

BROWARD BRIEFINGS

SUBSTANCE ABUSE INFORMATION FOR ACTION



COVID-19 Guidance for Clients Engaged in Substance Use Treatment

Triggers & Relapse

The stress of this situation may put you at greater risk for alcohol or drug use. You may experience increased stress due to changes in your schedule including work, childcare and family care, and increased anxiety related to media reports and finances. Be kind to yourself during this stressful time. Practice self-care (e.g., reading, meditation, walks). Realize that you and others may be asked more health questions than usual at visits to your clinic, doctor, or pharmacy. *This should be the case for everyone and not just those struggling with addiction.*

Screening for coronavirus should be universal and not targeted to those with addiction. Questions related to COVID-19 can be answered 24/7 at 1 (866) 779-6121, or by emailing COVID-19@flhealth.gov. Broward residents concerned they may have been exposed to COVID-19 should call this number before going to any health care facility.

Medication & Other Treatment Considerations

Ongoing access to naloxone and medications used to treat addiction is essential.

MAINTAINING ACCESS TO YOUR CURRENT MEDICATION (S)



Talk to your clinician and your pharmacy about having enough medication (perhaps more than you are used to receiving) and accessing refills. Only reduce your dose of medication if you cannot access your regular dose.

If you have coronavirus or fever, cough, or new breathing problems, you should try to stay away from others. If you are sick or have coronavirus symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath, tell your clinician and/or pharmacy before coming into pick up medications so that they can prepare to meet you. Work with your clinician to adjust the type and frequency of monitoring (self-report, urine toxicology, breath testing) that is best for your specific situation.

STARTING OR CHANGING MEDICATION



Don't delay treatment! Starting buprenorphine at home is an option for some clients and may work for you.

Some clients may also be able to switch to a long acting version of their medication (monthly injections of buprenorphine or naltrexone) or a buprenorphine implant, which may help ensure continued treatment.

If you are already receiving monthly injectable medication, you should stay in touch with your clinician regarding scheduled appointments.

If you are going to miss an injection or if supplies are limited, you may be able to switch to a pill or film version of your medication.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR ACCESS TO METHADONE



Methadone programs can use telehealth and the telephone to reach you in a way that protects your privacy.

Methadone treatment programs can work with state agencies to increase the amount of take-home bottles (up to 28 days' supply) for some clients with serious medical problems.

Clients with exposure to coronavirus may be able to get 14-day take-home doses to allow them to stay at home and away from others. Those who are quarantined with coronavirus infection can designate an uninfected person to pick up and deliver their methadone or, if necessary, the program may be able to provide for "doorstep" delivery using an approved lock box.

Since methadone treatment programs may reduce the number of groups or limit the amount of people who can attend groups, speak to your clinician about a modified recovery plan.

RESOURCES

Note: These resources are for information-sharing purposes only and should not be considered direct endorsements.

Florida Narcotics Anonymous (NA):
<https://naflorida.org/meetings/>

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)
Intergroup: <http://aa-intergroup.org/>

Cocaine Anonymous (CA)
Intergroup: <https://ca.org/meetings/>

Marijuana Anonymous (MA):
<https://ma-online.org>

Smart Recovery:
www.smartrecovery.org, click on "online community"

InTheRooms: <http://intherooms.org>

Reddit Recovery: Offers a virtual hang out and support during recovery
<https://www.reddit.com/r/REDDITORSI/NRECOVERY/>

LifeRing (Secular Recovery)
<https://www.lifering.org/online-meetings>

You can explore more options from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration via <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/virtual-recovery-resources.pdf>

Counseling & Meetings

All group visits in the clinician's office should be avoided. Work with your clinicians to identify alternatives to in-person (including group) visits. This may include telephone, telehealth, or telemedicine options. Those with FL Medicaid can learn more about changes to telehealth policies related to the COVID-19 State of Emergency here: https://ahca.myflorida.com/covid-19_alerts.shtml

Some meetings (AA, NA) may be cancelled or have limited attendance. In groups and meetings, try to maintain at least 6 feet between yourself and others at all times ("social distancing"). Avoid hugging, shaking hands and holding hands to keep everyone safe. Consider free, non-commercial online or digital support group options.

Special Considerations About Smoking and Vaping

Those with lung disease are at increased risk of more severe coronavirus infection. Smoking and vaping of any substance may increase lung irritation and your risk of viral infection. Talk to your clinician about accessing nicotine treatments (patch, gum, lozenge, inhaler) or other medications to help reduce smoking and vaping. Tobacco Free Florida offers free tools and services. Learn more at <https://tobaccofreeflorida.com/>

Travel

You should limit all travel, including travel to even nearby places. Most cities have made suggestions about not traveling. Visit Broward.org/Coronavirus for the latest updates. If you need to travel, make sure you have enough medication or can get a treatment provider where you are headed.

Age and Other Medical Conditions

Being age 60 or older puts people at increased risk of getting coronavirus infection. In addition, there is an increased risk of severe infection for those 60 and older who contract the virus. Certain medical conditions (heart disease, diabetes, lung diseases like COPD, bronchitis, emphysema and asthma, kidney disease, high blood pressure, cancer) also place individuals at increased risk. Work with your clinicians to be sure these health conditions are being treated. Be sure to have all your vaccinations (or immunizations) including influenza ("flu shot"), tetanus, hepatitis A and B, and pneumonia as needed.

Where to Find Information About Coronavirus

For the latest information, visit the Florida and Broward Health Department Websites, as well as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Coronavirus website.

Florida Department of Health Coronavirus Website: <https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/>

Florida's COVID-19 Data and Surveillance Dashboard:

<https://fdoh.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opstdashboard/index.html#/8d0de33f260d444c852a615dc7837c86>

Broward County Department of Health: <http://broward.floridahealth.gov/>

CDC Coronavirus site:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Additional Information

Safer Drug Use

<https://yale.app.box.com/v/COVID19HarmReductionGuidance>

<https://harmreduction.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID19-safer-drug-use-1.pdf>

Patients Living with HIV

<https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/living-well-with-hiv/taking-care-of-yourself/emergencies-and-disasters>

<https://aidsinfo.nih.gov/guidelines/html/8/covid-19-and-persons-with-hiv--interim-guidance-/0>

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/hiv.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fspecific-groups%2Fhiv.html

Tips for Social Distancing, Quarantine, And Isolation During an Infectious Disease Outbreak

<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/tips-social-distancing-quarantine-isolation-031620.pdf>

CDC: Mental Health and Coping During COVID-19

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fmanaging-stress-anxiety.html

Articles

Shatterproof: “How I’m Coping with COVID-19 and Social Isolation as a Person in Long-Term Recovery” provides helpful suggestions: <http://bit.ly/shatterproof-coping>

The Chopra Center: “Anxious About the Coronavirus? Here Are Eight Practical Tips on How to Stay Calm and Support Your Immune System.” <http://bit.ly/Chopra-calm>

Source: Adapted from Yale Program in Addiction Medicine. https://medicine.yale.edu/intmed/genmed/addictionmedicine/Clinicians%20Yale%20ADM%20COVID-19%20Guidance_032620_380627_5_v2.pdf & <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/virtual-recovery-resources.pdf>

Broward Briefings may be copied. Please cite United Way of Broward County Commission on Behavioral Health & Drug Prevention.



www.drugfreebroward.org