Creating a Status Neutral Crystal Methamphetamine Harm Reduction Program

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Crystal Meth & MSM

Researching the link between meth and sex:
- Exploring sexuality
- Managing feelings of sexuality

Managing mental health: use is linked to a number of social and emotional factors.
- Use of meth to “escape”, help with confidence, and cope with mood. (Nakamura et al 2009)
- Social isolation, emotional stressors, and housing concerns (Mimiaga et al 2010; Nakamura et al 2009)
- Depression
  - Use of meth to manage symptoms of mental health issues including depression and anxiety (Fontaine and Dacus 2007)
  - Depression in meth users high regardless of HIV status (Bousman et al 2011)

Meth & other drugs
- Relationship with alcohol (Forrest et al 2010; Mayer et al 2014; Mimiaga et al 2008 & 2009)
- Marijuana, cocaine/crack, and club drugs*

Crystal Meth & HIV+ MSM

Meth use higher in HIV+
  • Reported highest meth use (16%) among all other MSM groups. (CDC 2014)
  • More likely to report use over HIV- (CDC 2014; Nanin et al. 2006)

Sexual Risk Behaviors
  • Unprotected sex with non-main/causal partners (CDC 2014; Forrest et al 2010; Halkitis et al 2009)
    • Similar status HIV+ individuals (Bousman et al 2011; Vaccher et al 2016)
  • Higher than HIV- individuals (Bousman et al 2011; CDC 2014)

Implications for HIV care and treatment
  • Risk of advancing infection and complicating treatment (Bousman et al 2011; Halkitis et al 2009)
  • Interference with ability to care for self or HIV (Mimiaga et al 2008; Mayer et al 2014)
Self-reported crystal meth use among men who reported having sex with another man in the past 12 months.
Source: National HIV Behavioral Surveillance study (CDC)
NYS: Ending the Epidemic (EtE)

• Announced in 2014—plan to reduce HIV infection statewide by 2020
• Reduce the rate of HIV progression to AIDS by 50%
• Blueprint outlines pillars:
  • Identifying undiagnosed persons and linking to care
  • Link and retain persons diagnosed to care to ensure viral suppression
  • Provide access to PrEP for high risk populations
  • Implement recommendations in support of decreasing new infections and disease progression
Crystal Meth Harm Reduction (MTH)

• Category 7 of NYC area response to the ETE Blueprint
• Goals among crystal methamphetamine using New Yorkers
  • Reduce new HIV infections
  • Improve HIV treatment outcomes
  • Provide health education
  • Reduce harms associated with use
  • Offer support services and individual counseling
  • Link to clinical services for PrEP/PEP, HIV treatment, HCV testing/treatment, MAT
• Connect to treatment services for depression, anxiety, and psychosis
Harm Reduction Services (HRM)

- Ryan White Part A: Substance Abuse Treatment Services—Outpatient service
  - Focused on promoting harm reduction methods and substance use counseling
  - Mental health counseling or referral for counseling
  - Buprenorphine treatment
  - Auricular acupuncture
- Certified Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counselors (CASAC), licensed social workers, certified peers
- CBOs, outpatient hospital settings, syringe exchange programs
- DOHMH staff provide technical assistance on best practices and program implementation
Meeting the Needs

HIV Prevention Education (CDC 2014; Mimiaga et al 2008)
  • HIV facts (Burgess et al 2016)
  • Negotiating safer sex and implementing safer practices
  • Role of PrEP/PEP (Vaccher et al 2016)

Harm Reduction (Carrico et al 2014; Mimiaga et al 2010)
  • Pharmacologic Intervention (Das et al 2010; Elkashef et al 2008)
  • Safer injection / access to clean needles
  • Safer use methods

Focus on mental health (Das et al 2010; Burgess et al 2016)
  • Motivating behavioral changes (Anderson et al 2015; Reback and Shoptaw 2014)
  • Individual/group counseling (Carrico et al 2014; Mimiaga et al 2008)
Meeting the Needs

Importance of counseling & social support

• Social support networks & activities
• Providing safe space to share experiences and learn
• Best practices for care
• Use of peers (Burgess et al 2016)

Additional Aspects:

• Addressing co-occurring disorders (Halkitis 2009)
• Non-adherence & relapse (Burgess et al 2016; Johnson et al 2007; Shoptaw et al 2005)
• Benefits of online and text technology (Burgess et al 2016; Reback et al 2015)
Building on RWPA

- Designed to meet the goals of the ETE blueprint
- Allows for easy integration into current agency services
- Encourages utilization of external partnerships and other grant funded resources
  - Particularly existing RWPA services
- Emerges from existing harm reduction foundations
  - Program forms & intake assessments
  - Service descriptions and data entry processes
  - Similarly or currently trained staff
  - Comparable training requirements / resources
A Status-Neutral Approach

- Two agency sites
  - Clinical services
  - Outreach / supportive services
- Two funding streams
- Complementary services
### Service Aspects

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<tr>
<td><strong>Target Population</strong></td>
<td>HIV-/+ active meth users (inclusive of additional use of hard substances, alcohol, and tobacco) focusing on MSM, men of color, transgender women</td>
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<td><strong>HIV Focus</strong></td>
<td>ARV adherence, PrEP &amp; PEP for clients and partners, sexual harm reduction, health education</td>
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<td><strong>Medical Components</strong></td>
<td>Medical care on-site, referrals for care, medication adherence (PrEP/PEP/ARV), medication assisted treatment (MAT)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Social Support Components</strong></td>
<td>Benefits navigation, substance use counseling, group counseling, risk reduction education, overdose prevention training, trauma informed evidence based interventions, therapeutic activities such as auricular acupuncture</td>
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<td><strong>Outreach Efforts &amp; Focus Areas</strong></td>
<td>Drop-in groups, areas of known drug use, non-traditional sites (e.g. sex clubs, bars, sex parties, kiki balls), health fairs and neighborhood events</td>
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Service Flow

- Weekday Drop-In Groups
- In-Person (Street + Non-Traditional) Outreach
- Social Media / Referral from Other Programs

Intake Assessment

Linkage to Programs

- Medical Services
- Counseling
- Supportive Services
- Coordination Services
Utilization of Resources

• Utilization of various resources within agency:
  - RWPA services
  - Housing programs
  - Health care programming (e.g. health home, care coordination programs)

• Connecting & Collaborating with partners
  - Referrals from other harm reduction agencies
  - Work with other externally funded harm reduction programs focused on injection drug use and HIV prevention
  - Ensuring best practices and innovative harm reduction methods

• Meeting specific needs
  - Unstably housed
  - Immigration concerns
  - Skills building
## Services Delivery Summary*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Social Support Services</th>
<th>% of Clients</th>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Counseling</td>
<td>79.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Counseling</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Education</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
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<td>Linkage to Services</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
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<th>Medical Services (n=74)</th>
<th>% of clients</th>
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<td>Initial Medical Visit</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vaccination</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
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<td>STI Treatment</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>PrEP Prescription/Dispensation</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>PrEP Linkage</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medication Assisted Treatment</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
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*Data pertains to ReCHARGE program as of Fall 2018.
Characteristics of Clients (N=179)

- Male (97.2%)
- Under Age 40 (59.8%)
- Gay/bisexual (88.3%)
- Unemployed or out of the workforce (73.2%)
- Living below the federal poverty level (67.0%)
- Race/ethnicity:
  - Black (27.4%)
  - Latinx (31.8%)
- Unstably or temporarily housed (41%)
- Most clients are insured (82%)
Drug Use Among Clients* (n=179)

- Crystal Meth Use
  - 91.6% have recently used
  - 57.3% use 1 to 6 times a week
  - The majority smoke meth
  - 59.6% of HIV+ clients inject meth
- Severe substance use disorder at intake (82.1%)
- Poly drug use:
  - Cocaine / Crack (22%)
  - GHB (49%)
  - Prescription drugs (8.4%)
Future of MTH

• Feedback from clients and provider agencies
  • New service types: therapeutic activities, workforce development, and overdose prevention training

• Development and integration of quality improvement methods
  • Improvement planning and service goal setting
  • Quality indicator measures for evaluation

• New Initiatives:
  • Development of ER protocols for meth overdose
  • Expansion of service area and priority populations
Thank You

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