

Prevention with Positives: Examples of Formative Research and Programs

Planning for prevention with positives: Formative research

In implementing prevention services for HIV+ persons, many communities have found it important to spend time on formative research and community assessment to guide their decision-making in creating culturally competent and effective interventions.

Examples of formative research activities conducted by California providers to date as they develop prevention with positives services include:

- Conducting focus groups, individual interviews, and community forums with HIV+ members of potential target populations such as young MSM, MSM of color, heterosexual men of color, substance abusers, women, and transgendered persons.
- Conducting focus groups, individual interviews, and round-table discussions between prevention and care providers.
- Conducting mail-based surveys of target populations and prevention and care providers.

HIV+ participants from multiple populations involved in formative research activities have reported prevention needs in the following areas:

- HIV treatment education workshops
- Community-building activities for specific groups (for example, HIV+ Latino MSM, HIV+ African-American MSM, or HIV+ youth)
- General health and wellness support delivered in individual or small-group settings (nutrition information, buddy systems to encourage exercise, information on alternative therapies, stress reduction strategies)
- Substance abuse services that are sensitive to the needs of HIV+ persons
- Information and support for sero-discordant couples
- Greater availability of mental health services
- Peer-led support and information groups
- Skills-building workshops for positives on:
 - How to date
 - How to communicate with partners
 - How to negotiate safer sex
 - How to disclose HIV status
- Individual and/or group counseling focused on contextual factors that can influence risk such as
 - Poverty, racism, internalized and externalized homophobia
 - Impact of HIV+ status on sexual and cultural identity
 - Family stresses
 - Financial pressures (including money management)

Work-related stressors (managing medications and/or side effects at work; disclosure issues; back-to-work issues)

Domestic violence

Incarceration issues

- Interventions that focus on relationship dynamics such as controlling sexual situations and communicating effectively with sexual partners
- Telephone and/or web-based support for HIV+ persons in rural areas or for those who aren't comfortable in face-to-face settings
- Both peer and professional support in dealing with sexual compulsivity/sex addiction

More information on formative research in California communities:

AIDS Partnership California (APC), a program of Northern California Grantmakers, funded seven agencies to conduct formative research on what HIV+ people of color want and need in an HIV prevention program. Some of their findings are among those listed above. A final summary of formative research efforts to date will soon appear on their website at www.aidspartnershipca.org

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Program Examples

Please note that this is not meant to be a comprehensive list of all programs focused on prevention with positives. It is meant to offer current examples of several types of interventions. In addition, prevention with positives is an area that has not yet developed a large body of evaluated research. Some of the following examples have been evaluated; some are in the process of being evaluated. All are offered as illustrations of possible approaches and are not 'best practices' recommendations.

Short-term group intervention

Center for AIDS Intervention Research, Medical College of Wisconsin

Five-session group offered to multiple HIV+ target populations at two community-based organizations. Grounded in Social Cognitive Theory and framed as managing stress related to HIV disclosure and practicing safer sexual behavior. Delivered by community-based paraprofessionals and mental health counselors. Sessions emphasized building behavioral skills, enhancing self-efficacy for practicing risk reduction behaviors, promoting intentions to change risk behaviors, and developing strategies for behavior change.

Note: Intervention manuals from this project are available upon request.

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Supporting client disclosure of HIV status

California STD/HIV Prevention Training Center

A skills-based training that explores the many issues surrounding client HIV status disclosure and discusses strategies for supporting this in a number of different settings. Participants learn a five-step process that supports HIV+ clients in disclosing their HIV status others in a variety of relationships. The course also promotes safer sex strategies for clients, regardless of disclosure.

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Integration of psychotherapy, social events, and community building

Asian & Pacific Islander Wellness Center, San Francisco

Multi-faceted intervention that includes *social support and community building* (monthly theme-based events, annual events), a *general health and wellness program* (nutrition and exercise information and support), *treatment education workshops* (Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced), *group psychotherapy* (a series of three 6 to 8-week sessions offering support and problem-solving skills), and *individual psychotherapy*.

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Three-part intervention for HIV+ African-American MSM

AIDS Project of the East Bay, Alameda

Early focus on *identifying and recruiting HIV-positive African-American MSM* through outreach at popular target population venues, establishing linkages with HIV testing programs, and developing peer-to-peer recruitment protocols. Later offered *group level activities* via weekly drop-in education and social support (peer-led) groups as well as *community social events* and a *weekend retreat*.

Contact: Bongane Nyathi
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Skills-building workshops for HIV+ monolingual Latino MSM

Bienestar Human Services, Los Angeles

Five-session workshop series (2 series for couples and 3 for singles) facilitated by a peer counselor and a prevention case manager. Topics include ethnic, sexual orientation, and sexual roles, disclosure and coming out issues, the interplay of desire, passion, and guilt, relationships and communication, and finally community action steps and leadership development. Workshop participants are invited to a "graduation" weekend retreat.

Contact: Victor Martinez
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Prevention integrated with HIV care and treatment

California Office of AIDS, Early Intervention Program

The Early Intervention Program is located in 35 California counties. It was established in 1987 with the dual goals of interrupting the transmission of HIV and prolonging the health and productivity of HIV-infected persons. EIP clients receive transmission risk reduction counseling, medical treatment, case management, psychosocial assessment, and health education delivered in a team-based setting. Prevention interventions include prevention case management, individual or group work, HIV status disclosure support, and interventions with HIV- partners.

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Social Marketing

HIV Stops With Me: Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston

Campaign using HIV+ spokesmodels, a website, newspaper and magazine ads, postcards, billboards and transit media, and (in one site) a television commercial aired during primetime and available online. All are centered around seven real HIV+ people talking about their commitment to and strategies for ending the epidemic. The overall goal of the campaign is to support HIV+ men, women and transgenders in their efforts to be leaders in HIV prevention.

Website: <http://www.hivstopswithme.com>

Internet chatroom-based intervention

AIDS Project of the Ozarks

In an effort to reach HIV+ persons in isolated rural areas or persons reluctant to engage in face-to-face interventions, *volunteer educators are placed in Internet chat rooms*. Some educators include 'hot button' words such as 'bareback', 'X', etc. in their profiles to encourage others online to contact them about prevention issues.

Contact: Jim House
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Group intervention for HIV+ women in non-urban communities

Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University

Four group sessions framed around two main issues: enhancing quality of life and reducing unsafe sex among participants. Sessions concentrated on gender pride, self-worth, emotion-focused coping skills, risk reduction, sexual negotiation skills, and building healthy relationships.

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HIV+ Injection Drug Users

Center for AIDS Prevention Studies, San Francisco

INSPIRE (Interventions for SeroPositive IDUs: Research & Evaluation) is a *behavioral intervention for intravenous drug users (IDUs) to lower sexual and drug use risk, increase access to care, and increase adherence to HAART regimens.*

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HIV+ Jail Inmates: Pre- and post-release

The Homebase Project, San Francisco

As part of a CDC-funded initiative administered by the California Office of AIDS, this *jail-based project focuses on HIV+ inmates, with goals of increasing post-release use of medical and social services, increasing post-release HIV medication adherence, decreasing post-release HIV risk behaviors, and reducing recidivism.* A combination of medical and psychiatric services as well as substance abuse counseling, money management counseling, transitional housing referrals, and other adjunctive services are provided.

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Linking HIV+ Teens to Care

UCLA Center for HIV Identification, Prevention, and Treatment Services

TLC (Teens Linked to Care) is an NIMH-funded study of an intervention designed to *change the risk behavior of youth living with HIV.* Based on interviews with young people in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York, a three-module intervention was designed, with each module consisting of several group sessions. Module 1 sessions focus on "staying healthy", module 2 sessions focus on "acting safe", and Module 3 sessions focus on quality of life issues.

Intervention manuals are available at <http://chipts.ucla.edu>

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LIFE (Learning Immune Function Enhancement)

Shanti San Francisco

LIFE is a *16-week group utilizing a "biopsychosocial" approach that looks at internal psychological responses and external social factors that affect immunity.*

During the course of the program participants learn how these issues affect the reduction of risky behavior, optimal functioning of the immune system, and adherence to health routines. The L.I.F.E. Program is also available through online participation at <http://www.shanti.org>

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Prevention for HIV Infected Persons Project (PHIPP)

Multi-site, National Demonstration Project

PHIPP is a five-year, CDC-funded demonstration project focused on prevention needs for people who are HIV+. Project goals include increasing the number of high risk individuals who know their status, providing prevention services for those who are HIV infected, linking HIV+ persons with care, and developing models for technology transfer from PHIPP to health departments, community planning groups, and community based organizations. Five health departments were selected to implement PHIPP, as summarized below.

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PHIPP: California

The State of California's Office of AIDS developed two programs funded by PHIPP: One focused on achieving behavior change for HIV+ individuals at high risk for HIV transmission (HIV Transmission Prevention Project, or HTPP), and another focused on bringing HIV+ persons of color into prevention and care services (The Bridge Project).

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HIV Transmission Prevention Project

The HIV Transmission Prevention Project (HTPP) consists of *intensive risk reduction counseling offered to HIV+ individuals enrolled in Early Intervention Program (EIP) sites who are identified as being at high risk for HIV transmission* and who require more than EIP's standard risk reduction interventions (see earlier EIP program description) to achieve behavior change.

The Bridge Project

Located in EIP sites in communities of color, the Bridge Project *links HIV+ persons of color to prevention and care services via peer counselors trained as treatment educators*. Bridge workers assist clients in identifying and overcoming barriers to entering and remaining in care, and also reach and re-engage individuals who have been previously lost to care in EIP.

PHIPP: Los Angeles

The Los Angeles PHIPP offers a multi-site approach to prevention with positives, combining outreach, testing and counseling, linkage to prevention and care services, and community-based interventions.

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AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA) is developing a Wellness for Positives program focusing on individuals who have been living with HIV for longer than two years, addressing topics such as disclosure of status, meeting ongoing health care needs, and meeting basic needs.

Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Center is working on the Positive Images Program, including linkage to prevention and care services, telephone chat line, website, individual counseling, support group, and workshops.

AIDS Healthcare Foundation offers prevention services for partners of HIV+ persons.

Tarzana Treatment Center provides prevention services to individuals who have been HIV+ for less than two years and who are in substance abuse treatment.

PHIPP: Maryland

Maryland has worked closely with the city of Baltimore to develop PHIPP programs in order to target high-risk communities, particularly those with high HIV incidence based on injection drug use.

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Through the UJIMA Project, a van offering HIV/STD counseling and testing visits high-risk neighborhoods. Outreach workers establish a connection with potential clients and over time, attempt to link them to prevention case management and other appropriate services.

Maryland has also developed PHIPP-based programs that work within correctional facilities in suburban Washington D.C, in order to provide inmates with HIV counseling and testing and link them with post-release services such as prevention case management.

PHIPP: San Francisco

San Francisco's PHIPP programs include the social marketing campaign described earlier and aimed at changing attitudes HIV+ persons have about their role in the epidemic (see above for information on *HIV Stops With Me*).

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In addition to the social marketing campaign, San Francisco's PHIPP includes the University of California San Francisco's *AIDS Health Project* (AHP), which has developed a *provider training designed to increase the prevention skills of individuals that provide services to HIV+ people*.

Other San Francisco PHIPP programs include a *series of group interventions* run through the *Stop AIDS Project* that seeks to *reduce risky behaviors among gay and bisexual men through workshops, social events, community forums, and weekend seminars*.

PHIPP: Wisconsin

Wisconsin's PHIPP has focused their prevention with positives efforts within three initiatives:

Prevention Case Management (PCM) *assists those living with HIV infection as well as those at high risk of contracting HIV to make behavior changes to reduce likelihood of further transmission.*

Outreach Counseling, Testing, and Referral (CTR) *targeted to African-Americans and Latinos* in southeastern Wisconsin, enables people to know their serostatus and helps those living with HIV access treatment and services.

Circle of Friends: Gay Men of Color Social Networks Initiative, provides a *social-network approach to testing* in the Milwaukee area, *geared to increase the number of African American MSM who are aware of their HIV serostatus* and linked to appropriate prevention and care services.

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