

The HCVCAT

The Hepatitis C Virus Care Capability in Alcohol and other Drug Treatment Tool (HCVCAT) is a concise, easy to use tool to assist alcohol and other drug (AOD) services to measure, rate and improve their capability to identify and provide care to people living with Hepatitis C Virus (HCV). In this context, HCV care includes provision of information and education, screening for risk, testing, treatment, and support.

AOD services work through the HCVCAT tool to conduct a self-review of their HCV capability and identify opportunities for improvement.

The 2022/2023 project¹

Through 2022/2023 WANADA ran a project supporting services to undertake HCVCAT self-reviews and aiming to identify system improvement opportunities, and collective capability building needs, within the AOD service sector.

The project involved 19 metropolitan and regional based AOD services that had quality processes in place and existing infrastructure to support the application of any identified systems improvements. 10 of these services had previously undertaken supported self-reviews using the HCVCAT though the 2020/21 WANADA pilot project.

Work with services participating in 2022/2023 included:

- supported self-reviews (pre) to determine and develop a plan to **address barriers and gaps** to providing HCV care.
- supported self-reviews (post) to **determine the impact** of implemented capability building activities and potential further improvements.
- maintenance supported self-reviews for services who participated in the pilot program, to **reassess capacity** and address barriers and gaps to providing HCV care.
- assistance in accessing HCV **resources and training**.
- access to **staff HCV training** from Peer Based Harm Reduction WA.

Feedback from services participating in supported self-reviews was consistently positive.

"Benefits include more awareness, knowledge and resources within our team/service to support individuals with hep C related concerns."

"Good discussion and ideas sparking"

Similarly, those program participants who accessed the HCV staff training provided by Peer Based Harm Reduction WA also provided consistently positive feedback.

“Information was explained professionally, clearly and in perfect detail. I loved the lived experience aspect too, a huge strength!”

“Broad coverage of topic but delivered in an easy to understand way, making content easier to remember.”

This qualitative feedback is further supported by self-review data collected by the project.

- Of the nine services undertaking pre and post supported self-reviews the mean rating increased in the post scores for every dimension of capability assessed by the HCVCAT.
- These newly participating services collectively identified 71 **opportunities for improvement** (an average of 8 each). 66% of these were completed or commenced between the pre and the post.
- Of the 10 services who undertook a maintenance supported self-review the mean scores showed that improvements made between pre and post reviews were essentially maintained or further increased since the post review. This is particularly noteworthy as it demonstrates that changes made between the pre and the post had a **sustained impact**, even in the context of the pandemic.
- A further 32 opportunities for improvement were identified collectively through the **maintenance self-reviews**.
- Of the 101 participants from 12 services who undertook the PBHRWA staff training and completed an evaluation, 93% strongly agreed that their **knowledge and understanding** about HCV and HCV treatment had increased.
- Of the eight managers who responded to a project evaluation survey 87.5% agreed that having participated in the project, their service/program was **better able to meet the needs** of service users at risk of HCV infection.

In 2024 the HCVCAT has been reviewed and updated to support greater sustainability and independent self-reviews by WA AOD services. In addition to the HCVCAT tool itself, the resource includes an introduction to the HCVCAT, and information on how to undertake a self-review using the tool. Organisations are encouraged to adopt the tool as part of their ongoing continuous quality improvement processes.

For more information, or to access the tool and other HCV resources, contact projects@wanada.org.au or visit <https://wanada.org.au/sector-quality/hepatitis-c>.