



Disease Intervention Specialist

DIS



Carla Harvey
STD/HIV Field Operations
Supervisor
Metro Public Health
Department
Memphis/Shelby County



DIS Work Force

- ◆ Originally established to work in the field of STI prevention, DIS have ground level investigative skills that have become key components of tuberculosis outbreak response, HIV exposure notification, other infectious disease control, and emergency response efforts. DIS remain critical to the foundation of public health service and are widely regarded as the backbone of STD/HIV programs.



Objective of a DIS

- ◆ To prevent disease transmission by ensuring that all people who are infected or have been exposed to a treatable STI are promptly examined and adequately treated.
- ◆ To ensure patients manage the infection, prevent future infections and to respond if infected in the future.



Disease Intervention Specialist

- DIS are trained professionals, informed about the causes and spread of STIs
- DIS are skilled in identifying and locating people who may have been exposed to an STIs
- DIS provide counseling about behaviors that put a person at risk for STIs, including HIV infection



Skills a DIS must exhibit

- ◆ Professionalism
- ◆ Persistence
- ◆ A nonjudgmental attitude
- ◆ Effective listening
- ◆ Assertiveness
- ◆ The Ability speak at patients's level of understanding



Partner Services

- ◆ “...a broad array of services that should be offered to persons with syphilis, HIV, gonorrhea, or chlamydia infections and their partners. A critical function of partner services is partner notification, a process through which infected persons are interviewed to elicit information about their partners, who can then be confidentially notified of their possible exposure or potential risk.”



Partner Services

- ◆ Performed by specially educated and trained DIS.
- ◆ Why is it important? Going from the known case → to unknown case.
- ◆ Opportunity for identification and treatment of untreated infections, interruption of transmission and prevention of incubating cases through epidemiologic treatment.



Myths about DIS

- ◆ DIS are the sex police
- ◆ DIS spread information about your sex life to your friends, family, and coworkers.
- ◆ DIS make visits to your home and work in clearly marked Health Department vehicles
- ◆ DIS are associated with law enforcement



The Truth about DIS

- ◆ DIS are concerned about the individual patient and public health
- ◆ All information is kept confidential
- ◆ DIS provide a public service despite challenging situations.
- ◆ DIS are innovative in finding people while maintaining confidentiality
- ◆ DIS work is evolving as people use social media to find new partners



Impact on Community Health

- ◆ DIS processed over 19,000 abnormal laboratory reports in 2016.
- ◆ DIS interviewed about 2,100 cases in 2016
- ◆ Each abnormal laboratory report requires DIS activity to ensure positive outcomes
- ◆ DIS perform their duties to improve the health and well being of the community



Shelby County DIS

- ◆ Field Operations

- ◆ 9 Disease Intervention Specialist

- ◆ 2 Lead Disease Intervention Specialist

- ◆ STD Surveillance

- ◆ 4 Disease Intervention Specialist

- ◆ 1 Lead Disease Intervention Specialist



- ◆ HIV Surveillance
- ◆ 2 Disease Intervention Specialist
- ◆ 1 Lead Intervention Specialist.



Questions