed

We believe your feedback is one of the best ways we can improve our educational resources. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for edits, please email us at transcarebc@phsa.ca.

SECTION 1

Goal/Purpose

The Hormone Injection Supplies Toolkit was created to support harm reduction services to be inclusive of trans, gender diverse, and Two-Spirit community members, by **carrying consistent hormone injection supplies** as a part of their services.

We hope the recommendations and resources provided will be helpful in your journey towards making harm reduction services inclusive of all genders.

How to implement this toolkit:

1. Begin by understanding your current knowledge and competency about gender diversity within your program. The [Service Provider Reflection Tool](#) and [Organizational Assessment Tool](#) are two resources that have been developed for this purpose.
2. Increase your knowledge and skills by taking educational training, such as Trans Care BC's [Introduction to Gender Diversity](#), a free online training course.
3. Based on what you've learned, consider what specific actions you/your team can take to increase inclusion and safety at your site (think small but mighty changes to start).
4. Increase awareness and knowledge of hormone injection supplies and self-injection practices used for gender-affirming hormone therapy. Most supplies are available through the [BCCDC Harm Reduction Supply Program](#).
5. Increase awareness of local or provincial resources available for trans, gender diverse, and Two-Spirit people.

Resource tip: You can search Trans Care BC's [Peer Support Directory](#) to learn about peer support groups for trans, gender diverse, and Two-Spirit people in your community.

SECTION 1

Goal/Purpose

Are you a registered Harm Reduction Distribution Site?



... **Yes:** Order supplies for subcutaneous or intramuscular injection for your site using the [Supply Requisition Form](#). Don't forget to update any related forms, documents, or tracking sheets to include the new addition of these supplies.



... **No:** Consider signing up as a registered site. You can sign up as a registered site by contacting your regional harm reduction coordinator. Your site must be pre-authorized by your regional health authority before you can order supplies through the Supply Requisition Form. TowardTheHeart.com has more information on how to become a distribution site.



... **Not Sure:** Email harmreduction@bccdc.ca for more information.



SECTION 2

Trans Care BC Educational Resources

Trans Care BC's Education Team develops accessible online trainings and support tools with the goal of increasing health literacy, knowledge, competency, and cultural safety for teams supporting trans, gender diverse, and Two-Spirit people across BC.

Intro to Gender Diversity – Free, Online Training Course

This foundational (introductory) training is for people new to learning about gender diversity. The training offers key terms and concepts, along with strategies for supporting gender diverse individuals.

The training explores:

- Key terms and concepts related to gender diversity
- Barriers to care that gender diverse people commonly face
- Simple strategies for creating accessible and affirming services

Organizational Assessment Tool

This assessment tool is for *organizations* interested in developing a robust approach to offering accessible care for gender diverse individuals. This tool can be used on its own or in combination with the Service Provider Reflection Tool for Individual Service Providers & Support Staff which is designed for *individuals* seeking learning opportunities to explore their own knowledge and attitudes towards gender diversity.

If you would like to be notified when a new online training becomes available, please contact the Education Team to be added to the mailing list.

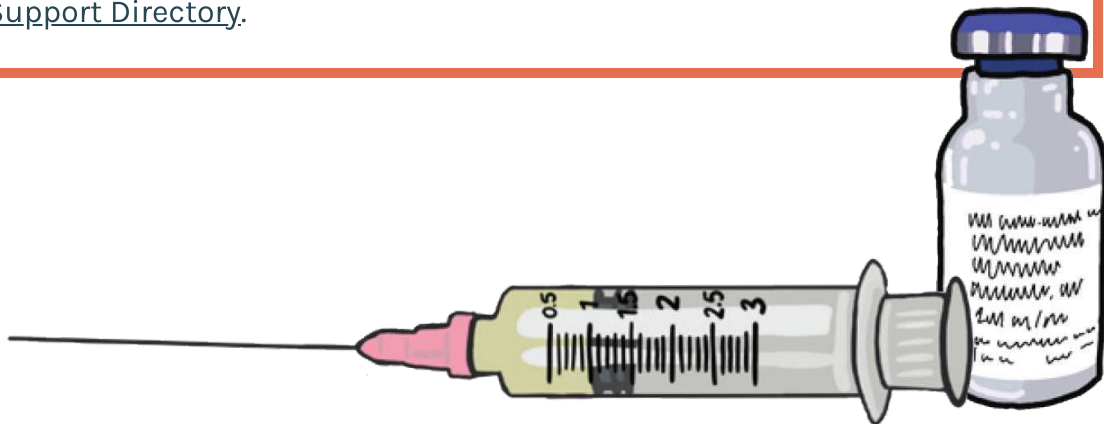
SECTION 3

Considerations for Your Harm Reduction Site

What do you need in order to offer hormone injection supplies at your site/program?

Checklist

- ☐ Make education, training, and resources available for staff.
- ☐ Assess what steps you and your program can take to provide more inclusive services to gender diverse community members.
- ☐ Make a plan to implement changes to make your program/services more inclusive of gender diverse community members. This can include things like inclusive bathrooms, welcoming signage, and having forms/documents that are inclusive of trans, gender diverse, and Two-Spirit people.
- ☐ Order and stock the supplies needed for hormone injection (see [page 10](#)), and **keep these stocked as consistently as possible**.
- ☐ Increase awareness of resources and community supports for gender diverse community members, such as [Trans Care BC](#) and the online [Peer Support Directory](#).



SECTION 3

Considerations for Your Harm Reduction Site

Creating a welcoming and supportive space for trans, gender diverse and Two-Spirit clients

1. Identify your site's areas for growth:

Trans Care BC has multiple tools for organizations and service providers to help create safer, inclusive, and affirming spaces. While directed toward primary care settings, the Organizational Assessment Tool includes ways to enhance ongoing services that would apply to a variety of settings. In addition to educational resources and trainings, hiring gender diverse, trans, and Two-Spirit people is a great way to help create safer environments.

2. Use inclusive and affirming language and signage:

Learn more about inclusive and affirming language that can make a difference in your services, and check out Trans Care BC's support tools such this one on Gender Inclusive Language.

3. Specifically mention trans, gender diverse, and Two-Spirit people:

On your website or promotional materials, specifically mention the services you provide that are inclusive of trans, gender diverse, and Two-Spirit people, including hormone injection supplies.

To learn more about terminology and inclusive language, check out Queer Terminology from A to Q, a helpful glossary of terms and descriptions by QMUNITY.

4. Respect confidentiality:

Follow BCCDC harm reduction supply guidelines for supply distribution that does not require people to "out" themselves, such as proof of prescription or asking someone to disclose their gender identity. This can include making self-serve options available so that people can take their supplies anonymously, or asking what size of needle is required, instead of asking what the needles are used for.

SECTION 3

Considerations for Your Harm Reduction Site

What should you do if you make a mistake or accidentally compromise safety for a client?

Making mistakes and correcting them

We all make mistakes eventually. If you make a mistake in your choice of words, terms, names, or pronouns, just apologize, correct yourself, and move on to something else.

Knowledge is key

There are great educational opportunities for learning about trans inclusion. Support staff and volunteers in expanding their knowledge and competency by integrating online modules from Trans Care BC into general staff training. Consider making this a requirement to work in the space.



SECTION 4

Injection Education

It is important to be familiar with basic subcutaneous and intramuscular information when providing guidance to people self-injecting hormones.

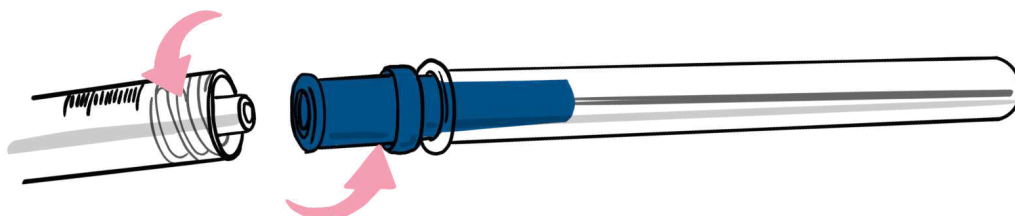
Trans Care BC and the BCCDC have developed a [Subcutaneous injections pamphlet](#) and an [Intramuscular injections pamphlet](#). You can print these pamphlets and have them available for clients, and they can be helpful resources to have on hand for your own reference. For additional information, you can visit Trans Care BC's website page about [hormone injection](#).

Ordering information

You can download the [Supply Requisition Form](#) to order harm reduction supplies for your site, and find more information on the Toward The Heart website ([TowardTheHeart.com](#)).

The inclusion of supplies for the injection of hormone therapy is funded by the Ministry of Health, and you can order these supplies for your registered harm reduction site free of charge. These supplies are then distributed to the community free of charge.

If your site wants to distribute supplies not available through this Provincial Supply Program, your site would need to purchase these separately (e.g., from a medical supply distributor). See [page 11](#) for more information.



SECTION 5

Hormone Injection Supply Details

Injection equipment currently available through the BCCDC Harm Reduction Supply Program is limited to what is listed on the [Supply Requisition Form](#).

Supplies not listed below, therefore not available or funded through the Harm Reduction Supply Program, may be obtained through other ways (see [page 11](#)).

Supplies available through the Harm Reduction Supply Program are:

Subcutaneous (SC) Injection Supplies

- Needle, disposable, 18g x 1½" (to draw up only - **do not use to inject** due to the large needle size)
- Needle, disposable, 25g x 5/8"
- Needle, disposable, 26g x ½"
- Needle, disposable, 27g x ½"
- Alcohol swabs
- Syringes without needles (barrels), 3ml and 5ml
- Sharps collector, mini and 1L

Intramuscular (IM) Injection Supplies

- Needle, disposable, 18g x 1½" (to draw up only - **do not use to inject** due to the large needle size)
- Needle, disposable, 22g x 1"
- Needle, disposable, 22g x 1½"
- Needle, disposable, 25g x 1"
- Alcohol swabs
- Syringes without needles (barrels), 3ml and 5ml
- Sharps collector, mini and 1L



Please note that these supplies are subject to change.

SECTION 5

Hormone Injection Supply Details

What if someone asks for injecting equipment that is not available to order through the Provincial Supply Program?

Some prefer to use equipment that is **not** available to order through the BCCDC Harm Reduction Supply Program. These items may include:

Subcutaneous (SC) Injection Supplies

- Needle, disposable, 25g x 1/2"
- Needle, disposable, 26g x 5/8"
- Needle, disposable, 27g x 5/8"
- Syringes without needles (barrels), 1ml

Intramuscular (IM) Injection Supplies

- Needle, disposable, 23g x 1"
- Needle, disposable, 23g x 1 1/2"
- Syringes without needles (barrels), 1ml



If someone wants to access injection equipment **not** available through the BCCDC Harm Reduction Supply Program, they can:

- Talk to their primary care provider (e.g., nurse, nurse practitioner, doctor) to explore supply options.
- Talk to their pharmacist, as they may be able to purchase the supplies from a local pharmacy.
- Look into purchasing from medical supply distributors.

TIP:

If someone inquires about supplies that you currently do not have in stock, it can be helpful to refer to the [Supply Requisition Form](#) to see whether or not the supplies are available to be ordered.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are some ways I can encourage people to regularly access our harm reduction site for hormone injection supplies?



Carry a stock of supplies consistently at your site / service and know your supplies:

A common barrier reported from people accessing hormone injection supplies is the inconsistent availability of equipment. It is recommended that distribution sites get to know what people in their communities need for subcutaneous and/or intramuscular injections, and to **carry those supplies consistently**. If you run out of supplies, know where to refer people (e.g. local health clinic or another harm reduction site) and let folks know when your next order is expected.



Spread the word:

Promote your harm reduction site as a service that carries [hormone injection supplies](#). It is helpful to let other service providers and local community agencies know so that they can spread the word. You can even print off a sign that says hormone therapy injection supplies available here, see [page 32](#).



Prepare kits ahead of time:

It can be helpful to prepare hormone injection supply kits in advance (subcutaneous and intramuscular) so they are readily available when people need.



Kindness goes a long way:

Try to meet the needs of people accessing your services. If someone asks for a box of supplies, give it to them. Sometimes people are picking up supplies for multiple people or can't make a trip regularly, and this practice is supported by BCCDC supply distribution guidelines.

Frequently Asked Questions

What if I don't know how to answer someone's question about hormone injection supplies, or related health care needs?

Know your limitations and where to refer people

Sometimes people have questions we may not be able to answer, and that's totally okay. In situations like this, it can be helpful to know where to refer people so they get the resources they need. See [page 14](#) for a list of helpful resources.

Clients needing information or support related to hormones and/or hormone injection can:

- Contact their doctor, nurse practitioner, or primary care provider
- Speak with their pharmacist
- Visit Trans Care BC's website, specifically the [hormones](#) and [navigating hormone shortages](#) sections
- Review Trans Care BC's injections pamphlets ([Pages 16 and 19](#)), or other helpful resources such as the [Injection Guide by Fenway health](#).
- Visit the [Online Peer Support Directory](#) to see if there are peer support groups, for trans, gender diverse, and Two-Spirit people, available in their community.

See [page 14](#) for a list of helpful resources.

See [page 32](#) for a handy printout you can offer to clients who are looking for more information.



Frequently Asked Questions

Would you like to know about peer supports in your community?

Trans Care BC Peer Support Directory

Trans, gender diverse and Two-Spirit clients accessing harm reduction may also be interested in connecting with peer support in their community. The Peer Support Directory assists peers in finding peer support groups and services.

Check out Trans Care BC's website for more helpful information and resources.

Where can I learn more?

Trans Care BC Educational Resources

See page 14 of this guide for links and additional information on resources.

Trans Care BC Health Navigator Team

Trans Care BC's health navigator team helps people in BC find and connect to gender-affirming health and wellness supports. Based out of Vancouver, the team includes health navigators, a part-time nurse, peers, and admin support staff, with access to a general practitioner for consultation as needed. The team works alongside service providers and community contacts from across the province to help people find services as close to home as possible.

Health Navigator Contact Information

- Email: transcareteam@phsa.ca
- Phone: Toll-free (BC): 1-866-999-1514
- Outside of BC or unable to call a toll-free number: 604-675-3647

Toward the Heart

For more information and where to access injection supplies visit the Toward the Heart website (TowardTheHeart.com).

You can also email: harmreduction@bccdc.ca.

Additional Trans Health Resources

- Rainbow Health Ontario
- Fenway Institute: National LGBT Health Education Center



Appendix A: BCCDC Supply Requisition Form



For more information and a web form, please visit:

<https://towardtheheart.com/resource/hr-req-form/open>

Appendix B: Intramuscular Injections Pamphlet



For more information and a web version, please visit:

http://www.phsa.ca/transcarebc/Documents/HealthProf/Intramuscular_injections_brochure.pdf

A downloadable Intramuscular Injections Pamphlet can be found on the following 2 pages.

Appendix C: Subcutaneous Injections Pamphlet



For more information and a web version, please visit:

http://www.phsa.ca/transcarebc/Documents/HealthProf/Subcutaneous_injections_brochure.pdf

A downloadable Subcutaneous Injections Pamphlet can be found on the following 2 pages.

Appendix D: Gender Diversity Education



For more information and a web version, please visit:

http://www.phsa.ca/transcarebc/Documents/HealthProf/TCBC_Intro_Edu_Resources.pdf

A downloadable interactive 1-pager, with links to educational resources, can be found on the following page.

Appendix E: Gender Inclusive Language



For more information and a web version, please visit:

http://www.phsa.ca/transcarebc/Documents/HealthProf/Gender_Inclusive_Language_General.pdf

A downloadable guide to gender inclusive language can be found on the following two pages.

Appendix F: Making Mistakes and Correcting Them



For more information and a web version, please visit:

http://www.phsa.ca/transcarebc/Documents/HealthProf/Making_Mistakes_Everyone.pdf

A downloadable guide on 'making mistakes and correcting them' can be found on the following two pages.

Appendix G: Information for clients



Clients needing information or support related to hormones and/or hormone injection can:

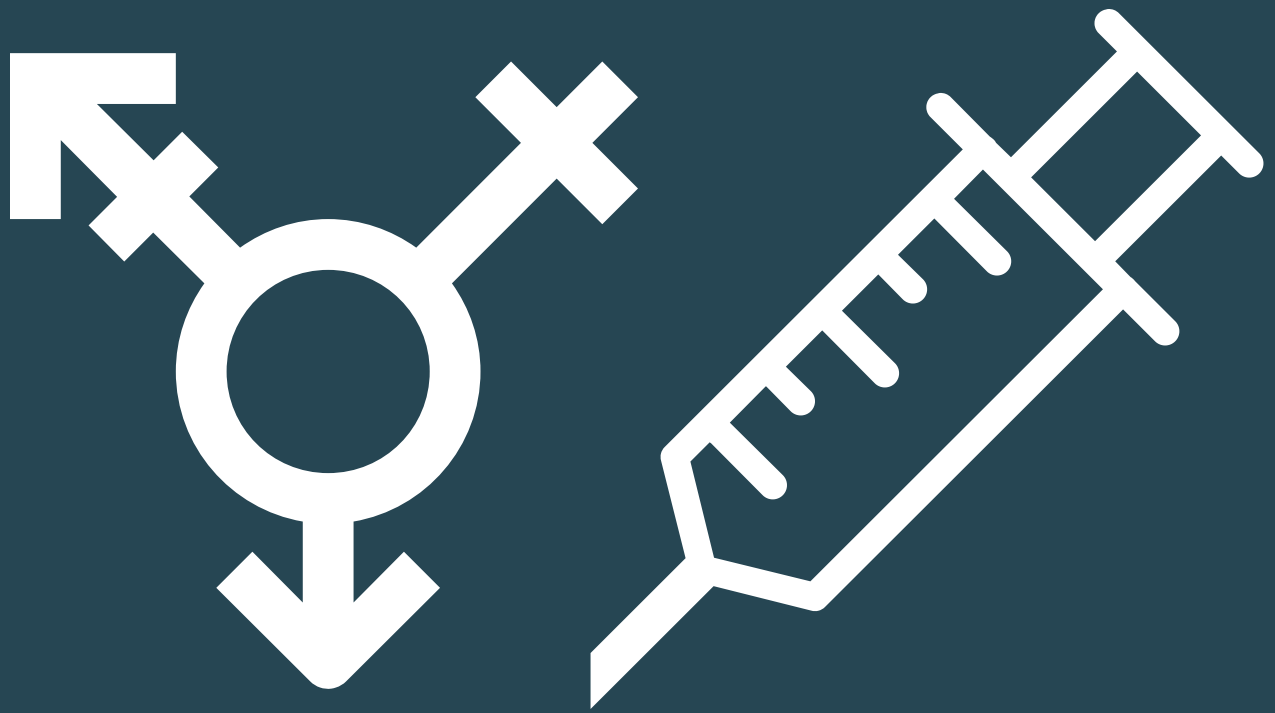
1. Contact their doctor, nurse practitioner, or primary care provider
2. Speak with their pharmacist
3. Visit Trans Care BC's website, specifically the sections on hormones (<http://www.phsa.ca/transcarebc/hormones>) and navigating hormone shortages (<http://www.phsa.ca/transcarebc/hormones/hormone-shortages>)
4. Review Trans Care BC's injections pamphlets (<http://www.phsa.ca/transcarebc/hormones/how-to-inject>), or other helpful resources such as the Injection Guide by Fenway health (https://fenwayhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/COM-1880-trans-health_injection-guide_small_v2.pdf).
5. Visit the Online Peer Support Directory (<http://www.phsa.ca/transcarebc/care-support/peer-community-support/srvc-directory>) to see if there are peer supports available in their area.

Appendix H: Signage for Safe Injection site



Downloadable signage for your harm reduction site can be found on the following page.

HORMONE INJECTION SUPPLIES



ON SITE