

# MEDICATIONS & SURVIVORS

Victims of domestic violence may be taking a number of different medications when they come to your services. It's important to never require them to disclose any medical diagnosis or medications they are currently taking. As advocates, we believe in the autonomy of survivors and this should extend to them protecting their medical information.

## ABOUT HIV MEDICATIONS

There are a variety of medications, also known as antiretroviral therapy (ART), on the market today to treat HIV. If taken daily, HIV viral load can be reduced, thus greatly mitigating the transmission of HIV. If taken as prescribed, ART can reduce HIV viral load to an undetectable level, which means HIV cannot be detected on a standard blood test. Once undetectable is reached it is virtually impossible to transmit HIV through sex.

There are also medications that can greatly reduce the acquisition of HIV if taken as prescribed, called pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). When taken as required, PrEP has been shown to reduce the risk of HIV infection through sex by 99 percent. (CDC.gov)



## WORKING WITH SURVIVORS



**Discussion of medical history should always be voluntary.**



**Do not collect medications. Dispensing medication could be a violation of the law.**



**Provide lockboxes for survivors to store medications.**

## HIV MEDICATION COSTS

The cost of HIV medications is staggering, \$2000-4000 per month, and can be prohibitive to those needing the medications. However, there are programs available to assist. Patient Assistance Programs, run by drug companies and foundations, offer free or reduced-cost medication to those who qualify. The Ryan White AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) grants money to all states and territories in the United States for the treatment of HIV. However, the wait lists for programs can be long and medications included differ from state to state.