



South Riverdale
COMMUNITY
HEALTH CENTRE

Skin & Wound Care for People Who Use Drugs

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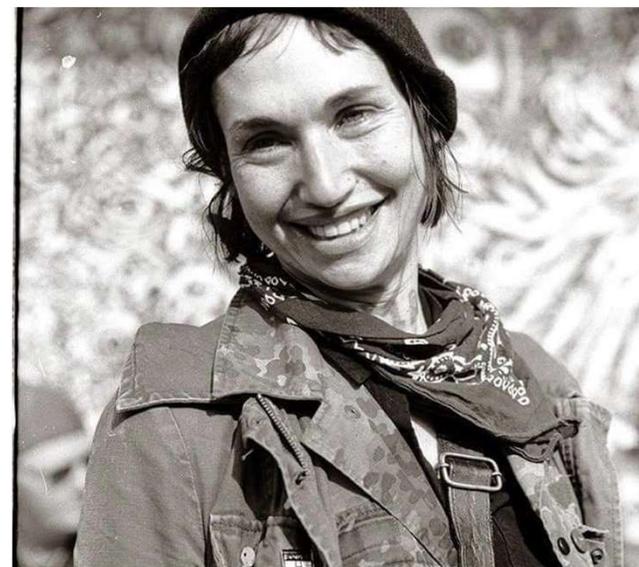
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Heather Mackay-Lams, Community
Health Worker, Moss Park CTS

Land Acknowledgement



Introductions

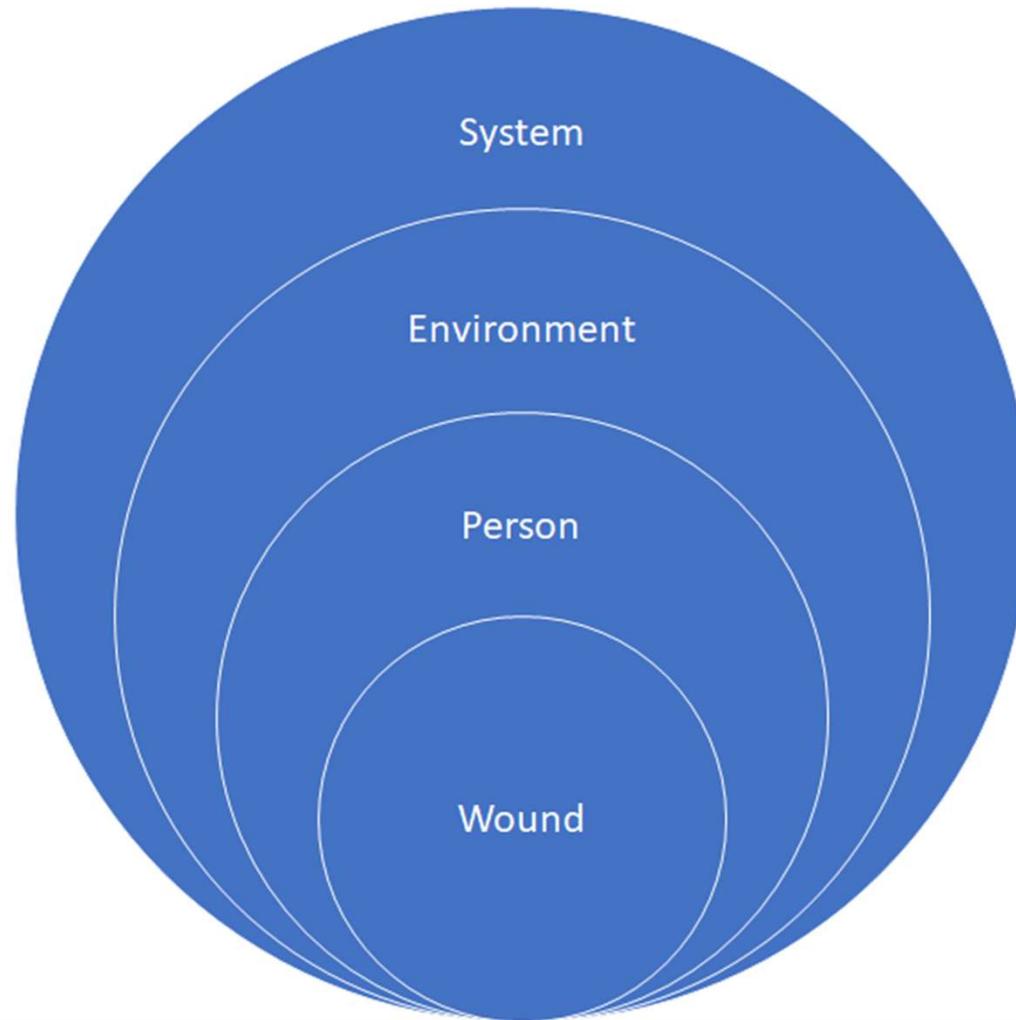


Objectives

- **Define chronic vs. acute wounds**
- **Describe Wounds and Infections**
- **Recognize basic principles of wound care**
- **Assessing, cleansing, and dressing a wound**
- **Supporting people with wounds**
 - **injection technique & safe supply**
- **Explore tools and resources**
- **Most importantly... have a discussion!**
 - What are you seeing? What's been challenging/effective?

Wounds and Infections

- ▶ What causes infection?
 - Pathogen + Host + Proliferation
- ▶ Pathogen – bacteria, virus, fungus
- ▶ Host Factors & Immune System
 - Immunocompromised – eg. HIV, other comorbidities, nutrition, exhaustion!
- ▶ Proliferation
 - The pathogen finds it's ideal living conditions and it grows and spreads!
- ▶ ***Not all skin and wound infections are caused by drugs and/or injecting!***





Basic Principles

- ▶ Person centered care
 - ▶ “adherence” vs. “compliance”
- ▶ Treat the Cause / Treat the System
- ▶ Local wound care
 - ▶ Cleansing/debridement
 - ▶ Bacterial balance
 - ▶ Moisture balance

How do we treat the cause?

(how do we prevent wounds in the first place?)

Treat the Cause / Treat the System

- ▶ Rotating injection sites
- ▶ Hand hygiene & wearing gloves if you're assisting!
- ▶ Clean the skin BEFORE injecting!
- ▶ Switch out rigs

- ▶ Support accompaniments to medical appointments / ED visits
 - Reduce stigma, advocate for adequate pain management

- ▶ Find safe places for ongoing wound care and monitoring in the community
- ▶ *SAFE SUPPLY*

Phases of Wound Healing

- ▶ Hemostasis
 - ▶ Immediate response
- ▶ Inflammation
 - ▶ 0-4 days
- ▶ Proliferation
 - ▶ 4-21 days
- ▶ Maturation
 - ▶ Up to 2 years



Definition

- ▶ Acute wound
- ▶ wound that occurs when the integrity of any tissue is compromised (e.g. skin breaks, muscle tears, burns, or bone fractures)
- ▶ wound may be caused by an act, such as a gunshot, fall, or surgical procedure; by an infectious disease; or by an underlying condition



Definition

Chronic wound

- a wound that fails to progress through an orderly and timely sequence of repair
- a wound that passes through the repair process without restoring anatomic and functional results



With permission C. Harris
Lazarus et al 1992

Assessing, cleansing, and dressing a wound

► Assessment:

- Locations, size, exudate, borders, depth, tunneling, undermining, erythema, edema
- A picture is worth a thousand words!

PAIN AND WOUND INFECTION
Sibbald, Woo, Ayello 06
Woo, Sibbald 09



NATIONAL
PRESSURE
ULCER
ADVISORY
PANEL

STAGE 2

NERDS
Superficial:
Treat
topically

- Non-healing
- **Exudate**
- Red + Bleeding
- Debris
- **Smell**

STONEES
Deep:
Treat
Systemically

- Size is bigger
- Temperature ↑
- Os (probes, exposed)
- New breakdown
- **Exudate,**
- Erythema, Edema
- **Smell**

Increased
pain

Case Study 1



Case Study 1

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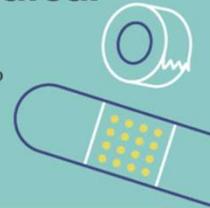
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With permission E. Telegdi

How do I know it's serious? When to seek medical care for wounds

Wounds can get worse quickly and lead to life-threatening infections in your blood. **Tell a trusted healthcare provider or harm reduction worker if you have a wound, no matter how small it is.**



Get medical care if your wound has any of the

S.T.O.P. ! SIGNS

Size, Shape or Streaks



- gets bigger (trace the outside of the reddened area with a marker to watch for this)
- swollen (puffy)
- edges are red or bleeding
- red streaks (painful reddish lines coming from wound or red stripes up the skin)

Temperature



- feels warm or hot to touch
- you have a fever

Odour



- smells bad or different

Pain or Pus



- hurts more
- liquid or green/yellow pus

Your health matters. You deserve respectful care.



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Produced by the distribution team made possible through a financial contribution from the Public Health Agency of Canada, Health Canada Substance Use and Addictions Program.
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Cleansing Do's: Sterile water, normal saline, tap water!



Cleansing Don'ts!



Dressing a Wound

- ▶ Wounds Canada Step-by-Step Guide:
- ▶ <https://www.woundscanada.ca/docman/public/patient-or-caregiver/1680-care-at-home-series-changing-a-dressing/file>
- ▶ Goal: keep the wound clean and covered
 - Moisture balance!
 - Choose options that will absorb exudate
 - Be mindful that some ppl are allergic to different tapes/adhesives
 - Secure the dressing to minimize damage or introducing new bacteria
 - Change dressing when soiled
 - Cover but don't occlude!

Case Study 2



With permission E. Telegdi



Case Study 3

With permission E. Telegdi



How do you support people with wounds?

Ways to support people with wounds

- ▶ Provide support and reminders with dressing changes
- ▶ Provide with supplies
- ▶ Provide accompaniments to medical appointments
- ▶ Help monitor for signs and symptoms of systemic infection (fever, chills, lethargy)
- ▶ Recommend a trusted HCP
- ▶ Keep on fighting for Safe Supply!

Tools and Resources

- ▶ Wounds Canada – Care at Home Series
- ▶ An Introductory Guide for Assessing and Understanding Common Wounds with People Who Inject Drugs (Dunn and Gauthier, 2020)
- ▶ Local resources and referrals – drop-ins, CTS, SOS nurses, friends and family!
- ▶ CATIE Stop Tool

Note for the 2018 Harm Reduction Conference:
 This is a project still under revision and editing.
 Errors and inconsistencies belong to me (see Slack).
 -- AD
 Questions, comments, or concerns can be addressed to
 alic@justaddca.org

An introductory guide for assessing and understanding common wounds with people who inject drugs.

About the authors

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Patient or Caregiver > Preventing and Managing Wounds

Preventing and Managing Wounds

- Overview
- Preventing and Managing Wounds**
 - Basic Skin Physiology
 - Wound index
- Resources
 - Care at Home Series
 - Série des Soins à Domicile
 - DIY Skin Health Series
 - Diabetes, Healthy Feet

What is a wound?

Wounds can be known as cuts, sores or even ulcers located on the skin. What is not commonly known is that the skin is considered wounded even when it is not open. When the skin appears purple, firm or hardened it could indicate that the damage is deep under the skin and it may eventually erupt into a large wound.

How do we care for wounds?

The most important aspect of wound management is prevention! However, wound prevention and management can be challenging, particularly when the person with a wound or at risk for a wound is living with complicating factors that may increase risk or prolong the healing of existing wounds.

Questions / Comments / Discussion?

More Questions?

▶ Erin Telegdi – etelegdi@srchc.com