

# HIV-related Outreach Services to Homeless/and or Street Youth

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Presented by:

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# Jamaica Drop-In Center, Safe Space

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- ❑ The Drop-In Center opened its doors in July of 2006
  - ❑ Main services are for youth ages 13-21 that are Runaway, Homeless and/or At Risk
  - ❑ We provide a number of services that include:
    - Counseling and Case Management
    - Emergency services for homeless and runaway youth (food, clothing, shower and laundry facilities)
    - Social and recreational activities
    - Life skills workshops
    - Career exploration and job readiness training
    - Substance abuse counseling and referrals
    - Arts programming
    - Financial literacy
    - Support for youth that identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender & Questioning (LGBTQ)
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# MAC HIV/AIDS Prevention Initiative

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- **The MAC AIDS/HIV Prevention Initiative** is a new Youth HIV-Prevention Program for both in-school and out-of-school youth ages 15-24 based at Safe Space's Drop-In Centers in Manhattan and Queens. The principle goal for the new Youth HIV Prevention Program is:
    - to raise awareness of HIV/STI's among at-risk youth and provide them the knowledge and understanding to empower them to take active roles in the Global HIV-Prevention Initiative.
  - A key component of the HIV Prevention Initiative is our use of the Peer to Peer Model. Using a Peer Education Model gives Safe Space the opportunity to work closely with a smaller group of young adults and creates a parallel process in which the peer educators are working towards increasing their self-perception of risk factors and initiating positive changes. They are in turn, promoting positive sexual health to help build self-efficiency in their peers. These participants receive stipends for their work.
  - Throughout the project, participants are encouraged to get tested for HIV and will be exposed to the spectrum of HIV/STD and early pregnancy preventive measures.
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# MAC HIV/AIDS Prevention Initiative

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**MAC HIV/AIDS Prevention Initiative goals and objectives are to:**

- ❑ Increase HIV/AIDS awareness risk reduction knowledge**
  - ❑ Provide outreach to young women and men who are high risk for sexual activity**
  - ❑ Increase partner adoption of norms supportive to consistent condom use**
  - ❑ Provide age and culturally appropriate sex education**
  - ❑ Provide access to reproductive health services**
  - ❑ Provide youth development activities that improve self-esteem, life skills; and opportunities to get involved**
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# Outreach Services and Staffing Patterns

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## □ Staffing

- Full-time outreach worker for Drop-in Center
- Two full-time Outreach Specialists for MAC AIDS/HIV Prevention Initiative (Manhattan and Queens)
- 13 Peer Educators

## □ Services

- Street outreach with Safe Space Van
  - Presentations at provider agencies
  - Safe sex kits, program information and services
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# Youth and Homelessness

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## □ Statistics and Demographics *(National Coalition for Homeless, Fact sheet, 2008)*

- Homeless youth are individuals under the age of eighteen who lack parental, foster, or institutional care also referred to as “unaccompanied youth”
  - Most recent study indicates that there are an estimated 1,682,900 homeless and runaway youth (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention)
  - This number is equally divided between females and males with averages between 15 and 17
  - Six percent of this population identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ).
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# Youth and Homelessness, cont.

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## □ Causes

- Homelessness could occur for many reasons however some of the common reason are:
    - Family problems that include but not limited to unresolved family conflict and physical and/or sexual abuse
    - Financial crisis that affects family through loss of employment, lack of affordable housing and limited access to public assistance. Youth can become homeless with their families if they go in the shelter system and may sometimes become separated
    - Residential Instability is also a factor. Having a history of foster care tends to correlate with youth homelessness. When a youth is discharged from either institutional or foster care their resources are limited and they usually have no housing or financial support
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# Homeless Youth and HIV

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- According the Office of National AIDS Policy, HIV seems to be more prevalent among those in their late teens, males and racial and ethnic minorities
  - There are a significant # of homeless youth that are at-risk for HIV. The reasons this is so is because :
    - Lack of access to medical and health services
    - Risky behaviors that include increased drug use, unprotected sex and in some cases sex work as a means to finances
    - Lack of access to education and prevention programs
    - Lack of access to HIV counseling and voluntary testing
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# Empire State Coalition

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The Empire State Coalition is a membership organization using its collective voice to promote the safety, health and future of runaway, homeless and street-involved youth.

- ❑ The Empire State Coalition is committed to working on behalf of runaway, homeless and street youth to ensure their rights. Youth have the right to be safe, healthy and prepared for the future.
  - ❑ The Empire State Coalition brings together agencies and individuals from throughout New York State who share our ideals and who, by serving youth in the full context of their families, their cultures and their communities, provide a continuum of services that works towards making that ideal a reality.
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# Empire State Coalition, cont.

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There are about 75 member organizations state wide. As an advocacy organization, the Empire State Coalition is a collective voice to:

- ❑ Promote voluntary strength-based services for youth and their families
  - ❑ Advocate for resources in every community
  - ❑ Share ideas and expertise; disseminate information
  - ❑ Network for a full range of quality services
  - ❑ Develop program models to meet new and changing needs
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# Recommendations for Services

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- ❑ More agencies should be providing street Outreach to continue education and distribute condoms and safe sex packets
  - ❑ Mobile medical vans should be more readily available in the 5 boroughs to provide testing services and counseling
  - ❑ There should be a continued emphasis on Peer Education and leadership
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# QUESTIONS?????

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Thank you for your time!

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