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HIV/AIDS HOTLINE

Needle Exchange 101

ACTIONAIDS 1216 ARCH STREET, 6TH FLR, PHILA, PA 19107 215.981.0088 WWW.ACTIONAIDS.ORG



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is a needle exchange program (NEP)?

A: A needle exchange program provides clean needles in exchange for used/dirty ones. The focus of the program is to reduce the use of dirty needles by injection drug users and reduce the spread of disease.

Q: Does syringe exchange increase drug use?

A: No. Research has found that needle exchange does not increase drug use, especially when conducted in collaboration with drug treatment, HIV medical care and supportive services.

Meeting you where you are!

Harm Reduction

A way to reduce harmful behaviors and promote a healthier way of life.

Q: Does needle exchange increase the number of needles on the street?

A: No. From a public health perspective needle exchange programs protect the public from accidental sticks on the street, from unknowing transmission of disease and accidental contact with contaminated needles found in parks, beaches or trails. Needle exchange programs help ensure safe disposal of used needles.

Q: Do syringe exchange programs reduce the number of HIV infection?

A: Yes. Research has found that needle exchange programs do in fact reduce the number of new HIV infections by at least one-third. "An impressive body of evidence suggests powerful effects from needle exchange programs....Studies show reduction in risk behavior as high as 80%, with estimates of a 30% or greater reduction of HIV in IDUs."*

Q: What is the importance of a NEP?

A: Sharing used needles puts all injection drug users at risk for acquiring and spreading infections such as HIV and Hepatitis. Through a harm reduction model of care, people who use NEP will also be offered medical care, social services, and referrals to drug treatment.

For more information about where to exchange your used needles for clean (new) ones:

Prevention Point Philadelphia - 166 Lehigh Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19133 (215) 634-5272
Action AIDS - 1216 Arch Street 6th Fl. Philadelphia, PA 19107 (215) 981-0088

* (http://www.cdc.gov/idu/facts/AED_IDU_SYR.pdf - accessed 11/27/07)



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