



ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO OPPOSE CRACK IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

A great place to start an opposition campaign to CRACK is to establish a grassroots base to build a local movement to resist CRACK's strategy of coercing poor women into getting sterilized. Even if the grassroots base is only 4 people, 4 people can accomplish a lot with very simple actions.

- **Gear up and prepare:**

- **Find out who is the local leadership** of the new CRACK chapter or the Chapter Coordinator.
- **Find out CRACK's targeting strategies.** Are they planning a press conference? Who are they collaborating with locally – the police, foster parents, healthcare providers? Keep a watchful eye out for the distribution of flyers at local treatment centers, the placement of ads on public transportation vehicles, billboards, benches, etc. Check for ads in free city papers.
- **Organize an opposition committee** with friends or people who also oppose CRACK.
- **Create a "Local Statement of Opposition"** that community members can sign. Washington, DC- based, Family Watch, is collecting signatures for a national statement of opposition to CRACK. Check it out at www.familywatch.org/crack.htm, sign it and use it as model to create your local statement of opposition. Examples of local statements from Baltimore and Seattle can be viewed at www.cwpe.org/issues/health_html/contraceptives/index.html.
- **Collect information and create a CRACK PACK.** You can begin by starting a collection of "opposition to CRACK" literature. This information will help lots! Use it to build your own arguments to oppose CRACK. A CRACK PACK is a collection of factsheets and articles with critical information and arguments that oppose CRACK from a variety of perspectives. It can include your own local statement opposing CRACK; statements of opposition from other organizations; film referrals that build your arguments on issues such as failure of U.S. drug policy or the correlation between childhood sexual and physical violence and drug use (available upon request from info@caraseattle.org); opposition stickers, and all kinds of juicy bits of info that support your movement. Here is list of some materials you could include. All are available upon request from info@cwpe.org.

"Opposition to Coercion in Family Planning Decision Making," a policy statement specifically about CRACK from the American Public Health Association.

"*Treatment, Not Sterilization is the Way to Help Addicted Moms*," by Lynn M. Paltrow and Robert Newman. Article originally appeared in *The Houston Chronicle*, Sunday January 30, 2000, p. 4C.

"*Fact Sheet on Positive Prevention/CRACK (Children Requiring A Caring Community)*," by Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA) and the Black People's Project (BPP).

"*Cracking Open CRACK: Unethical Sterilization Movement Gains Momentum*," by Judith M. Scully. Different Takes (A Publication of the Population and Development Program at Hampshire College) No. 2, Spring 2000

"*Research Brief: Cocaine and Pregnancy*," by Phillip Coffin, Drug Policy Alliance (formerly the Lindesmith Center). January 1996.

"*The CRACK Program: Discriminatory, Unethical, Ineffective, and Bad Public Policy*," by the Washington, DC-based Ad Hoc Coalition Opposing the CRACK Program. (This factsheet is intended for an audience of policy-makers and legislators). Fall 2000.

"*Comments on CRACK: Discrimination in Disguise*," by Shelia Clark, National Black Women's Health Project. Sister Ink, Vol. 1, No. 7, Fall 1999.

- **Launch a Counter Gorilla Campaign:**

- You Can Contact, Collaborate. Once you find that CRACK has come to your neighborhood or city and have prepared to establish a grassroots base, the next step should be contacting and visiting organizations that serve the people whose communities are targeted by CRACK. Distribute CRACK PACKS, ask community leaders and organization heads to sign on to your local statement of opposition to CRACK, Start dialogs with everyone about how CRACK impacts the people they serve and about CRACK's coercive sterilization tactics. Locate points of overlap with the intersecting issues of racism, sexual and physical violence, disabilities, poverty, and the historical targeting of marginalized communities. Here are some great places to start:

Local drug treatment services and Needle Exchanges

Local public health department

Homeless shelters

Shelters that provide services for sex workers

Welfare Rights Advocates

Disability Rights Advocates

Youth Liberation collectives

Local reproductive health service-providers

White Supremacist Watchdog Organizations/Coalitions (where possible)

Human Rights Organizations

- **Circulate a press release on your statement and local opposition to CRACK to area media and press.** Get to the press early and make sure they write a story from your perspective.
- **Don't let any articles on CRACK in local media go unanswered.** Make sure that the public gets both sides of the story. Write letters to the editors and Op Eds for your local newspapers.
- **Show up at CRACK's press conference.** Let the press know that there are opposing voices in your community.
- **Join an anti-CRACK listserv to get timely action alerts and new information:** Join by sending a message to: listserv@hermes.circ.gwu.edu. Write: "subscribe crack firstname lastname" in the body of the message and send!

To post a message to all, send it to: crack@hermes.circ.gwu.edu
- **Keep a Barbara Harris Watch.** Strategize to counter Barbara Harris, founder of CRACK, at her speaking venues by writing letters to urge conference planners to provide opposing viewpoints, and by protesting CRACK at these events.
- **Remove all and any CRACK ads or flyers.** CRACK is more likely to place their ads and flyers on public spaces like lamp posts, bus stops, on the store front of drug treatment centers, needles exchanges, homeless shelters, public hospitals that serve a majority of poor clients.
- **Create anti-CRACK stickers** and stick them directly on CRACK propaganda in your neighborhood. Messages like "DON'T let CRACK convince you that your children have no value" and "CRACK is rooted in racism" seem to get a lot of people's attention.
- **Sponsor a conversation** or "tea party" so that you can invite some of your friends or other folks who may be open to hearing why it is critical to oppose CRACK over for some information and strategy discussions. These are intimate community discussions and a great tool for getting to know more folks in your community.
- **Organize a sidewalk chalk campaign** down some popular city or neighborhood streets with points on why it is critical to oppose CRACK.
- **Support Funding** for mental health programs, drug treatment, and services to poor women.
- **Advocate for drug treatment programs** for pregnant women and for the inclusion in prenatal care.