



Harm Reduction with the Syringe Services Program at Prevention Point Philadelphia

Student Interns

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Community Preceptors

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COMMUNITY PARTNER

Community Partner: Prevention Point

Prevention Point Philadelphia provides harm reduction services to Philadelphia and the surrounding area. Now a nonprofit public health organization, Prevention Point was started as a grassroots, underground organization in 1991 by ACT UP Philadelphia (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) and distributed syringes to help reduce the transmission of HIV among people who injected drugs. Following the legalization of possession of syringes by Mayor Ed Rendell's executive order in 1992 on account of lobbying efforts, Prevention Point has grown into a larger organization that provides many services with a harm reduction approach including medical care, overdose prevention education, naloxone distribution, and case management along with housing, meals, and mail services for people facing housing instability.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

A large focus for the summer was working with the Syringe Services Program to provide participants with sterile syringes and supplies (such as cotton filters and antiseptic wipes) and also to help direct clients to services at Prevention Point such as Medical Case Management, HIV and HCV Testing and care, wound care, and PrEP.

Recently, xylazine, or "tranq," has become widespread in Kensington and Philadelphia. Due to its vasoconstrictive effects on local blood vessels and skin tissue, it can lead to ulcers and wounds that can be difficult to treat and manage. Many participants seek wound care supplies and education that Prevention Point can provide during syringe exchanges – a goal of our summer was to protocolize wound care supply kits and to create a wound care resource handout.

TEAM'S EXPERIENCE

Through the summer, we worked closely with the Syringe Services Program. Activities included creating syringe supply kits and wound care materials for distribution, brainstorming and developing additional strategies for delivering wound care resources, helping other volunteers learn how to participate with SSP, and meeting with participants during exchanges to provide them with materials and services that met their needs.

We had the opportunity to talk to participants during syringe exchanges, provide them with supplies they requested, and help guide participants to additional services at Prevention Point if wanted. The summer provided an excellent opportunity to learn and practice harm reduction principles while also engaging with and listening to community members longitudinally. Through these relationships, we were able to witness what specific needs participants had and how Prevention Point works to assist and support these individuals.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS/CHALLENGES/ JOYS

Wound Care Clinics

Day	Location	Time
MONDAY	KENSINGTON HOSPITAL MOBILE THE ROCK MINISTRIES	10:00-3:00
	PHILADELPHIA HEALTH CENTER 6 (MEDICAID/MEDICARE) 301 W GIRARD	8:00-4:30
TUESDAY	DREXEL MOBILE UNIT 22ND & LEHIGH	10:00-2:30
	SAVAGE SISTERS CLEARFIELD & KENSINGTON	10:00-4:00
	PHILADELPHIA HEALTH CENTER 6 (MEDICAID/MEDICARE) 301 W GIRARD	8:00-4:30
WEDNESDAY	KENSINGTON HOSPITAL MOBILE THE ROCK MINISTRIES	10:00-3:00
	SAVAGE SISTERS CLEARFIELD & KENSINGTON	10:00-4:00
	PHILADELPHIA HEALTH CENTER 6 (MEDICAID/MEDICARE) 301 W GIRARD	8:00-4:30
	PUNK WITH LUNCH BROAD & SNYDER	1:30-3:30
THURSDAY	SAVAGE SISTERS CLEARFIELD & KENSINGTON	10:00-4:00
	KENSINGTON HOSPITAL MOBILE THE ROCK MINISTRIES	10:00-3:00
	PHILADELPHIA HEALTH CENTER 6 (MEDICAID/MEDICARE) 301 W GIRARD	8:00-4:30
FRIDAY	DREXEL MOBILE UNIT 24ND & SNYDER	10:00-2:30
	KENSINGTON HOSPITAL MOBILE THE ROCK MINISTRIES	10:00-3:00
	PHILADELPHIA HEALTH CENTER 6 (MEDICAID/MEDICARE) 301 W GIRARD	8:00-4:30
	PREVENTION POINT WOUND CARE	11:00-3:30

- Helped streamline wound care support by creating routine of making wound care supply kits
- Helped compile wound care resources for participants
- Learned from participants and listened to their stories while speaking multiple times over the internship
- Were able to host a cookout for participants with the Syringe Services Program team

REFLECTION

Zane MacFarlane and William Nguyen: Over the summer, we had the opportunity to work for the Syringe Services Program at Prevention Point and learn firsthand how harm reduction operates. On a technical level, we learned from the SSP team and directly from participants about their various supply needs as well as the challenging nature of managing xylazine-associated wounds. One of our greatest takeaways was witnessing the incredible compassion and support the staff provides for participants day in and day out through their services and conversations. The harm reduction services and staff at Prevention Point empower participants who often feel stigmatized by society and meet their needs wherever they are. It is a model and therapeutic approach we will be thinking about and hoping to practice as we advance in our medical careers.