

Fall 2022

What's New at Praxis

[Praxis is now offering Harm Reduction Office Hours for all BSAS funded treatment provider staff.](#)

Meeting the third Wednesday of each month from 1-2 pm from October - June, we will discuss successes and challenges of offering harm reduction based services, provide on the spot consultation, and host a community learning atmosphere for us to learn from each other about implementing harm reduction in programs. *Please note – this is separate from the required harm reduction training and although not required, it is encouraged by your BSAS Contract Officer.*

"Harm reduction means better coordinated care because we are supposed to get them up for success. Recovery is a lot of work and shows an enormous amount of initiative, and that initiative needs to be reciprocated on the services side of things."

To learn more about best practices in care coordination and a wide variety of other topics, join us in our monthly office hours.

[Register now!](#)

Co-Occurring Disorders Training with AdCare: November 18, 2022 9:00 - 10:30 AM

In the United States, almost half of all people with substance use disorders also meet criteria for a mental health disorder and vice versa. Understanding how each disorder impacts the other is imperative to providing effective interventions. In this session, participants will learn about symptoms and treatment for common psychiatric disorders and will analyze how they impact and interact with substance use disorders.

Content will explore best practices in supporting people living with co-occurring conditions to promote long term recovery and successful reintegration into their community of choice.

[Register now!](#)

Meet the Praxis Team: Isabel-Kai Fisher

Isabel-Kai is a Project Assistant at C4 Innovations, who joined the team full-time in July 2022 after serving on C4's Project Amp Youth Advisory Board for the year prior to assist with research on peer-led support.

They also recently graduated SUNY Purchase with a Bachelor of Arts in Media Studies. For their senior project, Isabel-Kai wrote an experimental auto-ethnography, "RECOVERING BODY," about their recovery from misusing benzodiazepines — this body of work also serves to explore the cultural, public, and private impacts that different forms of media have on an individual's experience of mental health, addiction, substance use, recovery, creativity, and spirituality.



Isabel-Kai is an energy healer, writer, and artist. They find much solace in the world of imagination and dreams, and they are often found reading or spending time with trees in their free time. While Isabel-Kai is a lifelong New Yorker (and proud!) that will change soon as they have plans to move South to escape the cold Winters.

Emerging Trend in the Massachusetts Drug Supply: Xylazine

By Jill Amos

Amongst the growing concerns of synthetic opioids in Massachusetts over past years, a new emerging and worrying trend is the compounding of fentanyl and other drugs with an animal tranquilizer, known as xylazine. Xylazine has only been approved for use in animals and veterinary medicine, but is being added to fentanyl and other substances to "give legs" or increase the length of the high the user experiences (Friedman, 2022). Known as "tranq" or "tranq dope," as of June of 2022, it was found in 21% of samples in Eastern Mass and 42% in Western Mass (MADDS, 2022).

Unlike fentanyl, there are no current rapid tests available for xylazine detection in substances, although researchers are working to make a case for the need to quickly develop them (Farah, 2022). Because the person who uses fentanyl or other drugs is often unaware of the presence of xylazine, they are vulnerable to dangerous outcomes. People can be rendered unconscious for several hours, leaving them vulnerable to injury, assault, and/or being robbed. In addition, rates of overdose are increasing in opioid users as xylazine exacerbates the slowing of the respiratory system that is common with opioids. Further, substance use and medical care providers are seeing increased rates of ulcers, skin lesions, and necrosis, and even loss of fingers, toes, and eventually larger limbs (Bebinger, 2022). Xylazine slows blood flow and causes vasoconstriction, allowing for ulcers to form and slowing or prohibiting the healing of wounds. (Malayala et al., 2022).

In the interest of harm reduction and safety of people using opioids, adjustments must be made to the prevention, intervention, and response of opioid overdoses. Because so many individuals who are ingesting xylazine do not realize it is present in their substances, a major task is to continue to call attention to and provide education about xylazine and its effects. Harm reduction techniques—such as, "go low and slow," "stay with the same dealer," and "don't use alone"—are more important than ever as potency and composition are commonly unknown and widely varied. Encouraging clients to use clean needles and injection equipment, coaching on safe injection practices, and using alcohol swabs on skin sites prior to injection are also critical to minimize wounds and infections. Clients need to be advised to watch carefully for any abscesses or wounds and to seek medical attention quickly to prevent dangerous infection, necrosis, or death of body tissue (MADDS, 2022).

When encountering someone in active overdose, response needs to be adjusted, as much training in overdose prevention and response focuses on helping to revive the individual to consciousness. However, if a person has consumed xylazine in addition to opioids, consciousness may not occur from intervention methods as they may still be heavily sedated. Naloxone, known by its brand name Narcan, is a medication that specifically targets and reverses opioid overdose, but it does not affect the sedation that occurs with the consumption of xylazine. In these cases, naloxone is still imperative to address the opioids, but in addition, rescue breaths are vitally important to keep oxygen flowing into the lungs until the person starts breathing on their own (or until emergency crews arrive)—whether they are conscious or not. Providing oxygen is critical to survival and the protection of the individual's vital organs (Bebinger, 2022).

Linking individuals with community resources is critical in helping reduce the potential harm associated with xylazine. Access to clean needles and other materials, safe using sites, naloxone kits, and safe lines/apps are examples of useful methods of reducing dangers that can accompany substance use especially when purity is unknown. In addition, connecting clients to medical and harm reduction clinics for wound care is an increasing need as the prevalence of xylazine continues to rise.

Join Us to Complete Your Required Trainings

We are still offering our standard trainings and technical assistance. Please note that these trainings are 90-minutes long and provide 1.5 CE credits. They are being held on Zoom. [Please register here.](#)

Contact Us

Contact us to request training or technical assistance at praxis@c4innovates.com.

