



MYTH BUSTED:

Needle Distribution Model vs. Needle Exchange Model



Needle Exchange: a one-for-one form of syringe distribution where individuals are not given new sterile needles unless they return their used needles.



Needle Distribution: a form of syringe distribution where individuals are given new sterile needles whenever they need them, regardless of whether or not used needles are returned at the same time.



Myth - Limiting the Number of Needles is Better for Overall Public Health.

Fact: Limiting the number of needles distributed increases the tendency for clients to share and re-use the same drug injection equipment; thus increasing transmission of HIV, hepatitis C and other infections.



Myth - Reusing Needles is Fine if you Aren't Sharing Them.

Fact: With multiple uses, the tip of the needle becomes weakened and can break off and stuck under the skin. Also, a reused needle becomes dull and doesn't inject as easily as a new one and can cause pain, bleeding, bruising, and infections.



Myth - A Needle Exchange Program will Prevent Needles from Ending Up In Community.

Fact: Studies show that rates of return for needle distribution programs are higher than needle exchange programs. The greater the access to syringes and easy disposal, the more likely people are to dispose of them in safe locations.



Myth - Provincial, National, and Global Best Practices Supports Needle Exchange Programs.

Fact: The Canadian Best Practice recommendations considers needle exchange to be "outdated and unsatisfactory". The BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) has promoted needle distribution and safe disposal since 2002.



Myth - Safe Needle Disposal isn't as Important with Exchange Programs

Fact - Harm reduction education programs help to remove discarded syringes from the community. It achieves this through public support, and community and staff education. This process is necessary regardless of the style of needle program. BCCDC Harm Reduction Services provides personal sharps containers; communities provide publicly accessible community needle drop boxes, needle disposal advice for the public, and pick-up of discarded drug injection equipment.