



The STEP Ezine



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Issue 58

The Seattle Treatment Education Project's (STEP) EZINE is an electronic treatment resource newsletter distributed monthly to case managers, front-line workers, people affected by HIV/AIDS, physicians, other public health and allied health professionals and people living with HIV/AIDS.

STEP's contact information is: STEP at Lifelong AIDS Alliance, 1002 E. Seneca Street, Seattle, WA 98122 (206) 329-4857 or (206) 957-1659. We also have a toll free number 1-888-399- (STEP) 7837 Anywhere in the US

Public Health Messages To All Men Who Have Sex With Men (MSM) About Crystal Meth Use

A TWO PART SERIES
PART I

In response to growing concern among prevention providers and the MSM community about crystal and HIV, Public Health has developed key messages about crystal. They are aimed towards specific sub-groups of MSM to address the full spectrum of crystal use and non-use.

These messages are intended to:

- Summarize essential talking points about the health impacts of crystal and the harm reduction options men can adopt to avoid or reduce their risks.
- Recognize and support positive, incremental behavior change driven by the individual's willingness and ability to adopt such changes.
- Emphasize self-efficacy and personal assets.
- Help counteract the stigma and shame that often only induce further drug use or risk behavior.

While these messages are specific to crystal, they should always be reinforced with standard sexual risk reduction and HIV/STD prevention messages endorsed for all MSM.

Community Resources for MSM crystal users:

Project NEON: (206)-323-1768 www.crystalneon.org

Health information, print media, community outreach, information and referrals, website, and drop-in “clinic” for crystal users every Wednesday evening (HIV/STD/Hepatitis screening, vein care consultation, needle exchange). FREE counseling services include individual drug use and risk reduction assistance, social/health service advocacy, treatment, pre-abstinence and relapse prevention groups. (program of SCS)

Seattle Counseling Services: (206)-323-1768

Intensive outpatient and outpatient chemical dependency treatment. Comprehensive mental health services and domestic violence program. Multiple funding options including sliding scale.

Capitol Hill Alano Club: 1222 E. Pine Street

LGBT 12-Step meetings every day of the week.

Narcotics Anonymous: 206-329-1618

Call for current meeting times and locations.

Needle Exchange: 205-7837 for all times and locations.

On Capitol Hill, every day 6-8:30 pm at 10th and Seneca (between IHOP and Lifelong AIDS).
Downtown, M-F 1-5:30 pm, Sat 2-4pm at 2nd Ave and Pike
Syringe exchange, clean injection equipment, condoms, lube, service referrals, vein care.

ESSENTIAL MESSAGES FOR MSM ABOUT CRYSTAL

- 1. If you don't use, don't start.**
- 2. If you do use, seek help to reduce or stop use.**
- 3. If stopping isn't an option, act consistently to reduce sexual risk and protect general wellbeing as described below.**

To men who don't use or may be curious about using:

Don't start. Crystal meth is highly addictive and dependency can develop quickly, even if you think you can control your use.

Despite popular perception, most gay/bi men do NOT use crystal.

You can have a great, satisfying sex life *without* crystal. Most gay men do.

Using crystal regularly can cause tooth loss, undesirable weight loss, paranoia, brain damage, and impotence. It impairs sexual choices and greatly increases your risk of HIV.

To men already using:

Seek help to reduce or stop crystal use.

Get tested for HIV and STDs every three months.

Before you get high:

- Plan for sexual safety BEFORE you get high. Decide how and with whom you want to have sex. Make a commitment to disclose/ask about HIV/STD status and use condoms once you're high.
- For bottoms, insert a Reality condom before getting high or leaving your house for sex.
- Pack plenty of condoms and lube. Put them where you will see them once you're high.

While you are high:

- Eat, drink extra water, and sleep.
- You CAN play safely and use condoms--even while you're high. Most men do.
- Prolonged crystal sex leads to excessive friction and can cause condoms to dry out more quickly or break. Change condoms every hour.
- Use more water-based lubricant than usual. Too much lube is almost enough.
- Crystal use in combination with other drugs such as Viagra, poppers, and Ecstasy can cause serious and even life-threatening health problems.

Keistering (“booty bumping”) is NOT a safer way to do crystal. It can seriously damage your bowels or anus. This may make anal sex very painful and increases your chance of getting HIV.

If you're not injecting, don't start. Reject offers from sex partners to inject you or show you how. Injecting greatly increases your chances of HIV, STDs, hepatitis C, abscesses, other soft tissue infections, and social/sexual rejection.

If you're using crystal and you don't take these precautions consistently, your chances of staying HIV negative are slim. Especially if you inject.

To men who inject:

Nearly one half of all MSM who inject crystal are HIV+. This is more than any other MSM.

Seek help to stop or reduce crystal use.

Use a new, sterile syringe every time you inject or divide drugs. You can acquire sterile syringes at the needle exchange or at pharmacies without a prescription.

Do not share syringes, cookers, or other paraphernalia with other users or sex partners.

If sterile needles are not available, proper use of bleach can kill HIV (3 step method). Bleach is not proven effective against hepatitis B or C.

To HIV positive men who use:

Research shows that using crystal meth often leads to higher viral loads, faster HIV progression, worsened immune function, and increased neurological damage.

Using crystal does NOT increase T-cells or boost your immune system. These are myths.

Your chances of successfully managing your HIV get better the sooner you stop using crystal.

Crystal can have bad interactions with many HIV meds.

While you're high, you may forget to take your meds or follow food and water guidelines. This can make your meds less effective and increase your viral load. Kidney stones are also common.

Be honest with your doctor about your drug use. If you can't, get a new doctor. Talk about whether taking HIV medications while you're still using is right for you.

Swedish Medical Center HIV Research Studies

1. Research Study for HIV+ Persons Failing Their Current Regimen:

48-week study of an experimental NNRTI in combination with other antiretroviral drugs in people who have resistance to protease inhibitors and NNRTIs.

To qualify you must have:

- HIV Viral Load > 1,000 copies/mL
- Documented resistance testing showing resistance to PIs and NNRTIs

Please contact Heather 206-386-2820 for more information,

2. HIV Study for Multiply-Treated People Who Are Failing Their Current Regimen:

48-week study of an investigational protease inhibitor with a combination of other drugs.

Study related lab tests, including genotyping and physical exams are free. The investigational drug is provided at no cost.

Reimbursement for childcare and transportation are possible. Will work around your schedule (evenings, weekends, etc.)

Please contact Janice at 206-386-2523 for more information.

Tipranavir Early Access Program

A limited number of spaces in the Tipranavir early access program are available to persons with private providers and through the Madison Clinic. Patients must have a CD4 count ≤ 100 copies/mm³.

Please contact Heather at 206-386-2820 for more information.

3. Protease Inhibitor Switch Study

48-week research study of HIV+ people that will replace Kaletra® with a currently-marketed protease inhibitor to see if it will improve cholesterol levels. To take part in this study, your current viral load must be <50 copies/mL.

This trial includes:

- Laboratory testing
- Physical Exams
- Some Medications
- Reimbursement for travel and child care.

Please contact Heather at 206-386-2820 for more information.

Research Study at UW Medical Center on Women Living with HIV

FACTORS THAT AFFECT GENITAL HIV-1 SHEDDING IN WOMEN

Study overview:

Little is known about how HIV affects women as compared to men. The purpose of this study is to find what factors affect the amount of HIV present in the vagina and cervix and how this may differ from the amount of HIV present in the blood. We think that hormones, and vaginal and cervical infections may influence how HIV acts in the vagina and cervix. This is important because an increase in HIV in the vagina or cervix could lead to changes in HIV in the rest of a woman's body.

Eligibility:

HIV positive women ages 14-49 years
Non-pregnant or not postmenopausal women
Ability to keep study appointments

Study requirements:

Four study visits in the first year and three visits per year in the following 4 years. Each visit will last approximately one hour and include:

- Questionnaire
- Blood sample (viral load)
- Urine sample
- Pelvic exam
- Speculum exam
- Cervical biopsy.

We will ask you to collect samples from your mouth and vagina. These collections are done daily for 2 months at a time, 3 times in the first study year (a total of 6 months).

Medical examinations and lab tests are provided at no cost.

Reimbursement:

You will receive \$25 for each study visit and \$25 per month of daily home samples. If all of the scheduled visits and daily home samples are completed, you will be compensated a total of \$250 during the first year and \$75 per year for the following years.

Contact:

We appreciate your interest in this study. Please call us for further information:

Women's Health Care Research: 206-543-5557 (please ask for Jan or Jenni)

Job Announcement at Lifelong AIDS Alliance

HOUSING PROGRAM SPECIALIST

Job Description

Lifelong AIDS Alliance is a non-profit agency that is committed to preventing the spread of HIV, and to providing practical support services and advocating for those whose lives are affected by HIV and AIDS.

Definition:

The Housing Program Specialist is responsible for administering the following programs and functions: hotel/motel emergency housing program, emergency grant program, processing new housing applications, scheduling housing intakes and maintaining the housing intake calendar, and maintaining and updating the Housing Department's website. This is a full-time position and reports directly to the Client Services Manager.

Primary Responsibilities:

1. Accept, screen and process case manager referrals for emergency housing (hotel/motel voucher program), to include arranging for client placement into hotels.
2. Track and process hotel/motel invoices for payment.
3. Visit participating hotels/motels semi-annually to inspect facilities and verify Health Department inspection.
4. Identify new motels/hotels as needed that will adequately meet the needs of our clientele. This would include travel to hotels to meet with hotel managers, inspect facilities, and create business partnerships.
5. Accept, screen and process case manager requests for emergency utility and rental assistance grants (e-grant program).
6. Ensure that proper documentation accompanies emergency grant requests; prepare requests for payment by LLAA Accounts Payable.
7. Accept, screen and process new applications for housing assistance from case managers. Includes obtaining and reviewing criminal history records, scheduling housing intakes, and maintaining the housing intake calendar.
8. Maintain and update housing website on a weekly, biweekly, monthly and semi-annual basis with regard to new/changing housing inventory, eligibility, current vacancies, etc.
9. Stay abreast of new housing projects in King County that can be added to the website and establish effective lines of communication with housing providers.
10. Create systems for effective data gathering to maintain accurate and up-to-date information on the website.
11. Respond to requests for assistance with website.
12. Monitor feedback on effectiveness of website and implement changes as needed.
13. Establish effective working relationship with volunteer software support organization.
14. Monitor and create systems changes when needed to ensure client access to LLAA computer.
15. Maintain Excel and Access spreadsheets to monitor program expenditures and track client utilization of programs.
16. Prepare monthly, quarterly and annual reports to funders.
17. Work closely with HIV/AIDS case managers to ensure that they are aware of program policies and procedures.
18. Troubleshoot problems that arise when clients transgress rules and regulations of housing programs.

Secondary Responsibilities:

1. Create system for archiving housing files.
2. Assist with program evaluation duties as assigned.
3. Remain active in the recruitment, retention and appreciation of volunteers.
4. Perform other duties as assigned.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent experience.
- Minimum of 2 years of paid professional experience in advocacy services, private or public sector housing or homelessness services, or similar work in a client services setting.
- Minimum of 3 years of paid professional experience in administrative tasks.
- Ability to work with people in crisis and conflict, including those with mental illness, criminal history and chemical dependency.
- Strong listening, speaking, and writing skills.
- Demonstrated ability to work independently as well as part of a team.
- Possess an understanding of professional boundaries.
- Access to regular, dependable and timely transportation.
- Comfortable working with people of varying socioeconomic backgrounds and sexual orientations.
- Experience using Microsoft Windows, Word, Excel and the Internet.
- AIDS knowledgeable and sensitive, with familiarity about continuum of service needs applicable to AIDS health care and support services.

Candidates for employment at Lifelong should be aware that this is a unique work environment in which topics of sexuality and sexual orientation are an integral part of our everyday prevention and care work and are often discussed openly. Individuals who are uncomfortable with such topics, discussions and the occasional related graphic representations may choose not to work at Lifelong.

Women and people of color are encouraged to apply. If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Katherine Kizer at jobs@l1aa.org

A New Program at Lifelong AIDS Alliance

Presenting 'Intersexions'

You can do a lot with your mouth...including talk about your sexual health.

Are you a guy who is sexually active with men? Would you like a place to talk about your sexual behavior without being judged?

Intersexions is a FREE and CONFIDENTIAL service that allows you to explore any concerns or questions about your sexual health in an open, non-judgmental space. Plus, for each session you complete you will receive a \$20 grocery gift card!

Intersexions is an intensive program of one-on-one dialogue tailored to your needs. Sessions are held in person, online or by phone with a trained staff person.

To find out more about Intersexions or to set up an appointment call 206-957-1679, or email intersexions@l1aa.org.

Upcoming Event



Association of Nurses in AIDS Care Seattle-Puget Sound Chapter

Presents:

Summer Joint Quarterly Meeting with Cascade Chapter (Portland)

- Where:** Sorrento Hotel
900 Madison Street (at Terry)
Seattle, WA 98104
206-622-6400
- When:** Tuesday, June 15, 2004
Networking: 5:30pm – 6:pm
Business meeting/dinner: 6:00pm – 6:30pm
Presentation: 6:30pm – 7:30pm
- Topic:** ANAC Strategic Planning Update: New Challenges and Strengthened Commitments
- Presenter:** Rob T. Carroll, PhC, RN, ACRN

Rob is currently a doctoral candidate in Nursing Science and is the Washington State Education Coordinator at Northwest AIDS Education and Training Center, Center for Health Education and Research, University of Washington. Please RSVP by Monday, June 7th by calling Michelle Burton at 206-731-2559 or emailing at michelle.burton@metrokc.gov

Do you know that Seattle Treatment Education Program gets over 33,000 hits a month on their Web site link to *thebody.com*?

Curious?

Visit us online at www.thebody.com/step/steppage.html

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Please note that this is not a complete list of all HIV-related treatment information. STEP strives to provide the very latest in HIV/AIDS treatment information, research and drug development information. The most current research directions and antiretroviral drug data are provided throughout the Ezine publications. You will find highlight reports as well as extensive follow-up reports from many of the AIDS research and science conferences on the Ezine. In addition, all STEP quarterly treatment journals are available on our Web site at <http://www.thebody.com/step/steppage.html> or by calling our National Talkline at 1-888-399-STEP (7837). STEP works hard to give unbiased treatment information to all interested parties. If you have comments, questions, suggestions or grievances, please contact step@lifelongaidsalliance.org.

The Ezine producer is Roberto Gonzalez

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