

Facilitated Discussion Guide

Safe Injection Practices and Sharps Safety

Use the talking points below to engage your colleagues and others within your jurisdiction in a short, focused, and educational discussion. Facilitator notes included throughout this resource will provide tips for facilitating your discussion.

1. Share the objectives

Facilitator notes: Explain that today's infection prevention and control (IPC) educational session will be covering safe injection practices. Share the objectives with the group so they know what information will be covered and what they can hope to gain from the session.

- **Introduce** bloodborne pathogens.
- **Share** key safe injection practices.
- **Share** sharps safety best practices.

2. Introduce the topics

Facilitator notes: Share the key points below about safe injection practices to introduce the topics. When sharing, it may be helpful to connect these points to relevant experiences or happenings going on within your jurisdiction.

- Bloodborne pathogens (BBP) are infectious microorganisms that are found in blood and other bodily fluids.
 - Common examples include, Hepatitis B (HBV), Hepatitis C (HCV), and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).
- BBP exposure risks for health care personnel and patients include:
 - Needlesticks.
 - Shared needles or syringes.
 - Other sharps injuries.
- Safe injection practices are a part of [standard precautions](#) and should be followed to prevent the transmission of bloodborne pathogens to patients and health care personnel.
- Health care facilities must follow the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\) BBP Standards](#) and adhere to an [exposure control plan](#). **Facilitator note:** You may use the linked exposure control plan document as a template to create or update your facility's exposure control plan.

3. Expand on the topics

Facilitator notes: Now that you've introduced the topic, share more detailed information with the group using the key points below. It may be helpful to bring up the resources that are linked and walk through them together. You can use these resources to further deepen the conversation and add more points of discussion.

- Unsafe injection practices can result in disease transmission. Common unsafe practices include:
 - ✗ Using the same syringe for more than one patient .
 - ✗ Accessing a vial or bag with a syringe that has already been used to administer medication to a patient, then using the remaining contents from that vial or bag for another patient.
 - ✗ Using single-dose or single-use medication for more than one patient.
 - ✗ Failing to use aseptic technique when preparing and administering injections.
- Four main [safe injection practices](#) include:
 - **Aseptic technique:** Aseptic technique should always be used when preparing and administering injections. It involves:
 - ✓ Ensuring medications are stored and prepared in a dedicated preparation area.
 - ✓ Performing hand hygiene prior to drawing up a medication.
 - ✓ Disinfecting the rubber septum prior to drawing up the medication.
 - **One needle, one syringe, one time:** Always use needles and syringes for only one patient. Never administer medication from the same syringe to multiple patients. Medication vials should be entered with a new needle and syringe every time, even if obtaining additional doses for the same patient. Never enter a medication vial with a used syringe or needle.
Facilitator note: Visit the CDC's [One and Only Campaign webpage](#) for more information and resources on safe injection practices.
 - **Single-dose vials:** Single-dose medication vials are intended to be used for one patient for a single injection. Single-dose vials must only be accessed one time and never split into multiple syringes or combined with other leftover vials. A single-dose vial must be discarded at the end of intended use and not stored for future use.
 - **Multi-dose vials:** If multi-dose vials are used, both the needle and syringe used must be sterile. Multi-dose vials should be dedicated to one patient and stored away from treatment areas in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Discard a multi-dose vial immediately if the sterility is compromised or questionable. **Facilitator note:** Review the [Project Firstline infographic](#) on how to use multi-dose vials safely for more information.
- To ensure sharps safety, and as part of an exposure control plan, health care personnel should implement preventative exposure control measures including:
 - **Standard precautions:** Treat all blood and other potentially infectious materials as infectious and perform hand hygiene regularly.
 - **Personal protective equipment (PPE):** Wear PPE appropriate for the situation, such as gown, gloves, and eye protection, when there are potential exposure risks.

- **Proper handling and disposal of sharps:** Use needles with safety devices when possible to avoid having to recap needles and avoid inadvertent pokes. Approved sharps containers should be readily available for disposal. Containers must be closable, puncture-resistant, leakproof, and marked as biohazard. They should be routinely replaced and not be overfilled.

4. Discuss with your colleagues

Facilitator notes: Now that you've introduced and reviewed the topic in more detail, this is a great time to pause, answer questions, and discuss as a group. It's encouraged that you use this discussion to brainstorm ways to help improve practices in your department and within health care facilities in your jurisdiction. Below are some example questions you may discuss; you may also wish to discuss topics specific to your facility.

- What are we already doing that promotes safe infection practices?
 - Do we currently utilize sharps with safety devices?
 - Do we currently have sharps disposal containers in the locations where we need them?
- What could be improved to ensure safe injection practices are followed?
- What barriers currently exist that prevent us from implementing these safe injection practices? What is needed to overcome these barriers?

5. Wrap up and reinforce

Facilitator notes: Following the discussion, you may wish to reiterate the ideas and next steps that the group suggested. Invite the group to ask any remaining questions about the topic. Share the key takeaways below to wrap up the session.

- All health care personnel and staff should be educated on BBP, the risks they might encounter, and how they can protect themselves.
- Safe injection practices are a part of [standard precautions](#) and health care personnel should follow [safe injection practices](#) to prevent the transmission of diseases.
- [Exposure control methods](#) outlined in a facility's exposure control plan should be followed to minimize the risk of exposure to bloodborne pathogens.

