

Working with Chemsex

Background:

Research indicates higher levels of substance use by gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (MSM) than the population as a whole. Emerging evidence from services working with this group indicates growing trends of chemsex - sexualised drug use, injecting, and other harms associated with newer drugs and sexual behaviour. New HIV infections amongst MSM in London grew by over 20% in the last year, with concerns about the link between drug use and HIV risk.

Aim:

The course aims to raise awareness of chemsex, including emerging drug trends; it will explore drug use in a sexualised context by MSM and introduce strategies and techniques for reducing sexual risk and drug-related harm.

Objectives:

By the end of training participants will be able to:

- State ways in which patterns of presentations to services by MSM has changed in recent years
- Demonstrate awareness of the drugs most commonly used by MSM for chemsex
- Explore links between substance misuse and sexual health, with a particular emphasis on HIV prevention
- Identify drug use as a factor in sexual risk behaviour
- Develop appropriate interventions using motivational interviewing techniques to facilitate behavioural change
- Identify where MSM presenting with chemsex may benefit from specialist substance misuse interventions and refer appropriately.

Training Outline:

The training will comprise of:

- Update on emerging trends in chemsex within MSM
- Identifying drug and sexual health risks
- Motivational interviewing
- Dealing with ambivalence
- Case studies
- Care pathways and referrals
- Questions, evaluation and close

About the training provider:

London Friend is a charity that works to promote the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB & T) people. We are the oldest LGB & T charity in the UK, established in 1972. Our specialist drug and alcohol service is called Antidote, and has provided support around substance misuse since 2002, initially based at Turning Point's Hungerford Drug Project, and moving to London Friend in 2011. Working with a target population we were one of the first services in the UK to observe chemsex trends, and developed interventions that are sensitive to the needs of MSM engaged in chemsex. We have developed a number of innovative service delivery models with NHS and statutory drug services, and worked with drug policy makers at the Home Office, Department of Health and Public Health England to influence strategy for LGB & T inclusion.

About the trainer:

Jamie Willis is Training and Outreach Manager for Antidote at London Friend. He has been working within the social care sector for over 10 years and has a background working with young people, LGBT populations, mental health, homelessness and more recently before joining the Antidote team, as Accident & Emergency substance misuse counsellor at a busy North West London hospital. He has extensive experience providing training on a wide range of substance misuse and LGBT issues.