

# Street-based Outreach for Disease Prevention

## Keeping It Real 2009

Meg Panichelli  
Rachel Warner  
Genny Fulco  
Project SAFE  
safephila@gmail.com

## The power of language

- People identify in multiple ways, don't make assumptions
- Sex worker vs. prostitute
- Drug user vs. abuser, addict, habit,
- Avoid words that imply judgment, condemnation, or are pathologizing (something that is a problem and needs to be fixed)
- "Us" vs. "Them"

## Harm Reduction

- A set of practical strategies to reduce the negative health and social consequences of drug use.
- Accepts drug use as a reality
- Concerned with the quality of life over drug use cessation
- Non-judgmental, non-coercive provision of services
- Empowers and affirms users as the primary agents for improving their lives.

**Activity!**

## Safer injection kits

- Antiseptic wipes
- Cookers
- Sterile water (blue) or sterile saline (pink)
- Cotton filters
- Alcohol pads
- Ties
- Syringes
- Band-aids
- Antibiotic ointment
- Hard candy (lollipop, jolly rancher, etc.)

## Safer sex kits

- Plain condoms (insertive / “male,” latex)
- Flavored condoms (insertive / “male,” latex)
- Receptive condom (receptive / “female,” polyurethane)
- Dental dam (latex)
- Plain flavored lubes
- Antiseptic wipes (or coochie wipes!)
- Gloves
- Band-aids
- Antibiotic ointment
- Tampon
- Hard candy (lollipop, jolly rancher, etc.)

## Outreach logistics

### WHAT TO WEAR

- Dress for the weather and wear comfy shoes
- Dress comfortably but try not to call attention to yourself (don't wear flashy colors, show a lot of skin)...
- Wear pants and closed-toed shoes for safety

## Things to bring with you

- Photo ID w/ your date of birth (or not - pros & cons)
- Small amount of money for SEPTA, pay phone, drink/snack
- PPP participant card
- Executive Order # 4-92
- Pen and paper for BDR's and statistics
- RAGS statistics form
- BDA report forms
- Small sharps container/plastic bottle for used works
- Gloves to wear to pick up used works
- Hand sanitizer
- Naloxone, muscle syringes, Rx (if you're trained)

## Items for distribution

- Loose insertive condoms - plain, flavored (20 +)
- Loose syringes (30+)
- Loose rubber tips / spark plug covers (mouth pieces for crack stems) (10+)
- Loose chore (filter for crack stem) (10+)
- 15-20 safer injection kits
- 20-25 safer sex kits
- Project SAFE flyers in all the bags
- “How to Stay Safe” flyer and BDAs separately - these are only for women and people doing sex work
- Plastic bags with handles (especially if it’s rainy)

## Getting ready for outreach

1. Gather materials for outreach
  2. Communicate with your outreach partner/s about how you’ll meet (time, location) and who will carry/bring what
  3. Do outreach between 10 PM and 2 AM. Plan to spend about 2 hours walking the outreach route.
- DON’T:
    - Work while on outreach
    - Use/buy any drugs while on outreach

## Getting there

- If you are taking public transportation, plan your route ahead of time and communicate with outreach partner
- If you drive to outreach, park in a well-lit and busy spot
- It's also fine to bike or walk there
- Call or text Outreach Coordinator (OC) when you arrive and are ready to start
- Call or text OC again when you are done for the night

## Approaching folks

- Approach every woman you see (unless she is on the phone, with young children, trying to get a date, or it's too loud for her to hear you - due to the subway, traffic, etc.)
- OK to approach teens, use discretion, don't deny anything to anyone
- Don't approach people if the cops are watching (you or the people you want to approach)

## Talker & Look-out (AKA Person 1, Person 2)

- One classic outreach model is for one person to be the talker and the other to be the look-out/observer
- We want everyone to be comfortable with this model
- Benefits of this approach:
  - Clear roles and responsibilities
  - Minimizes chances that you'll both talk at the same time, thereby overwhelming the person you're approaching
  - Lets the talker concentrate on the conversation while the look-out pays close attention to the surroundings
- You can switch roles as often as you like - even within a conversation if, for example, the participant asks a question about the look-out's area of expertise
- Either person can take BDRs / stats

## You can start by saying things like

- “Hi, would you like any free condoms or works?”
- “Hi, would you like some free condoms?”
- Other ideas?

## Then tell them about your organization:

- Say something like, “We’re from Project SAFE, a women’s health organization”
- Offer flyers
- Tell them about the BDA
- Tell them about our delivery service

## Keep in mind

- It’s way more important to listen than it is to give advice.
- Don't tell people what they should do.
- It's their life, and they know what works best for them.
- If they ask for resources, refer to the back page of the flyer and supplement with additional information if you have it. (create a list of local resources to hand out if you don't already have one)
- If you don't know something, say you don't know it. Offer to call someone for information or ask the person how to contact them later once you have the information.

## (Potentially) sticky situations

- People sometimes ask for things other than the supplies we're distributing.
- They may ask for a ride, money, tokens, to hang out, etc.
- When deciding how to answer, consider:
  - The comfort of your outreach partner/s (it's best to talk about these things before you're on the spot)
  - The precedent you'll set
  - How to give HONEST answers
    - Say something like, "Sometimes we may be able to do that - right now, we can/can't...", or, "It's always okay to ask, but we won't always be able to say yes to that request..."

## If you offend someone

- Occasionally, people might be offended when you offer them supplies. They might say something like, "I'm not out here like that!"
- If this happens, say something like, "Sorry to bother you," or, "I didn't mean to offend you, we talk to every woman we see,"
- Unless the person is hostile, always try to remember to say, "Have a good night."

## Safety

- What happens when a volunteer encounters a dangerous situation?
- Don't get in the middle of violence or conflict.
- Don't venture off of the outreach route
- Pay attention to your surroundings.
- Use your best judgment.
- If you or your partner feels unsafe, leave the scene, go home, and call OC.
- Know the realistic potential for danger in your outreach area
- You have to stay safe in order to distribute outreach supplies and work towards disease prevention!

## Safety Cont.

- If someone is trying to date you, shake your head and say, "I'm not working," or, "I'm not dating," or "Leave me alone," or "Don't talk to me."
- If someone is following you, tell them to leave you alone, record their license plate #, and call OC.
- If there is a crowd of people, try to walk around them. Veer towards the street rather than the buildings. The goal is not to be totally surrounded by people, and not to be backed against a wall. Also, try not to let a crowd come between you and your outreach partner/s.

## Violence / sexual assault

- Most of us know someone who has experienced sexual violence
- Sexual assault and intimate partner violence are a reality for many of SAFE's participants (sometimes occurring during work and sometimes not)
- Providing support, listening and reserving judgment are some of the ways we can support folks who are victims/ survivors

## Supporting survivors cont.

- Assist the survivor in getting the help they need and want. This may mean providing phone numbers, information, transportation, etc.
- Try to minimize the number of times the survivor must tell the story of the assault.
- Let the survivor know that they can get free confidential medical treatment, without having to notify the police.
- Women Organized Against Rape (WOAR), which serves people of all genders, has a 24 hour hotline available for information and support.

## Some “don’t’s”

- DO NOT give advice or make decisions for the survivor
- DO NOT prod for details of the assault.
- DO NOT prevent the survivor from talking about the assault if she wants to.
- DO NOT ask her why she did not run or scream or fight.
- DO NOT tell the survivor what you would have done.

## “Don’t’s” cont.

- DO NOT ask her if they did anything to "lead the attacker on."
- DO NOT ask what the survivor was wearing.
- DO NOT ask why she is working after being assaulted.
- DO NOT ask whether she was drinking or using drugs.
- DO NOT blame the survivor.

## Bad date reports

- Bad Date reports provide an anonymous way for women to speak out about being assaulted
- The Bad Date Alert is a tool for working women to warn each other about “bad dates”
- Bad dates usually involve violence, but may also be johns who didn’t pay
- The BDA should only be given to women
- Women can call the hotline to give a BDR, but usually we get reports on outreach

## How to take a bad date report

- Let her know:
- The bad date sheet is completely anonymous, we do not share reports with the police.
- You have a right to report any attacks to the police but we will not pressure you to do so.
- Always remember, no matter who you are, where you live, what you do for a living, and what drugs you may or may not be using, if you have been raped or beaten while working it is an assault.

## Bad date report taking cont.

- Free rape kit exams are available at Episcopal Hospital (Front and Lehigh) and Thomas Jefferson University Hospital (11th and Sansom).
- Do not hesitate to seek medical help for fear of being picked up on warrants or arrested for prostituting.
- You have the right to remain anonymous and to receive a free rape kit exam without having the hospital call the police.
- It is not your fault.
- If you want someone from SAFE to come with you, call the hotline and press the button for the case worker.

## Activity!

## Disease prevention for the worker during Outreach

- Picking up syringes on outreach
  - Use glove
  - Place sharps container on a flat surface
  - Pick up syringe by the barrel
  - Drop in container point down
- Needle-Stick Proto-call
  - Every agency is different
  - Project SAFE
  - Post-Exposure Prophylaxis

## Anything else?

- Questions?
- Evaluations
- [www.safephila.org](http://www.safephila.org)
- Thanks for coming and for outreaching!