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San Francisco Peer NSP

So my name is Holly Bradford, I'm from America, I live in the San Francisco area and I work for the San Francisco Drug Users Union.

San Francisco Drug Users Union started doing peer needle exchanges about eighteen months ago and it has quickly become one of the largest if not the largest fixed site needle exchanges in San Francisco (by volume of needle). We do about 30,000 needles per month.

The reason I believe drug users should do needle exchange is when you have drug users actually delivering services, whether it be needle exchange or any other service that drug users need, or want, or desire is that there's no stigma there, no judgment. It's peer to peer, people are more comfortable coming in, we don't talk down to people, we're not condescending when people come in because, you know, we're all there too. Everybody in our program uses something. So people are just comfortable coming and I think that's why we've become one of the largest needle exchanges in San Francisco.

I think that the way to start a peer based needle exchange is to start doing secondary exchange and then once you start doing secondary exchange, which means that you go to a needle exchange and get a hundred needle and then you hand them out to people and take needle in and start exchanging with that bigger needle exchange. Immediately you'll start growing because you're drug users doing work with drug users. That's how we did it, we started with secondary exchange and now we're getting truck loads and pallets full of needles delivered to our program every week.