

New & Noteworthy

September Newsletter The Dogs Are Talking Monthly Dispatch September, 2007

Fall ushers in several of San Francisco's famous street fairs—Dore Alley, Harrison, Folsom, Castro. The season is a festive one for gay and bisexual men, and celebration can take many forms, including the enjoyment of drugs like methamphetamine. Unfortunately, meth use also means a good time for the syphilis bacteria, as it creates favorable conditions for the illness to spread. Our September ad focuses on the connection between the drug and the disease. This month's stars are Gladys the Chihuahua and Violet the American Staffordshire Terrier (casting call participant numbers 28 and 43). We hope their images, though funny, serve to remind users of the risks associated with meth as the street fairs get underway. By the way, don't forget to look for the Dogs Are Talking booth at both Folsom and Castro Streets. Our Folsom Street booth numbers are V-0756 and V-0758.

Remember, if you like this month's poster or you know the perfect spot for it, please don't hesitate to download it from our website. All our posters are available to be downloaded at any time, and we want you to hang them up all over town—don't let any wall space go to waste! Help us remind gay and bisexual men to get tested for syphilis.

Getting Involved

Interested in being a community partner or one of the Dogs Are Talking sponsors? Give Promotions West a call at 415.255.0800 or send an email to info@dogsaretalking.com. We'd love to hear from you today.

More about Meth

Readers may already know that methamphetamine is a powerful drug that produces highly desirable effects. Users are filled with euphoria, self-confidence and sexual desire, along with wakefulness and a sense of purpose. These feelings often crowd out the user's usual boundaries related to risk-taking and self-preservation. Although some people can use methamphetamine without dire consequences, many if not most progress to some level of dependency, often resulting in social, financial and physical collapse. People who are fortunate enough to be overcome their addiction often continue to suffer from chronic paranoia, memory impairment, intermittent confusion and anxiety.

Use of crystal methamphetamine is 10 to 20 times higher among gay men than in the general population. Because the drug increases sexual desire and stamina while reducing inhibitions, it often leads to more frequent unprotected sex. Gay and bisexual men who use crystal meth are three to four times more likely to contract HIV. Data suggest that half of new HIV infections and syphilis cases in gay men and other men who have sex with men can be attributed to methamphetamine use. However, public health officials believe the true percentage to be higher, given the current constraints of their data collection.

To address this situation, the City has recently increased funding of methamphetamine treatment, supporting innovative treatment programs like the Positive Reinforcement Opportunity Project (see below) and a variety of social marketing



campaigns.

“Resist Meth,” for example, is the message of a new media campaign targeting gay and bisexual men in San Francisco. The campaign includes a website (ResistMeth.org), posters, postcards, a brochure, and ads in local newspapers, on public transit, on the radio and on the popular gay website www.manhunt.net. The bold, iconographic images of the Resist Meth campaign are meant to get gay men’s attention and encourage them to visit the website to get information, practical advice, and resources for treatment and support. The campaign was developed in cooperation with Mayor Gavin Newsom’s Task Force on Methamphetamine and Boston’s Fenway Community Health. It is being launched simultaneously in San Francisco and Boston.



...and a Few More Things to Know about Speed



San Francisco’s STD Prevention and Control Services and the STOP AIDS Project have teamed up to publish a new educational brochure: “A Few More Things to Know about Speed.” More than 10,000 copies are making their way into bars, clubs, organizations, and clinics throughout the city.

The brochure pulls together materials and information from multiple sources on the use of speed (a.k.a crystal methamphetamine). Some of the information contained in the pamphlet may not be new; it’s intended to help people make better decisions if they choose to use speed or need resources to quit.

Copies of this brochure can be picked up at multiple locations where gay, bi and trans men gather, as well as the STOP AIDS Project (207 Sanchez Street at Market) and SF City Clinic (356 7th Street between Folsom and Harrison). The brochure is also available for download.

Drop in and Talk

Life After Meth is a peer-based support group for gay and bisexual men. It provides them with a safe place to talk about topics related to remaining abstinent from, or reducing use of, crystal methamphetamine.

The group is not affiliated with any particular method of treatment, but treatment resources are available upon request.

Discussion topics are dictated by participants’ specific concerns as well as issues common to newly “clean” men (e.g., socializing without “partying,” sex without meth, job hunting, defining and reaching short- and long-term goals, etc).

Life After Meth meets on the first and third Fridays of each month. For more information, contact Brandon Ivory at 415.846.5726 or by email at brandon.ivory@sfdph.org.

The Speed Project



The Speed Project is a harm reduction program for gay/bi and heteroflexible men in San Francisco who party with speed. The project hosts a weekly drop-in group, produces a community ’zine



called *Speedometer*, and hosts community forums, workshops, movie nights, and secondary syringe exchanges. It also does outreach in the Tenderloin, SOMA, & Castro areas and maintains a presence at syringe exchanges, street fairs, bars and clubs.

Peer educators are the heart of this project. Men volunteer to provide friends with nonjudgmental information and resources to encourage good health and help others party and play more safely. Peer educators and the project's 'zine *Speedometer* open doors for guys to share their stories and strategies with other users. They focus on what works for them to reduce the spread of HIV, hepatitis, STDs, and other harms associated with the use of crystal.

Check out our website (www.tpspf.com) for more info or call our events line at 415.788.5433.

Tweaker.org

Tweaker.org is much more than your go-to website for questions about crystal! It's also a team of guys who do harm reduction outreach and education at SF events, put on a show called Tina's Café, answer questions about crystal, and do whatever we can to help gay, bi and queer men better understand crystal and how it affects our lives.

Interested in getting involved with the Tweak Team? We meet every Wednesday night at Magnet from 7:30-8:30pm. This summer we'll be at all the street fairs and parties talking to other guys about meth. For more information go to www.tweaker.org or send an email to info@tweaker.org

The Stonewall Project



The Stonewall Project offers harm reduction counseling and education to gay/bi/queer/TG men who have questions or concerns about crystal use. There's no requirement that you be clean and sober (or even want to be) to join us. For more information go to www.stonewallsf.org or call 415.502.1999 for walk-in

counseling hours.

Positive Reinforcement Opportunity Project

Are you interested in a new way to quit the use of crystal meth, but need a little help? The Positive Reinforcement Opportunity Project (PROP) may be the solution for you. For more information contact David Pasol by phone at 415-740-6273, or by email at dpasol@waldenhouse.org. Or visit us at www.PROPsf.org.

Come talk to us about a FREE, easy & confidential way to help you stop using METH through weekly urine testing.

Earn \$\$\$\$ staying clean from METH




Tired of finding yourself in compromising positions?

PROP Sites

Walk-ins welcome!

Magnet
4122 18th Street
M, W & F
8-10 am

Tenderloin Health
255 Golden Gate
M, W & F
1-3 PM



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Contact us at info@dogsaretalking.com

STDtest.org | sfcityclinic.org | 415.487.5580

