

Hepatitis C Pre and Post Test Issues

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Substance Misuse



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Plan

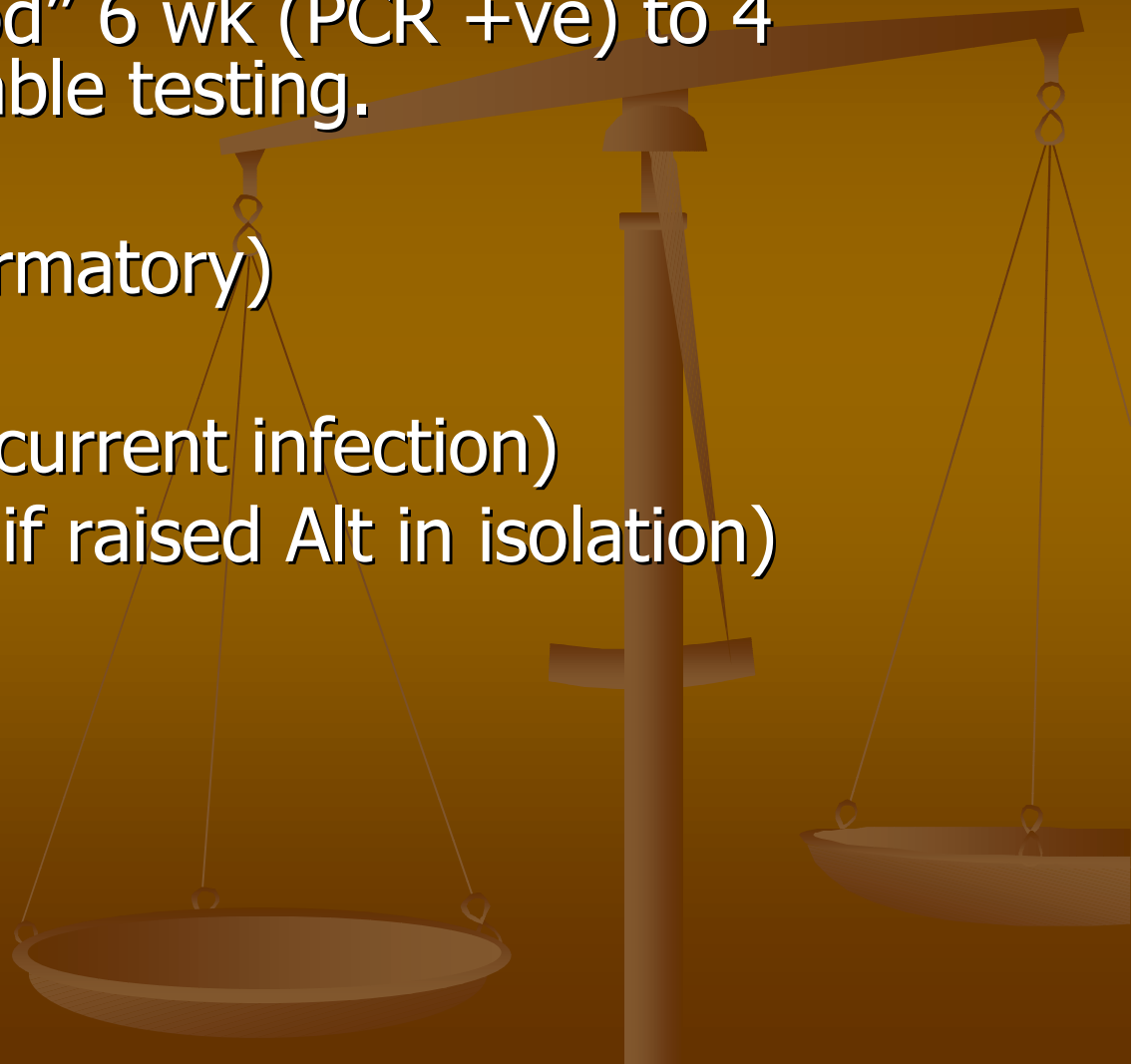
- Pre and post – normal issues
- Tests.
- Special issues.
- Recommendations



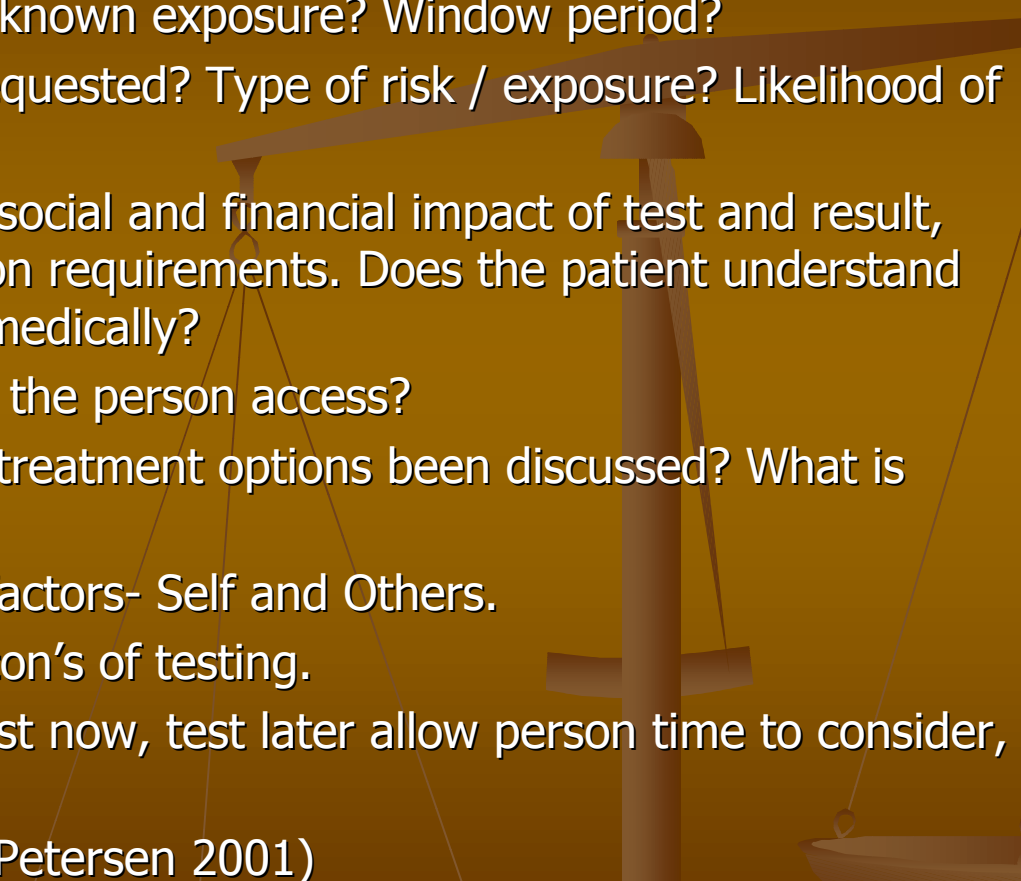
Hepatitis C tests

- “Incubation period” 6 wk (PCR +ve) to 4 mth (Ab) for reliable testing.
- Antibody (+confirmatory)
- Line Assay
- Qualitative PCR (current infection)
- LFT – (indicative if raised Alt in isolation)

- Quantitative PCR
- Genotype



Normal Issues

- **Timing** When was the last known exposure? Window period?
 - **Rationale** Why was test requested? Type of risk / exposure? Likelihood of positive test.
 - **Impact** Potential physical, social and financial impact of test and result, confidentiality and notification requirements. Does the patient understand what a positive test means medically?
 - **Support** What support can the person access?
 - **Treatment options** Have treatment options been discussed? What is available?
 - **Risk Factors** Discuss risk factors- Self and Others.
 - **Assessment** of pro's and con's of testing.
 - **Make decision** options- test now, test later allow person time to consider, do not test.
 - (Tristram Checklist © Trudi Petersen 2001)
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Giving Negative Results

Results should be given in person wherever possible, by the person who took the test

Where antibody test results are negative, patients should be counselled that any continued risky behaviour may lead to infection in the future.

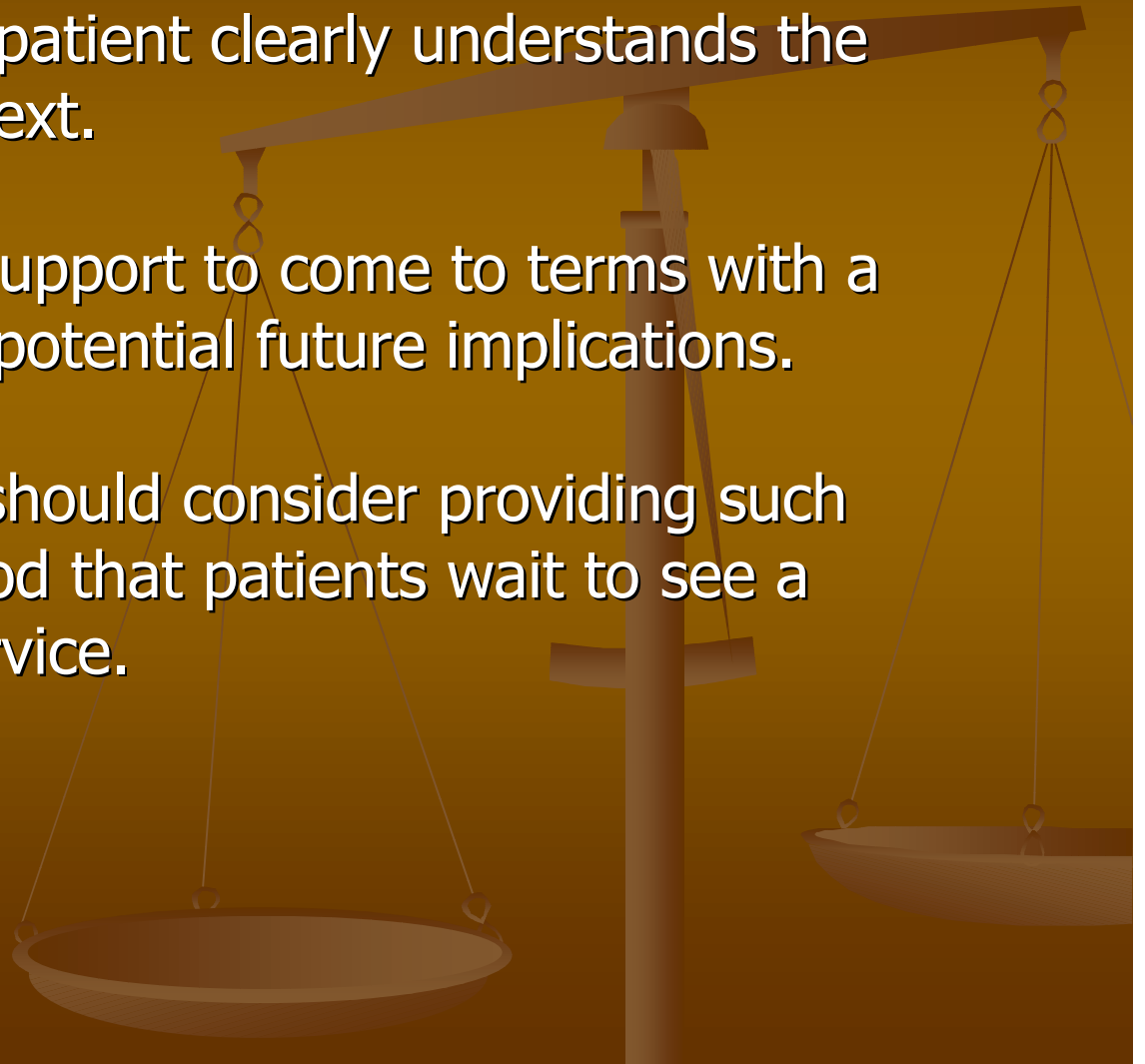
Repeat testing is advised if the patient is believed to have been recently exposed to the virus, since HCV antibodies can take up to six months to develop.

Giving Positive Results

It is important that the patient clearly understands the result and what to do next.

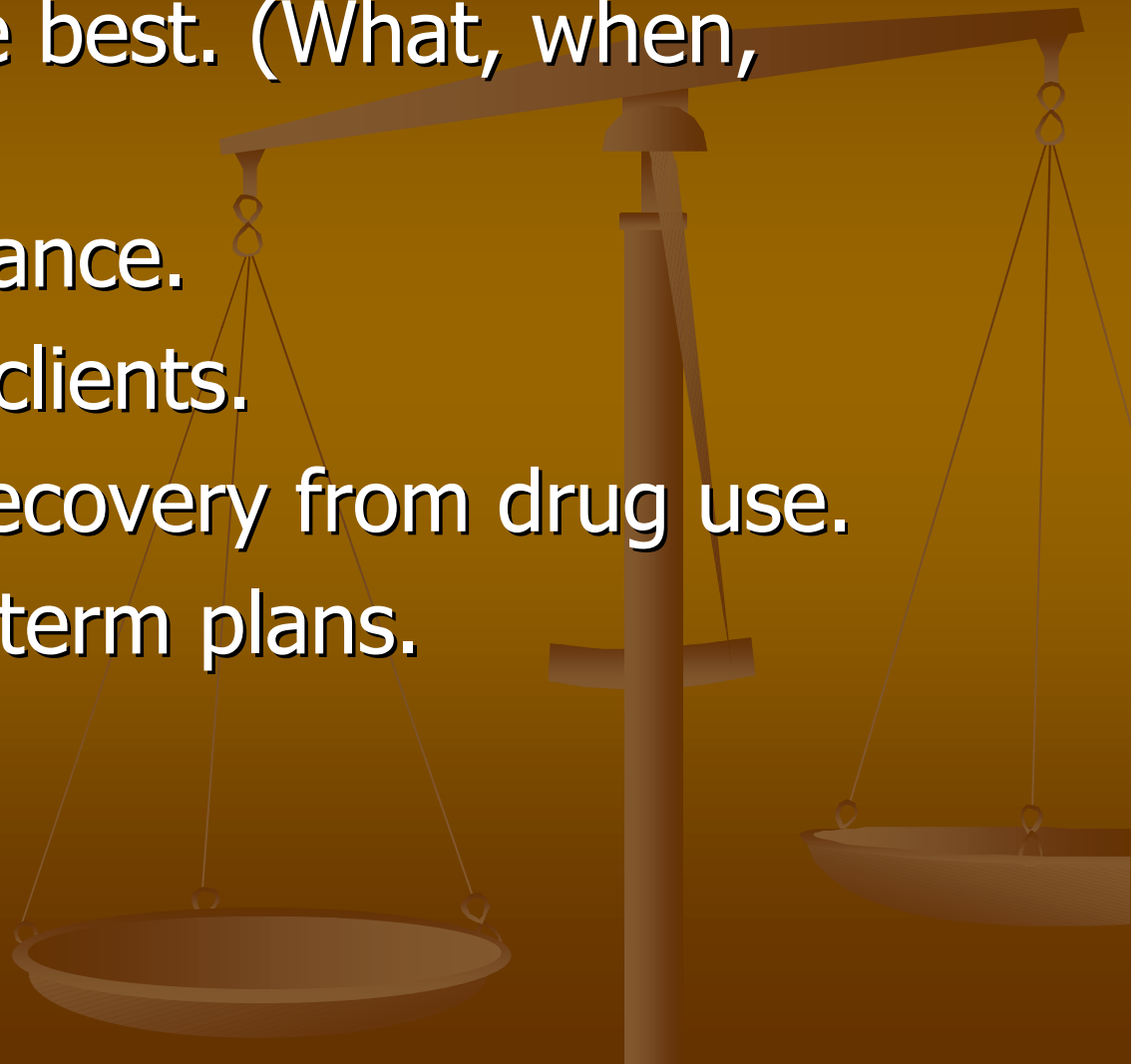
The patient may need support to come to terms with a positive test result and potential future implications.

Referring practitioners should consider providing such support during the period that patients wait to see a specialist or support service.



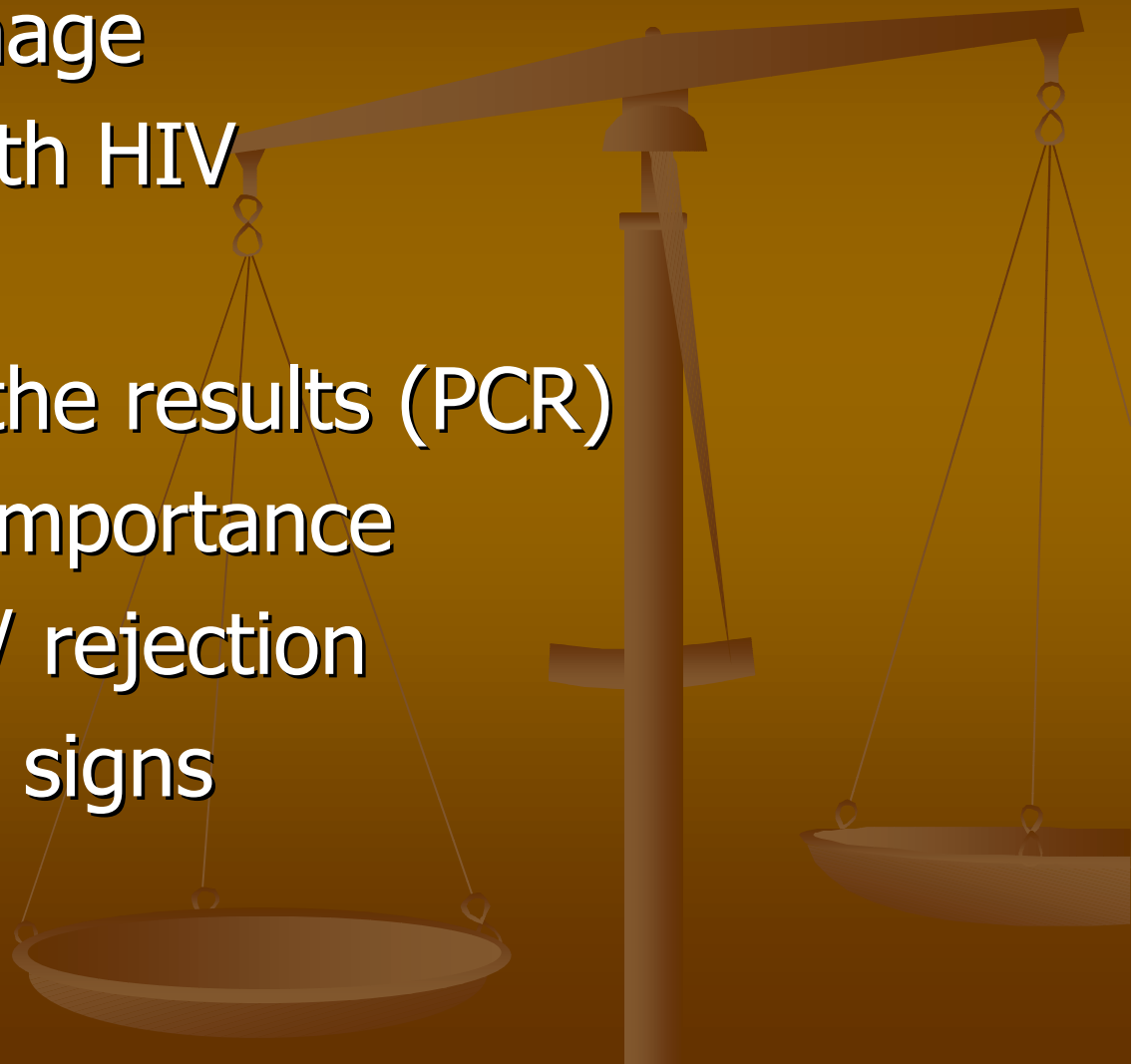
Discussing Physical health

- W questions are best. (What, when, where)
- Own your ignorance.
- Learn from the clients.
- Integrate into recovery from drug use.
- Long and short term plans.



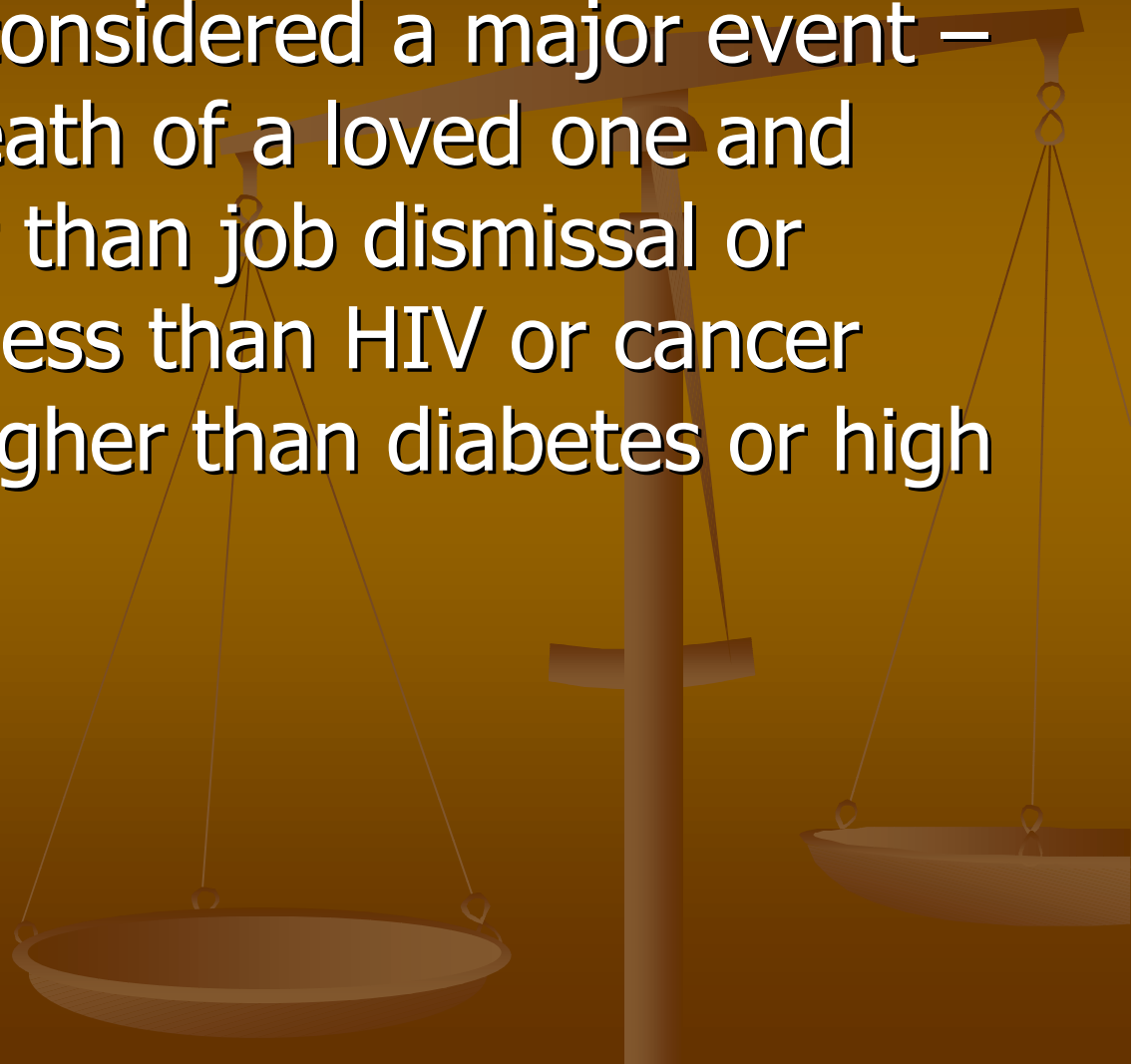
Hepatitis C Special issues

- Negative self image
- Comparisons with HIV
- Stigma
- Understanding the results (PCR)
- Minimising the importance
- Social isolation / rejection
- Lack of physical signs

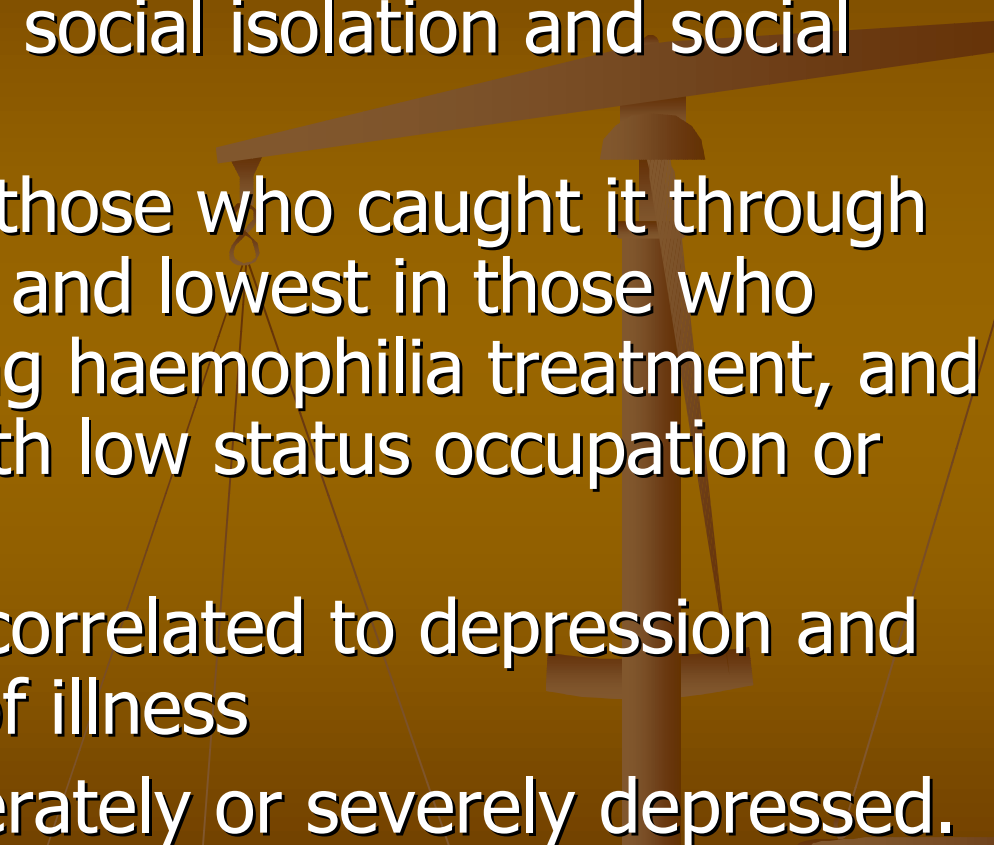


Castera et al 2006

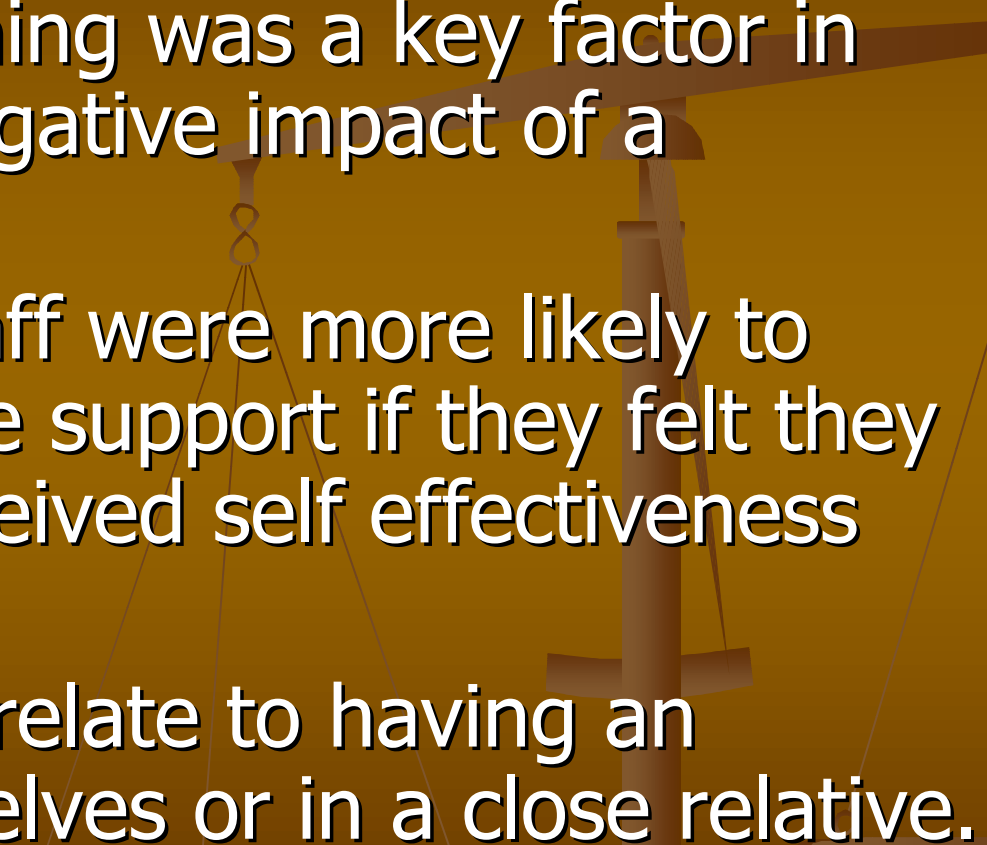
- Diagnosis was considered a major event – less than the death of a loved one and divorce, greater than job dismissal or moving house, less than HIV or cancer diagnosis but higher than diabetes or high blood pressure



Golden et al (2006)

- Fear of disclosure, social isolation and social rejection
 - Stigma highest in those who caught it through injecting drug use and lowest in those who contracted it during haemophilia treatment, and higher in those with low status occupation or unemployed
 - Stigma positively correlated to depression and poor acceptance of illness
 - 43.7% were moderately or severely depressed.
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Strauss et al (2007)

- Found that training was a key factor in reducing the negative impact of a diagnosis.
 - Drug service staff were more likely to provide effective support if they felt they had a high perceived self effectiveness and knowledge.
 - This did not correlate to having an infection themselves or in a close relative.
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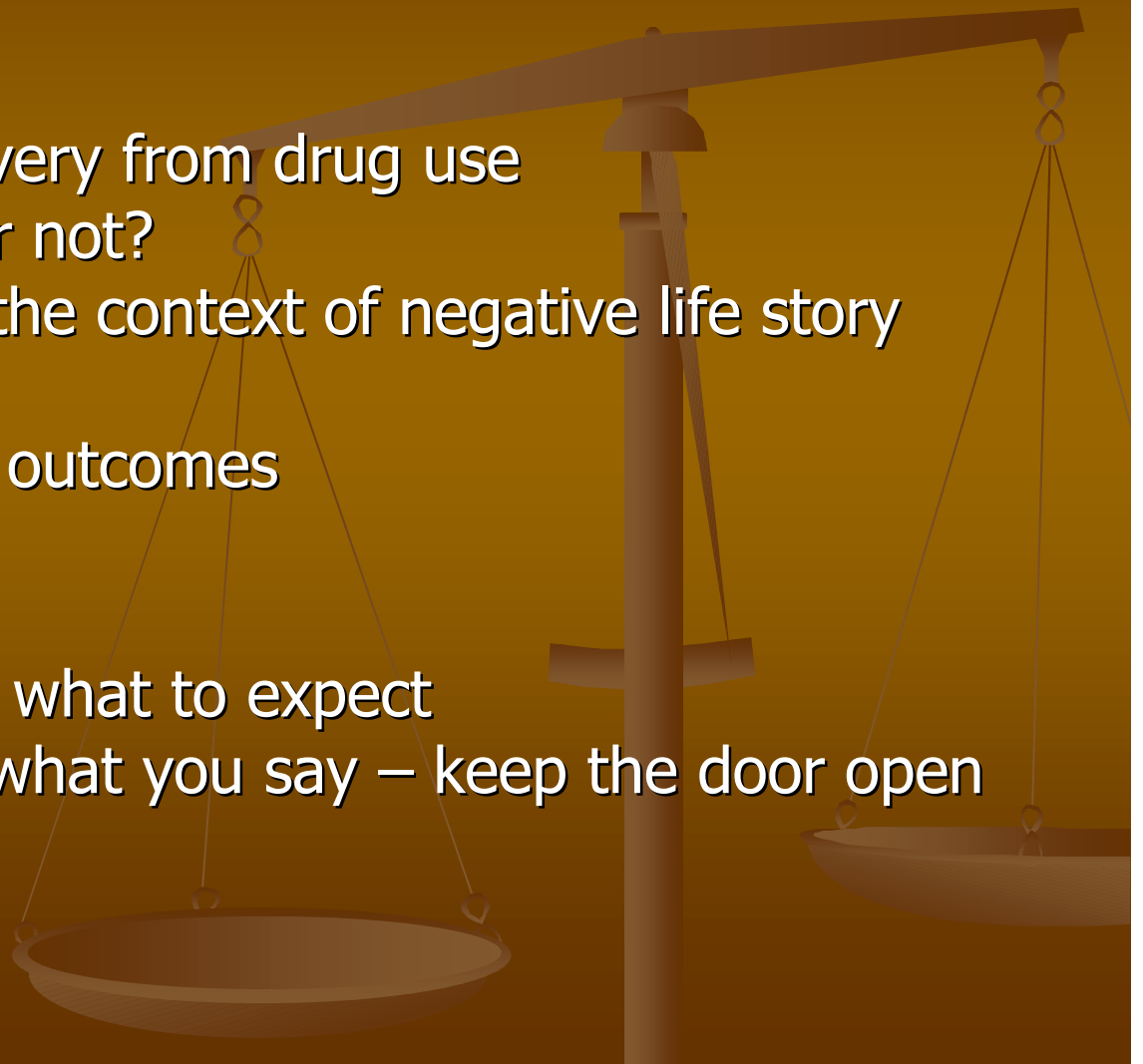
Benefits of testing (Otherwise, why bother?)

- Access to treatment
- Behaviour change
- Education
- Reduce onward transmission



Optimistic messages

- PCR negative
- Treatment outcomes
- Integration into recovery from drug use
- Symptoms – hep C or not?
- Try to see it outside the context of negative life story
- Future treatments
- Improving treatment outcomes
- Alcohol
- Scan vs biopsy
- Clear explanations of what to expect
- Expect the to forget what you say – keep the door open

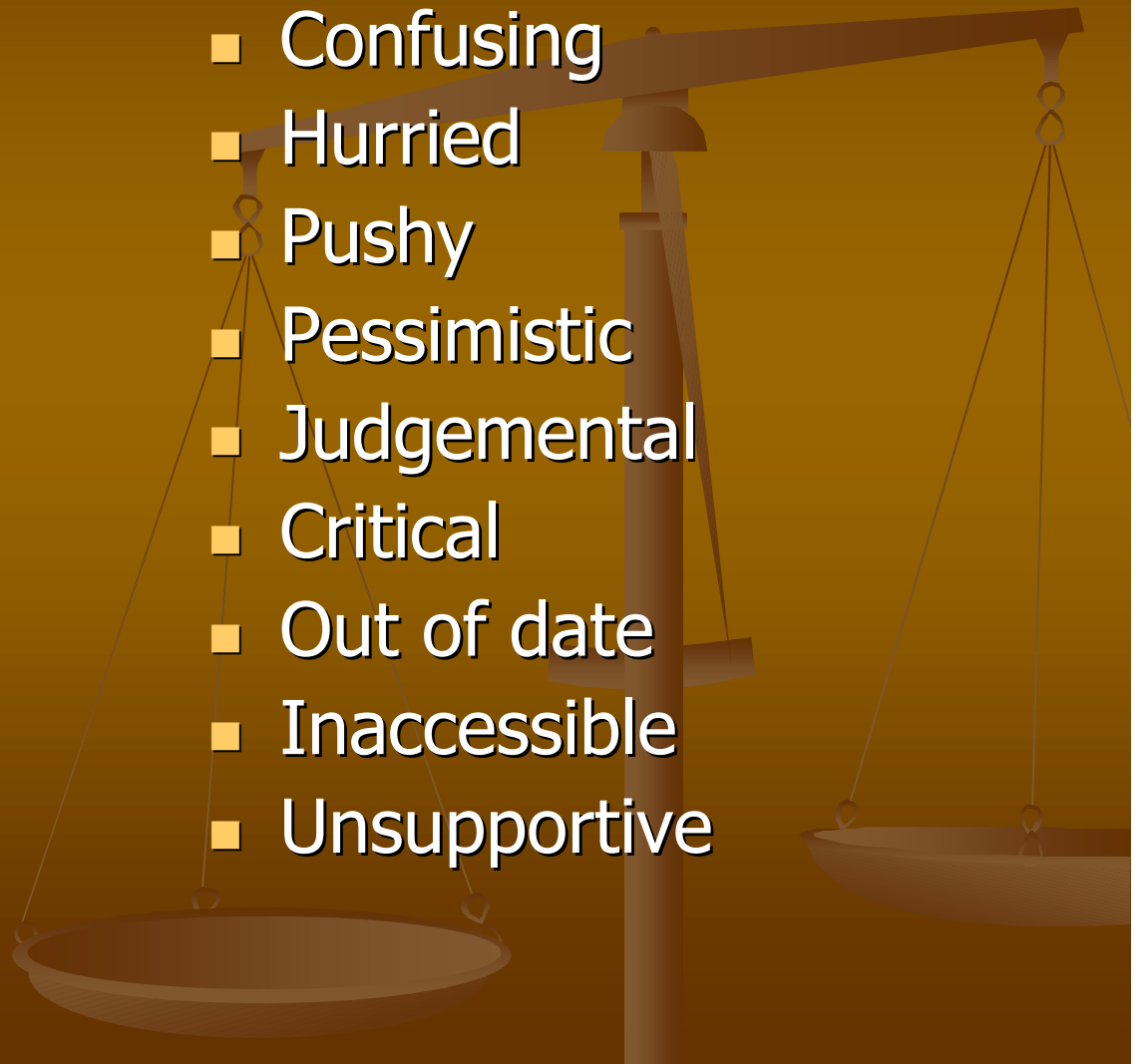


Good Pre and post

- Timely
- Relaxed
- Empowering
- Optimistic
- Informative
- Accurate
- Up to date
- Accessible
- Supportive
- Clear terms

Bad Pre and post

- Confusing
- Hurried
- Pushy
- Pessimistic
- Judgemental
- Critical
- Out of date
- Inaccessible
- Unsupportive



References

- Castera, L; Constant, A; Bernard, PH; de Ledinghen, V; and Couzigou, P Psychological impact of chronic hepatitis C: comparison with other stressful life events and chronic diseases. *World Journal of Gastroenterology*, 12 (10) March (2006): 1545-1550
- Golden, J; Conroy, RM; O'Dwyer, AM; Golden, D and Hardouin, J Illness-related stigma, mood and adjustment to illness in persons with hepatitis C. *Social Science and Medicine* 63 (2006): 3188-3198
- Petersen (2001) ?unpub
- Strauss, SM; Astone-Twerell, JM; Munoz-Plaza, C; Des Jarlais, DC; Gwadz, M; Hagan, H; Osborne, A and Rosenblum, A. Correlates of drug treatment programme staff's self efficacy to support their clients' hepatitis C virus (HCV) related needs. *American Jnl of Drug and Alcohol Abuse* 33(2007): 245-251.