

***MEDICINE OF METIS MUSIC***  
***A Metis Cultural Song to AIDE Hepatitis C***  
***Manual***

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## Medicine of Metis Music

### A Metis Cultural Song to AIDE Hepatitis C

#### Medicine:

Medicine is a very important word and concept for Indigenous peoples. It means more than many might think of. It is not a word to be used lightly. It does not necessarily mean a “prescription”.

Words are considered to be powerful medicine, so is laughter, tears and love, even a person’s thoughts are seen to be medicine. Music, dance, art, prayers, and songs are also powerful medicines.

This idea of medicine also includes the concept of teachings gained from looking at life events as The Circle of Life.

#### Meeting the Circle:

The Circle is a teacher of life; it shows us a way of looking at ourselves, our reality, and our world. When we look at a Circle there is no beginning and no end, there is no place, person, or life form that is more important or less important than any other. Everything in life, whether plant life, animal life, water life, or bird life is equally important and dependent and interconnected with each other. Through all the generations, those before now and those to come a thousand years from now, we will remain connected. The Circle gives us the lessons regarding similarity such as that we are all born (come into this life) and we all die (leave this life), our time here may differ, it may be seconds or many years, but the commonality remains. This teaching can bring us comfort and a sense of peace that we will always return to our original home when our job is completed. Turning this lesson around, it also serves us to know that just as we are all similar, we are also all different, in the same way that our similarities are vital so too are our differences. We may look different, find different things to enjoy, learn different skills, and have different experiences or views of life, but those very differences are precious, and each difference we see in others reflects a new part of ourselves.

The Circle can also teach us about balance and harmony in relationships with ourselves, each other, and with Creations. We are all different, yet all the same, each irreplaceable, and yet each alike.



## Thoughts from the Circle or Medicine Wheel

The Medicine Wheel or the Circle of Living is really a way of viewing life; it can be represented by a circle, or by any other object, such as a rock, water, or even a mirror, it is a very respected, very old and honored model that can be used to teach many things in Indigenous cultures. There are many variations of how to represent the Medicine Wheel, and in this one, we will use musical instruments – the Fiddle, drum, rattle and flute. Understanding these instruments in context of the Medicine Wheel, they will provide us with a foundation for the Hepatitis C (HCV) program guide.

We can look at life through the Medicine Wheel to see the four aspects of our humanness: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. Each of these aspects fits into a section of the Wheel and provides a visual view of both the differences and the connections between them, people can learn a sense of harmony by working towards balance in the aspects of their life. The way the sections meet in the centre, allows the person to see themselves as connected in physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual ways, but it also lets them see how if they are tired/lacking sleep, their mind will not function well, their emotions may not be well controlled, and their spiritual self is distressed.

The process of using Metis symbolism is deliberately structured to enable peer to peer information sharing. By investing in the person and utilizing a holistic method, the goal is the guarantee that fundamental elements of Metis culture drive this Hepatitis C education program, moving it past a general HCV 101 workshop. Additionally, this process will also help the facilitators get to know the participants, and this may be helpful in building relationships to stimulate future services and care related to Hepatitis C.



## The Program/Workshop

This program will use a holistic approach to provide Hepatitis C information through each of the human elements, and the aspects of music. The process will offer a grounding and through the development of the group, the facilitator will escort the group on their journey. The developer of the program chose to use various instruments as symbols due to their specific long-standing importance and history with Metis people.

Through the teaching, you will be able to create and share knowledge about:

- What Hepatitis C is and how it affects the body;
- How Hepatitis C is passed from person to person;
- How to prevent Hepatitis C from spreading;
- How your body will react to Hepatitis C; and
- What the treatment procedure for Hepatitis C is like.

## Pre-Workshop Suggestions

Create all four aspects by:

*Physical Comfort* – offer in a room that can be private and undisturbed for the hour of the workshop. Arrange chairs/pillows in a circle big enough to provide seating for everyone. Make sure that drinking water, Kleenex, smudge, and other items are available in the circle. It is suggested that the group be 10 or 12, but if two facilitators are present, the numbers could increase to 20.

*Learning Comfort* – information will be shared between participants and facilitator(s), all questions are valid (there is no such thing as a dumb or unimportant question). Everyone gains from hearing/stating or considering misconceptions (myths) that others might have about Hepatitis C. It is important that the setting of your workshop encourage the asking of questions.

*Emotional Comfort* – begin the group with creating and perhaps writing group rules of respect and confidentiality. It is important to stress that all participation is voluntary, no one is going to be pressured to participate or speak in any of the activities offered.

*Spiritual Comfort* – this program is based on the teachings of our ancestors and so values and respects a person's experiences of connection.



## Icebreaker

Ask the participants to share if they have or relate to a favourite instrument, or if they have an animal or other spiritual aide such as a rock/gem, plant, bird, or water animal. It is helpful to have resources such as an Elder/Knowledge Keeper with knowledge of music and history, animals or other items, and the connection to medicine, teachings, and nature. You can also add to your participant's knowledge from a variety of books such as: Working with the Circle.

Describe a list of various symbols which can be utilized to symbolize the teachings from the Medicine Wheel.

Examples such as:

Rocks, silver – Crystal

Trees or plants.

Musical instruments such as:

Drum – heartbeat of the world

Flute – caring

Rattle – Fiddle

Animals:

Buffalo – movement, sacrifice

Eagle – vision, big picture

Coyote – time, trickster

Mouse – sees things close up

Bear – internal search, internal voice

If time permits, participants could learn what animals, colours, rock or mineral guides might be there for them and find out what special gift, medicine, or lessons they bring.



## Four Sacred Instruments

### Give Voice about Hepatitis C

#### *Tasks*

Discuss Hepatitis C using the voice of wisdom from each of the four instruments (Drum, Fiddle, Flute, and Rattle).

Use storytelling as a method to teach and engage/entertain.

Offer the concerns of Hepatitis C in the context of individual lives linked to the social, economic, and political realities of Metis life.

#### *Resources Suggested*

Images/pictures of instruments or items (drum, fiddle, flute, and rattle).

#### *Facilitator Preparation*

Whether you utilize the items, pictures, or just discuss, it is more effective to imitate the sound of the instrument than just say the word (name) of the item. Tell the stories as you would any other story.

#### *Method*

There are four sections to this part of the program. Please develop your familiarity/knowledge with each section before continuing. Facilitators may want to share the sections, but each one needs to take part in all sections.

## Part 1 – The Fiddle

### The Wide View of Hepatitis C

The first instrument that gives voice and introduces the rest of the group of instruments is the FIDDLE. Fiddle suggests to us the gift of a new day//new way of looking at things/new vision, and will offer all of us a Hepatitis C overview across Canada, and share a story of the disparity of the number of Indigenous people, especially Metis living with Hepatitis C.



### Lesson One – Mental Segment: Fiddle (complicated, delicate but strong)

What is the Fiddle? (How it is necessary for each tiny piece of the fiddle, whether in the body, the bridge, or even the strings, each piece must be whole and healthy to create beautiful music, just as the parts of the human body must be health for your body to work at its best).

*I am Fiddle. I have a powerful medicine and voice. I am the one who guides sight and spiritual journeys. I give you a song, sung higher than all other songs, and so I can represent a link to the Creator or the world of spirits.*

*Songs are often used in ceremonies for healing and praying, they represent a connection and call or request to spirit power. I use my clear, distinct voice to represent protection, wisdom, strength, and clear vision. I can sing alone and represent individuality and leadership, important qualities if one is to take an active role in creating health in our communities since it often seems we travel or work alone.*

*Another thing we recognize about my Fiddle body, is that it is difficult to craft, and more difficult to learn to play, but once done, I create song for my entire life. The union between my Fiddle body and its Bow as illustrated by playing indicate the cooperation between humans, the process of creating a healthy life involves both partners in a relationship working in harmony together. This working together or learning to play my fiddle body is not always easy to do, it takes practice and commitment, but once learned the result is beautiful.*

*In my Fiddle body, I have four main parts, just like the Sacred Circle, I have the body, the bridges, the bow, and the strings. As Fiddle, I can illustrate to you, as Metis people, the strength and beauty of combining two nations together, and how the two became one with characteristics from both but are more than both alone.*


The most current National Census (2021) claims that there are 985,200 people who have identified themselves as Indigenous. This includes First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples, but it does not necessarily reflect those members of our families who are homeless, those who are isolated, those



who avoided the census, and of equal importance, those who do not identify themselves as Indigenous due to lack of knowledge, feelings of shame, or loss of identity. The number of Indigenous people is growing. Metis people are among the fastest growing and youngest group in Canada. In Alberta, there are 135,660 Indigenous people, approximately 56,000 of them are Metis. Over half of all Indigenous peoples live in urban communities rather than on reserves or Metis settlements.

In Canada, the number of Indigenous peoples who have tested positive for HCV is believed to be almost one-tenth of the populations, whereas in non-Indigenous peoples, only one-hundredth of them has tested positive for HCV. These numbers also do not accurately reflect the fact that many Metis people are not counted in the Indigenous numbers, as it is necessary to not only self-identify, but many communities/provinces do not identify Metis people as distinct and separate peoples. The real count of Hepatitis C in our communities is not readily available. Why might this reality exist?





## Lesson 2: Rattle – Emotional Large outside seen, inside tiny and unseen (cover, stick, grains of sand, etc., and tie)

### What is Hepatitis C and What does it do? The Facts



*I am Rattle. I come in various sizes. Some are quite small, but still, I have strong medicine in my voice. I teach you to pay attention, that not everything is as it seems, and that even small things are important. In the circle, no matter how young or old, how big, or small, everything is of equal importance, and has a role. For instance, if we had no ants or mosquitoes, all life would end on earth.*

*I put my message in a Rattle song for people to pay attention to the small, hidden things, that tiny quiet voice inside us, that whispers “don’t go there, don’t do that” is easy to ignore. It may sound unimportant in all the loud voices, but it is not. It may be the most important voice of all.*

*Sometimes, we ignore little things that we see or hear, like,*

*“I noticed sometimes she lied to other people, but I didn’t pay attention to it, and now I tested positive with Hepatitis C.”*

*“I used my own needle, but I didn’t know you couldn’t share tattoo ink. It seemed so unimportant.”*

*Listening to my song will help you pay attention to the small things that make up reality. If you want to protect yourself from HCV, you need my medicine. Get the facts and pay close attention.”*

Hepatitis C is a virus, an incredibly tiny life form but one which is very strong, it is also referred to as HCV or Hep C. it enters our bodies by blood-to-blood transmission, from a person who tests positive for Hepatitis C to a new person. Often, we do not intend or think the activities we do may expose us to disease, sometimes it is not the big pieces of our behaviour that cause us difficulty, but the small things that trip us up and change the outcomes. We need to pay attention to all the details, not just visible ones, to protect us from HCV. Many people know not to share needles, but they forget about the water used to mix drugs, or the tattoo ink used in body art.

#### *Activity One:*

What are some activities that might spread HCV?



## What does Hepatitis C do?

Once inside the body, Hep C attacks the liver. If not treated, the Hep C virus can damage the liver severely.

Your liver must cooperate with the entirety of your body to keep you healthy. It helps clean out all the toxins in your body, things we eat, drink, breath in, or absorb through our skin. All the multiple organs and systems that create your whole body must work together for best health. Lacking a healthy liver, your body encounters a hard time doing the many things we take for granted. Good digestion is dependent on having a healthy liver, a damaged liver cannot create the necessary proteins required for blood to clot. Without the ability to clot, blood continues to flow from cuts, bruises, or other damages. Unhealthy livers cannot properly use the drugs you may need to reduce the toxins and remove them from your body. A healthy liver is important to your health, and so it is of the utmost importance to avoid contracting Hepatitis C. However, if you do become Hepatitis C positive, there are things you can do to seek treatment and medications to take to remove Hepatitis C from your liver.


## How does Hepatitis C spread?

Hepatitis C is spread through infected blood from one person entering a healthy person's body in some way. This may happen by accident, by sharing personal hygiene equipment or by risky behaviours which allows contact with another person's body fluid.

### *Activity two:*

Identify ways to transmit Hepatitis C.

Identify ways to be with people without spreading Hepatitis C.



## Lesson Three: Spiritual – Flute (caring, offering protection safely)

### Making Choices

*I am Flute. I play my song often to offer caring and protection. It can be accepted or rejected. My flute song voice is powerful because I encourage you to look deep into yourself. Doing this allows you to see what really will meet your needs and desires and survive the hardships of life. While listening, my Flute voice can offer to open your heart and soul to possibilities; you must step outside your current place to become fully aware of what might come to you.*



*When you are inside your human home, you can listen quietly to the voice inside you.*

*It is the voice who reminds you of who you are, and what is important to you. That voice also lets you know what safety you need in a partner and who that partner might be.*

*If your body is quiet, then your mind and heart can find truthful answers.*

*I will help you decide your footsteps as you walk your path and answer important questions like:*

*What is important to me?*

*Do I want to have a child some day?*

*Do I want to live safely to become an Elder?*

*Are my behaviours likely to expose me to Hepatitis C?*


*If I have already contracted HCV on my journey, do I want to find appropriate treatment?*

*Once you have found your way in life, leave the shelter of your home, and take part in the world. You can sing proud, confidence songs like me.*

### How to stop Hepatitis C from spreading

Stopping the spread of HCV or Hepatitis C means paying attention to both large activities and the small parts of activities that can be considered risky. In order to stop the spread of Hep C, you need to stop the transmission of blood between people.

- Sharing needles is high risk, but so is sharing any pieces used in injection drug use, pieces such as the water used to mix/melt your drugs, the spoon or “cooker” used to heat the water and drugs in, even the swabs to clean your arm should not be shared.

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- Drug equipment used for smoking drugs, such as “crack” cocaine, this could include straws, crack pipes, or any parts making up crack pipes.
  - Body art equipment, ink needles, and other items used in tattoos or body piercings, can also be contaminated if proper procedures are not used to keep equipment clean and sterile.
  - Sharing personal hygiene supplies such as nail clippers, toothbrushes, razors are also ways by which Hepatitis C can be spread.
  - Blood from a cut, nosebleed or fight can also spread Hepatitis C if not properly handled. If you have to wipe up, or clean a surface, where there may be blood always follow what is referred to as “universal precautions” (there is an explanation of universal precautions at the back of this document).

## What happens if you contract Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C affects everyone differently. However, generally speaking, the odds are not in your favour, unless you get tested and seek treatment.

### *Physical/Body Affects: Without Treatment*

20% of people who are infected with Hepatitis C would have the virus clear their bodies within six months, and they would be recovered or test negative for Hepatitis C.

80% of people will develop a chronic infection, which means that they will develop a moderate degree of liver damage; they might not show any symptoms at all.

Of the 80% who develop a chronic infection, about 20 of them or ¼ of the people will continue to have increased liver disease, call cirrhosis of the liver.

The worst possible case is that up to 4% (or 1 in 4) people will advance to liver cancer.

### *Mental Affects*

People vary in their mental responses to Hepatitis C. it is very important to stay positive as holding a positive mental energy can have very beneficial effects on the virus, especially when combined with effective prescription drugs and prescribed therapy. There are various techniques to practice that will assist you to develop a positive mental attitude.

### *Emotional Affects*

No one can predict what emotional results will happen from contracting Hepatitis C. it is safe to assume that anyone will go through a wild roller coaster of emotional responses. This would also be true of anyone fortunate enough to have the genetic makeup to clear the infection on its own. There are, however, effective strategies to learn that will assist you to cope with the diagnosis of Hepatitis C.

Offer some strategies and request that participants add their own.



### *Spiritual Affects*

Hepatitis C can be a special teacher, if we allow it to share its lessons. We can either fall into despair or seek inner strength to help us deal in positive ways with crisis, that may come with Hepatitis C, or others that may face you in future life.

How do you find meaning in events?

Where do you turn for spiritual strength?

Whether your path leads you to traditional spiritual ceremonies such as sweat lodges, smudges, Elder/Knowledge Keeper teachings, or to contemporary religion, looking within yourself is an important step in finding spiritual strength.

### *Activity three:*

Share some ideas and ask the groups to generate others that build positive self-thoughts.



## Lesson Four – The Drum

*I am Drum, my medicine may be booming out loud and clear or soft and muted, but it is always potent. I bring the gift of Wisdom to those who will listen to my song. Without my gift or the lesson of wisdom being learned, one runs endlessly, like a dog chasing its own tail, never quite understanding the experience.*



*Lacking wisdom, you become only a ghost of your real self, never knowing whether to stay or to go.*

*The Drum has the wisdom to know when to sing loud and powerful in a group singing its song for the Pow Wow Dances. I am grounded and powerful then.*

*The Drum has the wisdom to sing by myself, calling people to pray. I am grounded and powerful then, I have the wisdom to choose which song is right for me.*

*Although I can be in a group, to play and sing, I don't run my life to the group's song. I listen with respect to my entire group, but I don't copy every song they sing. I pray when my heart is filled with doubt, I give thanks in prayer for many gifts. Prayer is another gift brought by me the Drum to all people.*


## Living with Choices

Each of us has to make choices all the time. It is really all we must do, make choices, and then deal with the results. If we are fortunate, we can change our choices and reduce the effects of unpleasant results. No one can make our choices for us, unless we give up the right and power to determine our own life. Drugs and alcohol when used inappropriately, can rob us of our ability to make healthy, effective choices, they can cloud our judgement; create illusions in our minds that give us a false sense of wellness and happiness. It is only when we abandon them – the substitutes for inner peace and knowledge that we begin to realize the drugs and alcohol may have directed us down a dangerous unhealthy path.

A long time ago, in Indigenous peoples, our people were not directed “to do this, do that, don't do this, or don't do that”. People were expected and supported to learn from watching others, from observing nature at work, and from making predictions about what might occur if they followed this path or that one.

If someone chooses stability, responsibility, truth, and cooperation, then the path may be hard and long, but it provides satisfaction and happiness. The results of that choice might be a role of leadership, respect, good health, and a long life.

Choosing instability, reality escape through drugs and alcohol, lies and broken promises, many in the beginning seem to offer an easy or quick answer to difficulties; however, the real costs or



consequences may be long lasting and severe. This path may lead to Hepatitis C infection, ill health, incarceration, and many other less desirable outcomes. Choosing this path, does not make a person “bad.” The choices they made may not be effective, unless of course these things were what the person was seeking.

### What the treatment procedure for Hepatitis C is like

New treatments for Hepatitis C are much better than previous ones. The treatment is for approximately 6 to 12 weeks duration. One pill a day, with few side effects. The success of treatment is about 95 – 99% of people are cured at the end of treatment. However, if the path of your choices is still filled with risky behaviours, you can be re-infected.

Whether we make positive, healthy choices to live safe, drug free lives, or make choices to invite drugs and alcohol to accompany us on our path, we are each part of the Circle and have an equal place in the Medicine Wheel.

The gift of songs of the Drum are invited into our lives whenever we chose to listen to the heartbeat of the world. There are important lessons to be gained from every path, sometimes the hardest path makes the best teacher and opens the greatest of gifts for us. The power of the Drum helps us stand our ground in the face of adversity.

The Medicine of the Drum helps prevent HCV by encouraging positive decision-making, individuality, and standing your ground in the face of pressure.

*Activity four: How do we resist the lure of unsafe activities, when we may be in a moment of indecision?*



## Appendices





## Activity One:

Determine and identify with a check the risk level for the following activities:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>High Risk</b>	<b>Low Risk</b>
Needle Sharing		
Hugging		
Sharing Crack Pipe		
Kissing		
Tattoo ink sharing		
Borrowing nail clippers		
Using Someone else's spoon or Cooker		
Sharing water to mix drugs		
Dancing		
Sharing Ceremonies, such as sweat lodge		
Sharing piercing tools		
Borrowing your brother's razor		
Sharing straws for cocaine snorting		
Having HCV+ person prepare your food		
Sharing hot tub		
Drinking from same glass/cup		
Picking up Kleenex used for nose bleed		



## Activity two: Safe Behaviours vs Unsafe Behaviours

How can you be safe with your partner:

Resources needed:

Whiteboard/flip chart

Markers

Time: 10 minutes

***Have participants brainstorm safe interactions with their partners.***

Examples:

Monogamous partnership

Use condoms properly

Do not use injection drugs

Keep personal hygiene equipment to self

***Have participants brainstorm unsafe interactions with partners***

Examples:

Multiple partners

Unprotected sex

Using injection drugs

Attending drug parties



## Activity three: Random Factors of HCV

Objective: to help illustrate the variety and randomness of what could happen

Resources:

Marbles - 20 clear, 80 green (60 light green, 20 dark green) 4 black/red

String Bag (to hold marbles)

Empty plate or box (to hold marbles as withdrawn from bag)

Set of Dice

Divide participants into duos (groups of two)

Have participant's roll the dice to determine who draws the marble (highest total draws marble); take out of bag a marble with each turn.



## Activity four:

Brainstorm safe coping options for resisting unsafe behaviours.



## Hepatitis C Quiz

1. What is Hepatitis C?
2. Hepatitis C is also known by two other names, what are they?
3. Will taking antibiotics cure Hepatitis C?
4. What part of the body does Hepatitis C attack?
5. What are two ways to contract Hepatitis C?



## Suggestions for Discussions

If we know what to do to stay healthy, why do we do unsafe, unhealthy things anyway?

When we put ourselves at risk, what feelings might we often be dealing with?

What might be some of the inner/spiritual lessons that Hepatitis C has to teach or share with us?

## Alternate Activities

Discuss/share positive visualization techniques.

Write positive sayings or affirmations to/or for yourself. Write positive sayings to share with others.

Identify what negative thoughts you say to yourself, in your mind and make a conscious effort to stop and replace them with positive mental comments.

Body positioning – become aware that when you keep your chin down, you are physically allowing your body to continue thinking or processing negative thoughts. By raising your chin and looking upwards it is easier to think positive thoughts.

Brainstorm other ways of staying positive, what do you do to keep a positive attitude?

What coping strategies would you use to deal with the impact of a positive Hepatitis C test result?

What is spirituality to you?

How do we know where to look or how to find spiritual strength?

What is a person has no sense of or no knowledge of spirituality?

How can spirituality or lack of it help or hinder us as we deal with Hepatitis C?



## Universal Precautions:

Facilitator can create handout of Universal Precautions or provide information orally depending upon your group.



## Universal Precautions

To minimize the risk of exposure to infectious agents such as the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and the Hepatitis B Virus, the body and blood fluids from all persons (including individuals, volunteers, and staff) shall be considered as potentially infected with blood borne pathogens.

All staff shall adhere to infection control procedures, including work practice controls (i.e., hand washing, handling of used needles, and other sharps) to prevent blood and other body fluids from entering their bodies through any openings, including cuts or open areas on the skin; and HIV is transmitted through blood and body fluids.

Four body fluids contain the highest viral concentration of HIV:

- Blood.
- Semen.
- Vaginal fluid; and
- Breast milk.

Hepatitis B is caused by a virus. Hepatitis B is approximately 100 times more infectious than HIV because it can live outside of the body and **remain infectious** for 7 days, depending on environmental conditions. It is transmitted by:

- Sexual contact.
- Blood to blood.
- Mother to child; or
- Other body fluid contacts.

Entry of the virus occurs through:

- Breaks in the skin (cutaneous exposure)
- Through the mucous membranes (mucocutaneous exposure, i.e., splashes in the eyes); or
- By percutaneous exposure (i.e., piercing the skin by an infected needle).


Hepatitis C is found only in the blood. It is approximately 4 times more infectious than HIV because it can live outside the body and **remain infectious** for 16 hours to 4 days: depending on the environmental conditions. It is transmitted through:

- Sharing needles.
- Unsafe tattooing and piercing.
- Nasal devices for snorting drugs.
- Non-sterile needles used for acupuncture.
- Sharing personal products like nail clippers and tweezers.
- Through sexual contact.
- Babies born to Hepatitis C positive mothers; and
- Through occupational exposure.

***The following procedures shall be closely followed at all work sites:***

- All staff shall ensure that cuts and open sores are not exposed (i.e., covered with a Band-Aid).
- Gloves, if needed, are only worn once, and disposed of in a plastic bag. Gloves should be disposable latex, vinyl, or household rubber gloves.
- Hands **MUST** be washed after wearing gloves. See hand washing procedures below.



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- Use fresh bleach (9 parts water to 1 part bleach). Opened bottles of bleach MUST be replaced after 3 months. Use papers towels and dispose of in sealed plastic bags. Treat soiled materials with caution. Pour a bleach mixture (9 parts water to 1 part bleach) on the soiled materials or area and let sit for 10 minutes before proceeding to clean.
  - Discard garbage, including gloves, in properly sealed containers (i.e., sharps container, etc.).
  - When doing laundry, keep soiled items separate and launder in hot soapy water and dry on hot cycle in dryer. Soiled clothing should be kept sealed in bags that prevent leakage. Rinse the washing machine well after use; and

***Hand washing procedure:***

Wash hands with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds after:

- Contact with blood or other body fluids.
- After going to the bathroom.
- Before preparing or eating food; and
- After removing latex gloves.
- Use hand lotion to help keep hands from getting chapped or irritated, intact skin prevents infection.

***Using supplies and equipment procedure:***

- Disposable latex or vinyl gloves shall be used when there is a possibility of contact with any body fluids.
- Disposable plastic backed under pads shall be used to protect sheets from fecal or urinary soiling; and
- Dependent upon a service user's status, disposable facemasks shall be used.

***Assisting service users:***

In the event that a staff member is required to provide individual assistance to discard sharp instruments (i.e., razors or syringes), *Universal Precautions* should be followed. Encourage service users to dispose of their own sharps' materials. If the service user is unable to do so, the staff member must make sure that an appropriate sharps container is readily available.

***Needle stick injury procedure:***

- Allow the area to bleed.
- Wash the area with soap and water.
- Go to your local emergency department or contact your family physician immediately. The hospital or your physician will initiate the "Protocol for Needle Stick Injury" which includes a HIV test and tests for Hepatitis if the staff is not already immunized.
- Report this incident to the Team Lead and complete a Critical Incident Report. The Incident Report and the Worker's Compensation Board report shall be forwarded to the Executive Director or designate as soon as possible.