

## The power of language

We all know how loaded some words can be and the different meanings they can hold depending on who you are.

Here is a quick reference guide for you to make sure that the language you are using in relation to illicit drugs, people who use/inject illicit drugs and people who are living with hepatitis C is positive rather than punitive!

### Hepatitis C

When abbreviating hepatitis C – **hep C**.

The best way to describe a person/s who has hepatitis C is – **a person/people who is/are living with hepatitis C**.

Transmission of hepatitis C – Rather than attributing this to a particular behaviour such as injecting drugs, it is important to focus on the how – blood to blood contact. For example instead of: hepatitis C is transmitted by injecting drugs say **hepatitis C is transmitted by blood to blood contact**.

There are no high risk groups so try to use **affected communities or high risk behaviours**. It is high risk behaviours that can spread hepatitis C, not high risk groups. Referring to 'high risk groups' stigmatises already marginalised people and groups. It can also lull people who don't identify with those groups into a false sense of security.

### Illicit Drugs

Describing illicit drugs can be emotive. Best way to describe them...**illicit drugs and prohibited substances**

### People who use illicit drugs

Terms like junkie and addict are discriminatory, instead use these terms:

**A person who uses/ injects illicit drugs**

**A person who is drug dependent**

**A person who is experiencing problematic drug use**