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TAKING CARE ...

OF OURSELVES & THOSE WE CARE ABOUT



HARM REDUCTION WOUND CARE

PASAN can't make these booklets alone.

It is only with the knowledge and expertise of those with lived and living experiences, both inside and outside of prison walls, that we can put together this information to share with others. Most imporantly, to share with prisoners.

We welcome that this booklet may be shared within different institutions as well as outside of prison walls, and we hope that you find something useful from it no matter where you are. It's also important to know that how this information is put together is meant for prisoners, especially those in federal institutions.

Because what harm reduction looks like on the outside is not the same as what harm reduction can look like on the inside – where the exact resources and supports we need are not always available when and how we need them.

We want to give sincere thanks to all of the participants who share their knowledge, their experiences, and their ideas with us to inform this booklet.

Your ongoing support and guidance helps PASAN continue to make resources that are relevant and importnat for prisoners inside.

PASAN believes
HARM REDUCTION MEANS that –

Everyone is deserving of health, connection, and well-being. So...

We remove our judgement and work to minimize harmful effects of actions rather than simply ignore or condemn them.
Remember our medicines are all different and what works for one does not work for all.

We are complex, multi-faceted people that will not share the same goals- or have the same needs – the best expert is the self. Our healing is unique to our experience and who we are, it cannot be done without our whole selves involved.

We focus on what's possible and not on what's out of our control. That means what's possible in my situation, environment, relationships, etc.

We acknowledge that there are systemic and institutional factors that take away choice and cause harm in people's lives, relationships, communities. We work to bring choice and self-direction back into focus.

All things are connected, we work from their intersections- a whole person approach to a whole person problem.



The who, what, why, where, when is important- the best results come from when the people who are impacted are involved in the solution. With listening and consultation, we find the right directions.

We believe that there is a better, more compassionate, kind and effective way to practice justice in our communities.
Our current system punishes and isolates, harm reduction finds common ground and restores relationships.

FINAL TAUGHT

Wound Healing vs Wound Closure

You have gained some knowledge to care your wounds, either alone or with the support of healthcare, and they are healing well! But are your wounds truly healed?

The answer is no! Throughout this workbook we use the language of *wound healing* but really and truly your wounds will never return to the state it was prior to the injury/wound. They will **close (wound closure)** – on their own or assisted by healthcare – stitching, staples, etc., and return to approximately 80% of the strength of that specific area of your body.

Because of this, it is safe to say that your wounds never fully heal but they close (wound closure). Your wounds will always be at risk of reopening because of injuries, so it is important that you take precautions to prevent future injuries to that area of your body.

We want to hear from you

Tell us about your wound care journey:
What works and what doesn't.
What else you will like to learn about wounds.
Feedback on how we can improve this workbook.
etc.
You can write to the Federal team at PASAN or give us a call and ask to speak with a Federal In-Reach worker.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

When we think of wounds one thing that comes to mind is blood. HIV and Hepatitis-C (Hep-C) are blood borne diseases that can spread faster in prisons, because of little to no access to new gear. Prisons can be a difficult environment for wounds to heal, since you have limited access to healthcare appointments.

Depending on what is the cause of your wounds, you may choose not to seek medical attention but rather care for it by yourself. It is important that you have some wound care knowledge so that you can care for your injury in ways that help healing and lower your chances of infection.

There may be many reasons why you can't see healthcare – lockdowns, long wait times, etc. We've included some basic tips for managing a wound. If you are concerned about a wound, it is important to see healthcare ASAP – you may need antibiotics for an infection, or a more in-depth care plan for chronic wounds.

Another super important resource is the allies and trusted people around you. Check in with people you trust, ask them questions, brainstorm with them – what works and what doesn't, what's safe and what's not, what does access look like, etc. – and look after each other.

A lot of wound care resources are written for people outside of prison. Some of the instructions and tips may not be possible inside. These resources are still super important because they share a lot of helpful information and may even be life saving. Give PASAN a call if you would like us to mail you more information.

This booklet is meant as a health education resource on wounds and to share best practices to care for your wounds when medical attention or supplies are not easy to access.



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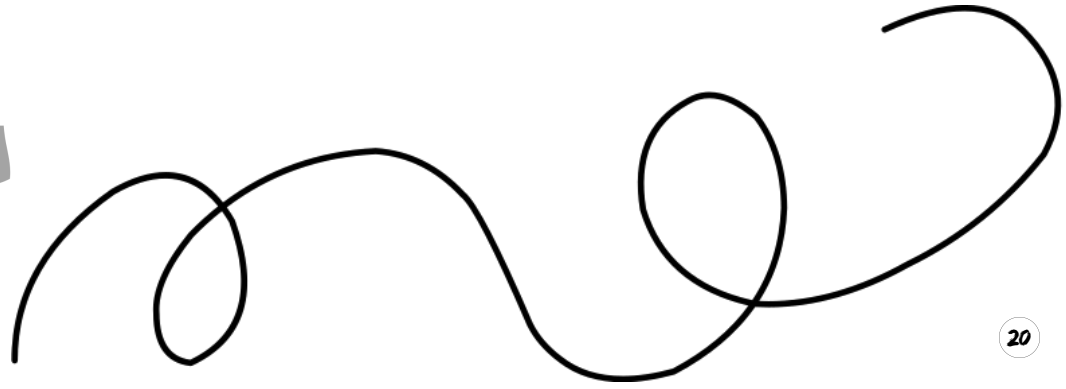
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WOUND INSPECTION CHART, CONTINUED

Use this space and/or a piece of paper to create additional wound inspection chats for each dressing change.



WOUND INSPECTION CHART

You can use this wound inspection chart to assess your wound every time you change a dressing. Keep an eye on how it is healing and see healthcare if there are no changes or if it is getting worse.

Date			
Compared to my last dressing change . . .	**Better**	**Unchanged**	**Worse**
I am feeling...	Better	The Same	Worse
My wound pain is...	Better	The Same	Worse
The wound's size is...	Smaller	The Same	Larger
The fluid (drainage) coming from the wound is...	Less	The same	More
The smell from the wound (not the dressing) is...	Less	The Same	Stronger
The swelling around the wound is...	Less	The Same	Larger
The amount of redness around the wound is . . .	Less	The Same	Larger
The temperature of the skin around the wound is...	Normal	The Same	Hotter
The moisture on the skin around the wound is	Normal	The Same	More

WHAT IS A WOUND?

A wound is an injury that where the skin or other tissues (muscles, organs, etc.) of the body are damaged. Wounds are usually called **open or closed**.

Open wounds are visible on your body and can be as simple as a needle prick, razor cut from shaving, abscesses or more extreme like a large gash (laceration). **Closed wounds** are injuries inside the body that are not visible without breaking the skin, for example muscle tears, blunt force trauma to organs, and internal bleeding.

Another aspect of wound that is important to understand is the healing time and cause of your wounds regardless if they are open or closed. They are placed in two categories:

Acute Wounds – these will show definite signs of healing within four weeks (clean, well-defined edges). In other words, these wounds progress through the normal stages of wound healing. They are usually from a single, identifiable event, such as razors, a bruise (abrasion), clean cut, minor burn, surgeries, fighting, etc.

Chronic Wounds – these do not show signs of healing within four weeks and may last for months or years [irregular or darkened edges, persistent inflammation or fluid drainage, visible dead tissue (necrosis), or an unpleasant odor]. These wounds do not progress normally through the stages of healing (getting 'stalled'). There are many factors that can stop a wound from healing.

We will talk about the stages of wound healing later.

WOUND SELF ASSESSMENT

Now that you have an understanding of wounds, do you currently have a wound? If you answered yes, then you can assess it. Check all that apply and write your answer in the statement below:

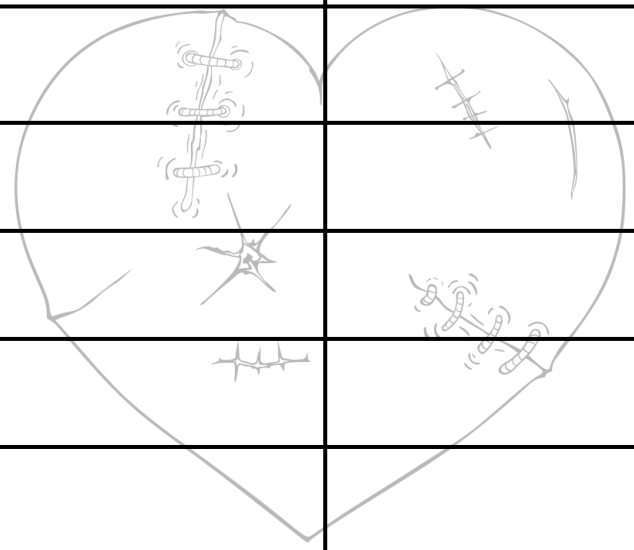
OPEN ACUTE
CHRONIC CLOSED

I have an/a _____

_____ wound.

If you have more than one wound, assess each one. Number them or use where they are on your body, e.g. left arm, right side of abdomen (mid section), etc. and asses each of them. Write your answers below:

Wounds (where on your body)	Type (e.g. Open Chronic)



DRESSING CHANGE

It is important to maintain good practices when changing a dressing to lower chances of infection and spreading germs from your wound. This step-by-step guide will go over some of the best practices.

Preparation

- Gather the supplies you will need.
- Choose an area where you can work comfortably, well lit, and have access to running water.

Wash your Hand

- With soap and water, and follow good hand washing techniques.
- Dry your hands with paper towel or a clean towel.

Remove the Dressing

- If you have access to new medical gloves, put them on.
- Gently remove the dressing and dispose of it in the plastic bag.
- Remove the glove and dispose of it and wash your hands again.

Clean your Wound

- With lukewarm tap water or cleaning solution given by healthcare.
- Use a clean cloth/paper towl/guaze if you have to wipe away the liquid and place them in the plastic bag.

Assess the Wound and Surrounding Skin

- Use the wound inspection chart on the next page to help you. If it is getting worse, put in a request to see healthcare.

Apply a New Dressing

- If you were given dressing from healthcare – follow their instructions or use a clean cloth.
- Apply the dressing to the middle of the wound and gently press it into place.

Clean Up

- Dispose of any remaining material you need to throw away in the plastic bag and place it in the garbage. Disinfect the work area by wiping it down with bleach or soapy water. Wash your hands again!

SUPPLIES CHECKLIST

What if you can't get to healthcare on time for follow-up care? Or you can't go to healthcare for fear of punishment. Going to healthcare is your decision – you can follow the steps we discussed for wound care earlier to help your wound heal, but look out for any S.T.O.P. signs and get medical help if needed – your health matters.

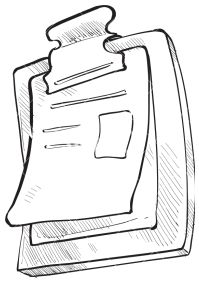
WHAT YOU WILL NEED

SET-UP:

- ☑ A **c**lean hard surface to work on. Wherever you have access to and is comfortable.
- ☑ Bleach or soap, and a cloth to disinfect the surface.
- ☑ Clean hands – hand washing with soap and water.
- ☑ Plastic bag for disposing of items.

WOUND CLEANSING:

- ☑ Clean cloth/towel/paper towels/gauze from healthcare.
- ☑ Tap water and soap.



WOUND INSPECTION:

- ☑ Wound Inspection Chart on page 19
- ☑ Pencil or pen

DRESSING APPLICATION:

- ☑ Dressing – clean cloth or dressing from healthcare.
- ☑ Makeshift string to tie the dressing or paper tape as a last option – make sure none of the sticky part is touching the wound.
- ☑ Clean scissors or something to help you cut the cloth for dressing. Bleach can be used for cleaning whatever you are using to cut.

But I do not have any wounds – that is okay, you can continue to read the workbook to educate yourself and others so when something happens you have some knowledge and can always come back to it for guidance.

This workbook will focus on open wounds. Go ahead and write all the **symptoms** you are experiencing in the space below:

S.T.O.P. SIGNS

If your wound has any of the S.T.O.P Signs (symptoms you listed), **put in a request immediately to see healthcare.** You cannot care for your wounds alone with these signs, it is getting worse and you need medical help.

Size, Shape or Streak

Getting Bigger, Swollen, Edges are red or bleeding, Red Streaks/lines from the wound.

Temperature

Feels warm or hot to touch and/or you have a fever.

Odour

Smells bad or you notice a different smell from usual.

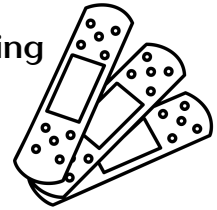
Pain or Pus

Hurts more. Luquid or green/yellow pus.

QUICK FIX OR HEALTHCARE

Not all wounds require a visit to healthcare. Minor cuts and scrapes can be treated at home or heal without requiring any care or a visit to healthcare. As a general rule, you should **seek out healthcare if:**

- Your wound **exposes** bone, muscle and fat tissues, organs or blood vessels.
- Your wound is **deeper than 1/4 inch or longer than 1/2 inch, or has edges that separate.**
- Your **bleeding** is severe and will not stop even after you applied pressure for **5-10 mins.**
- Your wound is on your **face or private parts** (genitals).
- Your wound is caused by an **animal or human bite.**
- There are symptoms of a nerve injury, such as l**oss of feeling (sensation) or loss of movement**.
- Your wound is deep or has **dirt and particles** that are difficult to remove.
- It is a **puncture wound** (including stab wounds), and there may be foreign materials in the wound.
- There is **pus or more discharge** than normal.
- You **have no**t had a **tetanus shot** in the past 5 years.
- You have **other medical conditions** that prevents healing.
- Your wound may put you **at risk of acquiring Hep-C or HIV** – a cut from a nail clipper, or from sharing or reusing gear or rigs.
- If you notice **any one** of the **S.T.O.P Signs.**



HELATHCARE INTERVENTION

What you can Expect

Wound Assessment: Healthcare staff will look at your wound to decide what care it will require to heal.

Wound Care: This will include cleaning the wound, requesting blood tests, prescribing medications, dressing the wound, follow-up visits to care for your wound, etc.

Medication: If you are given antibiotics, it is important that you follow the instructions and finish all of the medication in the time you are told to, even if you are feeling better.

Why it is imprtant to complete your antibiotic treatment?



Prevents Relapse: Stopping antibiotics early can leave some bacteria alive, which may multiply and cause the infection to return.

Prevents Resistance: Unfinished medication can allow bacteria to adapt and become resistant to the medication, making future infections harder to treat.

Ensures Complete Recovery: Some bacterial infections take longer to respond to treatment, and stopping too soon can cause complications.

Protects Others: Incomplete treatment can allow bacteria to spread to others, increasing the risk of transmission.



Other Health Conditions

Diabetic

- If you are diabetic, it is important that you take your diabetic medication to help monitor your blood sugar so that you do not develop diabetic foot ulcers.
- If you have a diabetic foot ulcer get support from healthcare to care for it and other conditions that may be contributing to it.
- Care for these wounds in the same way you would for any other until you can visit healthcare.

Blood Circulation

- If you have blood circulation issues speak with healthcare to manage symptoms and manage any wound care.
- A medical compression sock is sometimes used to treat these conditions and improve blood flow.
- If you don't have one – healthcare will be able to support you with getting it but you can wear leggings or tights to help.

Pressure Point Injuries

- These are injuries that develop because of too much pressure on certain parts of the body, like using crutches or a wheelchair.
- You will need to make some changes in your daily routine to ease pressure points and prevent further injuries.

Inflammatory/Autoimmune Conditions

- These are conditions that result in the body always being in a state of inflammation and can make it difficult for wounds to heal.
- Discuss these conditions with healthcare so they can determine the best care plan for your wound.

Many day-to-day minor wounds such as nicks, cuts, bruises, burns, etc. can heal easily on their own. BUT, if you think you've been exposed to HIV or Hep-C, follow up with healthcare ASAP.

What to do



DO NOT use bleach, rubbing alcohol, alcohol wipes or hydrogen peroxide to clean the wound. They destroy new cells, increase the risk of infections and your wound will take longer to heal. Soap and water will do the job.

Wash your hands (and anyone helping you): with soap and water even if you think it is not dirty. This helps avoid infections.





Stop the bleeding: some may stop on their own. If it does not, apply firm and direct pressure using a clean cloth, paper towel or toilet paper for a couple minutes. Lift the wound above your heart to help stop the bleeding. For burns, place it in cool tap water or cool wet cloth for about 10 mins.

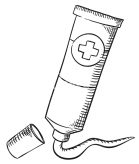
Clean the wound: rinse with lukewarm water and soap. This will help gently remove any bacteria, dirt or other debris.





Assess the Wound: determine whether you need to see healthcare using the Quick Fix tips you read about earlier.

What to do, contunied



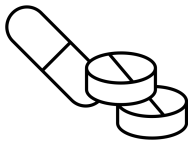
Apply ointment: if you have vaseline or antibiotic ointment, apply a *thin layer*. It will help with healing and prevent scarring. If you do not have vaseline or antibiotic ointment – *skip this step.* Ingredients in some antibiotic ointments can cause a mild rash in some people. If you get a rash, *stop using the ointment.*

Cover the wound: to keep it clean using a clean cloth (whatever you have that is clean and you can tear into strips) or a bandage (if you have). You can hold it in place with a makeshift string or paper tape (do not use duct tape!).

- If you have just a minor scrape or scratch, do not cover it.
- If you are using a band aid on the wound or paper tape, make sure none of the sticky part is touching the wound.
- If the wound is in an area that will not get dirty or be irritated by your clothing, you can leave it uncovered.
- You can use cling wrap for a couple hours to prevent your wound from getting dirty – do not keep your wound covered any longer than that.



Change the covering: do this at least once a day or whenever the covering becomes wet or dirty (water, discharge, blood, etc.). Clean the wound, assess it, apply petroleum jelly/ointnment and cover it. Dispose of the dirty covering/dressing in the garbage.



Pain relief: take over-the-counter pain relievers like ibuprofen or acetaminophen to help relieve painful cuts if you have or can easily get it.



S.T.O.P. Signs: monitor for any of the *S.T.O.P. signs* and if you arew experiencing any of them put in an urgent request to see healthcare.

HARM REDUCTION & WOUND CARE

You may have other related health conditions affecting the healing of your wound. It is important to get any medical conditions treated and maintain safe practies.

Drug Use

- Refer to PASAN's Safer Injecting and Safer Snorting workbook for safer drug use on the inside. Ask a PEC worker or the PEC office at your institution for one or give us a call and we will mail them in.
- Maintaining safer practices lowers the risks of infection from bacteria on your skin and in the drugs.
- Rotate injection sites because every time you inject you are creating a wound and it needs time to heal.
- If you develop an abscess, draw a circle around it, do not squeeze or cut it open! You can use a hot clean cloth 5-10mins a couple times day as a hot compress. This will help bring the pus to the surface and it will begin to drain.
- If the circle increases twice the size or you notice any of the S.T.O.P signs you should put in a request to see healthcare.
- Once it starts to drain stop applying petroleum jelly or ointment and the hot compress.
- Clean the wound with soap and water, and change the dressing as needed.
- Put in a request to see healthcare to manage your wound if it keeps getting bigger after it starts draining.
- Inject above your wound so that it can heal without anything passing through the site.
- If you notice a wound is turning black – it could be a result of Xylazine in your drug, and you will need special medical help with managing these. These wounds can appear anywhere and not just at the injection sites.
- If you notice red or dark purple, hot, tender spots with the skin changing to a rougher texture (like the skin of an orange) this may be a skin infection that require medical attention from healthcare.

WOUND HEALING

Your body has a complex system to patch up wounds. Each stage is needed for proper wound healing. Wound healing takes several steps that come together to repair the body.

This complex process occurs in **four** key stages: Blood Clotting (H*emostasis),* Inflammation, Rebuilding/Growth *(Proliferation), and* Strengthening (*Maturation).* We are going to examine each one of them so that you can understand what is happening and what you can do to support each healing stage.

1 Blood Clotting (Hemostasis)

This is the first stage of wound healing that stops the bleeding. When you first apply pressure to stop the bleeding you are helping the body create blood clots which will prevent more much blood loss and close the wound by making a scab.

2 Inflammation

Once the blood's clotted, the body can begin cleaning and healing the wound.
The area may look a little red and swollen (inflamed). It might feel a bit warm, too. Do not worry. This means help has arrived. Fresh blood brings more oxygen and nutrients to the wound to help it heal. You might see clear fluid in or around the wound. This means white blood cells are at work cleaning and defending against infections.

WOUND HEALING, CONTINUED

Supporting your Wounds at each Healing Stage

Use this space to brainstorm what **you can do at each of the healing stages** to help with the healing process.

3 Rebuilding/Growth (Proliferation)

Once the wound is clean and stable, your body can begin rebuilding the site. Oxygen-rich red blood cells come to the site to create new tissue. It's like a construction site, except your body makes its own building materials
At this stage in healing, you might see a fresh, raised, red scar. The scar will typically fade in color and look flatter over time.

4 Strengthening (Maturation)

Even after your wound looks closed and repaired, it is still healing. It might look pink and stretched or tightened. You may feel itching or tightness in the area.
Your body continues to repair and strengthen the area at this stage.



Another super important part of healing is **wound care.**
Sometimes a **wound can get stalled** in one stage especially larger wounds and wounds that will not heal.

They will **need some help** to move to the next healing stage.
If this happens, you will need to see healthcare ASAP – chronic or infected wounds without medical treatment can lead to a lot of complications, and even death.

Supporting your Wound at each Healing Stage

The healing time of your wound will depend on how large or deep it is but you can help each stage of its healing.

Use this space to write about the **changes you noticed** with your wound as it heals.