

YOUTH AND AIDS



WHAT'S THE CONNECTION

DO YOU KNOW?

AIDS Health Project
Administrative Office
54 Tenth Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

2,000 children in San Francisco are living in the streets. In order to survive, many become involved in activities commonly associated with street life:

- IV drug use
- Prostitution, hustling
- Criminal activities

Are these youth at risk for acquiring AIDS?



WHAT IS AIDS?

AIDS is a disease which causes a breakdown in the body's immune system, impairing the self-defense mechanisms which fight certain illnesses. The AIDS epidemic continues to grow at an alarming rate. The cause is unknown, but certain behaviors are considered to be high-risk.

WHO IS AT RISK?



Nearly all AIDS cases have occurred among the following populations.

- Hemophiliacs
- Haitian immigrants
- Intravenous drug users
- Gay or bisexual men

AIDS is *not* highly contagious, and it is *not* spread through casual social contact.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS FOR YOUTH?



Some young people engage in behaviors which are believed to put them at higher risks for developing AIDS.

- IV drug users run the risk of contracting and spreading AIDS by an inadvertent exchange of blood products in sharing needles.
- Young men who have or are experimenting with a gay identity may engage in sexual behaviors that are believed to be involved in the spread of AIDS.
- Young men who do *not* identify as gay but *do* hustle or prostitute may engage in high-risk sexual behaviors.
- Young women who are sexually active may have sexual contact with IV drug users or bisexual men who carry the disease.



WHAT CAN BE DONE FOR HIGH RISK YOUTH?

The Youth Program of the AIDS Health Project is directed towards:

- Youth who use IV drugs
- Young men who may be homosexually or bisexually active
- Young women who may be sexually active with other high-risk individuals (IV drug users or bisexual men)
- Young people who are anxious or concerned about AIDS, whether or not they have an identified risk.

Our goals are:

- Education
- Intervention and behavior change
- AIDS prevention

Our services include:

- Information about AIDS for youth (ages 12-22); what AIDS is, who is at risk, how to reduce risks.
- Presentations to youth groups.
- Referral for AIDS screening.
- Activity groups for youth.
- Health groups for youth.
- Theater presentations about AIDS and other health issues.
- Trainings for youth service professionals.
- Consultations to youth service professionals.

All services are free of charge to residents and programs of San Francisco.

To make a referral, get more information or request a consultation, contact:

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Center for Special Problems

558-4801

The AIDS Health Project is a program of the University of California San Francisco, funded by the City and County of San Francisco.