Harm Reduction 101: Approaching Syphilis Prevention for People Who Use Drugs

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Introductions

• Name
• What is your role in syphilis prevention?
• Location
• Why did you choose this breakout / What is one thing you would like to get out of this session?
Group Brainstorm

What comes to mind when you think of “People Who Use Drugs”? 
Group Brainstorm

What comes to mind if the person using drugs is:

- Female,
- Pregnant,
- Homeless / Unstably Housed, and
- Using Methamphetamine?
Framing Our Discussion

Syphilis*

&

People Who Use Drugs (PWUD)

*(...other STDs, HIV, and Viral Hepatitis)
Common Street Drugs

- Marijuana
- Ecstasy
- Methamphetamine
- Cocaine
- Heroin
- LSD
Common Street Drugs

Marijuana

Ecstasy

Methamphetamine

Cocaine

Heroin

LSD
What are some factors that influence risk in sexual behavior and/or drug use?
Sex & Drug Use: Intersecting Risks

- No. of Sex Partners
- Safe + Stable Housing
- Type of Drug
- Access to Sterile Drug Use Equipment
- Drug Use Prior to/During Sex
- Transactional Sex
- Intimate Partner Violence
- Access to/Proper Use of Condoms + Lubricant
- PrEP
- Type of Sex
- Contraception
- Tolerance
- Route of Administration
- Sex Partner Who Injects Drugs
People Who Use Drugs & STD/HIV Risk

Complex and variable, but some associations. PWUD generally more likely to have:

- Multiple sex partners
- Reduced condom use
- Transactional sex
- Reduced inhibitions
- “Traumatic” sex (if using stimulants, due to longer &/or more vigorous sex)

STDCB Data Collection

California Syphilis Interview Record
Harm Reduction 101

Philosophy, Social Movement, Interventions

Language and Terminology
Spectrum of Substance Use

I'M NOT USING SUBSTANCES AT ALL.

I'VE TRIED SUBSTANCES 1-2 TIMES BECAUSE I WAS CURIOUS. I MAY NOT DO IT AGAIN.

I USE SUBSTANCES EVERY SO OFTEN WITH FRIENDS, USUALLY AFTER SCHOOL OR ON WEEKENDS.

I USE SUBSTANCES DAILY. MY USE ISN'T GETTING IN THE WAY OF SCHOOL, WORK, FAMILY OR FRIENDSHIPS.

My substance use is getting in the way of doing the things I need and want to do.

I need to keep using substances, even though my use is causing problems for me.
Harm Reduction: Definitions

Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use.

Harm Reduction is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of people who use drugs.

Source: Harm Reduction Coalition
Harm Reduction Principles

- Respect, Dignity, & Compassion
- Low Threshold, Non-Judgmental Services
- Participant-Centered / “Nothing About Us, Without Us”
- “Any Positive Change”
- Emphasis on Practical Strategies / “Meet People Where They’re At”
Harm Reduction is NOT…

Harm Reduction

- Condoning or Encouraging Drug Use/High-Risk Behavior
- Ignoring or Minimizing Real Harms Caused by Drug Use

AND REMEMBER…

Anything Goes
ABSTINENCE IS AN OPTION
How Else Do We Apply Harm Reduction Strategies?
How Else Do We Apply Harm Reduction Strategies?
Selected Harm Reduction Interventions

- Sterile Injection Equipment / Syringe Exchange
- Route of Administration
- Pill Testing Kits
- Medication Assisted Treatment
- Safer Smoking Equipment
- Naloxone & Overdose Prevention Training
Language Matters!

Terms and Terminology
Slang & Stigma

Tweaker
Bum
Street Urchin
Junkie
Dope Fiend
Clean
Meth Head
Addict
Speed Freak
Instead, Try…

- Sterile
- Abstinent
- Person/People Who Use Drugs
- Person/People Who Inject Drugs
- Substance Use Disorder
- Learn Their Name

dignity + respect = Inclusion
Consider...

- Phrasing
- Tone
- Assumptions
- Frustration
- Personal Triggers

If you’re unsure...

Go back to basics!

- Respect
- Compassion
- Dignity
How Does this Apply to Syphilis Prevention?

(You tell me!)
How Does this Apply to Syphilis Prevention?

- Cooperation
- Trust
- Collaboration
- Overlapping Risk
- Community/Relationship Building
- Parallels between stigmatizing language shaming sexual and drug use behavior
Methamphetamine & Related Harm Reduction Strategies
Methamphetamine (Meth)

• Structurally similar to amphetamine, a common treatment for ADHD
  – Amphetamine Brands: Adderall, Benzedrine, Dexidrine
  – Effects of Methamphetamine Stronger

• Primary Effects:
  – Increased Energy + Alertness
  – Decreased Appetite
  – Euphoria
Meth: (Some) Street Names, Routes of Administration

HOW METH IS USED

- SMOKED
- INJECTED
- SNORTED
- INGESTED

Street Names:
- Meth
- Crystal
- Meth
- Crystal
- Speed
- Glass
- Ice
- Tina
- Crank
Meth: Harm Reduction Strategies

Sterile Injection + Smoking Equipment/
Syringe Exchange

Condoms + LUBE

Sterile Syringe Access

Food, Water, + Rest

Sterile Pipe Access
Injection Drug Use: (Some) Medical Complications

- HIV
- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis C
- Overdose
Injection Drug Use: (Some) Medical Complications
Injection Drug Use:
(Some) Medical Complications

Abscess
Cellulitis
Endocarditis
Meth and Dopamine: Why Keep Using?

“Best Day Ever”

“Baseline”

Source: California Health Care Foundation
www.chcf.org/events/2016/webinar-opioid-safety-coalitions-addiction-neurobiology
Activity: Principles of Harm Reduction

Which principle do you find most important?

Why?
Activity: Principles of Harm Reduction

Which principle do you think would be/is the most challenging to implement?

Why?
Collaborating with Harm Reduction Organizations

- Build relationships with staff
- Build trust with clients and community
- Increase resources and reach for disease investigation

Sharing equipment spreads Hep C
Come get sterile stuff
Resources

• CDPH Office of AIDS, Access to Sterile Syringes
  http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/aids/Pages/AccessstoSterileSyringes.aspx

• Harm Reduction Coalition
  http://harmreduction.org/

• CA Syringe Access Programs
  http://harmreduction.org/connect-locally/california/

• The Speed Project, San Francisco AIDS Foundation
  http://new.sfaf.org/tspsf/

• Tweaker.org

• Project Neon, Seattle Counseling Service
  http://projectneon.org/
Contact Information

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