

New Videotape Available to Provide Drug Abuse and AIDS Information to Arrestees

Significant research has shown that a large population of persons who pass through the criminal justice system are at risk of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. Many of these people serve little, if any, time in jail or prison, where they might be exposed to Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) or drug prevention information. In an effort to target an HIV/AIDS prevention program to this high-risk population, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) co-funded the development of a videotape that can be shown to detainees in lockups, booking facilities, and other criminal justice facilities.

The video, "Drugs and AIDS--Reaching for Help," is the first to use a drama-based approach focusing on the stories of three people specifically modeled after those in the target audience--people whose lives have been affected by crime, drugs, and HIV infection. The fictional stories are based on a composite of recorded interviews with individuals from the target population, such as former drug addicts and repeat offenders. The use of still photographs of volunteers who had been involved with drug abuse, spent time in jail, or became infected with HIV enhances the authenticity of the video.

The goal of the video is to encourage those who use illicit drugs to enter drug treatment and to motivate those at risk for exposure to HIV to alter their behaviors to reduce the risk of infection. Research has shown that strong fear-based messages rarely motivate long-term changes in behavior. Thus, while the criminal sanctions for illicit drug use and the grim effects of advanced HIV infection are depicted, the main focus of the video is on the positive benefits of a drug-free lifestyle and HIV prevention. The video presents such a lifestyle as a "positive alternative that one is drawn to, not only out of fear, but out of hope for a more rewarding and healthier life".

For more information about the development of the video, contact Michael Gross at Abt Associates Inc. (301) 913-0500. A copy of the videotape, "Drugs and AIDS--Reaching for Help," can be ordered from the National Institute of Justice/National Criminal Justice Reference Service at (800) 851-3420.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from M. Gross et al., 1994. "Drugs and AIDS--Reaching for Help": A Videotape on AIDS and Drug Abuse Prevention for Criminal Justice Populations," Journal of Drug Education 24(1): 1-20.

NIDA TO HOLD 20th ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM!

September 22, 1994 9:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. National Institutes of Health

The National Institute on Drug Abuse will hold a day-long symposium featuring distinguished scientists in the neuro-, behavioral, and social sciences who will provide a comprehensive overview of the contributions of research to our understanding of the causes, consequences, prevention, and treatment of drug abuse and addiction.

For additional information, contact NIDA at (301) 443-6480.

For more information about today's topic or to be placed on the distribution list, please call CESAR at 301-403-8329.

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