

HIV PARTNER COUNSELING & REFERRAL SERVICES

California Partner Counseling and Referral Services (PCRS) is a collection of free services for people living with HIV designed to support the disclosure of their HIV status to their sex and/or needle sharing partners, past and present. HIV/STD program staff and medical providers can be trained to offer PCRS to their clients, support disclosure of HIV, and encourage HIV counseling and testing of partners.

To access PCRS, contact the PCRS coordinator in your local area (see the last page of this section).

To register for training in offering PCRS, go to www.stdhivtraining.org.

PCRS DISCLOSURE OPTIONS

SELF DISCLOSURE

The client chooses to self disclose his/her HIV status to partner(s). If appropriate, client refers the partner to a facility that offers HIV counseling and testing. The provider offers assistance and support in preparing the client for this process, and provides printed referral materials as appropriate. Client is encouraged to check in with provider after status has been disclosed for further support.

Planning for Self Disclosure

- When will be the best time?
- Where is the best place, keeping in mind that others might hear?
- What will you say? "I have HIV" vs. "I'm sick" (want client to be clear about this)
- How might they react? Domestic violence assessment.
- Who else might partner need or want to tell?
- What questions might they have? Prepare appropriate referrals.
- What if partner says they are positive?
- What if they say they knew?
- What if they ask how long have you known?
- What if they ask how you got infected?
- What are the possible consequences of telling?
- If your partner wants to test they can call _____ or go to _____.

Remind the client that their partner may need some time alone, and that it's a normal response to disclosure.

DUAL DISCLOSURE

The client chooses to disclose his/her HIV status to a partner with the provider present. The provider offers assistance and support in preparing the client for this in-office process. Through a dual disclosure, the provider is able to address partner concerns and questions, as well as support the client. It is important to note that the role of the provider is to offer emotional support and health education information about HIV transmission and risk. At no time is the provider to reveal their client's HIV status. Counselor approval to provide this option is a programmatic policy issue and is at the discretion of the local program or agency.

Planning for Dual Disclosure

- How will you get them to come in, what will you say?
- Once here, what will you say? "I have HIV" vs. "I'm sick"
- How might they react? Domestic violence assessment.
- Who else will partner need or want to tell?
- What questions might they have? Prepare appropriate referrals.
- What if partner says they are positive?

Remember that the client must disclose his/her own HIV status. You can answer questions about HIV and provide your client and their partner with emotional support, as well as assist the partner in accessing HIV testing or care.

ANONYMOUS 3RD PARTY DISCLOSURE

The client chooses to remain anonymous and requests that partners be informed of their exposure by professionally trained field staff. The provider must gather full exposure, identifying, and locating information for each partner and forward that information on to designated local field notification staff. No information about the original positive client is forwarded. With this option, field staff takes complete responsibility for contacting the partner confidentially, notifying him/her of possible exposure to HIV, and offering the partner HIV testing and medical or other referrals if needed. At no time is the original client's identity or any exposure information shared with partners.

Planning for Anonymous 3rd Party Disclosure

- Explain how the anonymous 3rd party process works.
- What will you say if partner accuses you of being HIV-positive and giving their name?
"The health worker told me it was you." Tell client partner is "fishing."
- How might partner react? Any chance this partner will harm you? Domestic violence assessment.
- How many partners have they had? Tying back to client.

NO DISCLOSURE AT THIS TIME

At this point in time, the client may not be in need of HIV disclosure services due to a variety of reasons (e.g., partner/domestic violence, immigration issues, confidentiality concerns, other overriding issues). It is the provider's role to explore these issues with the client and offer support and referrals which may assist the client in addressing them. The door should be left open for the client to revisit this issue in the future.