

PROVIDERS AND FAITH- BASED GROUP: WORKING TOGETHER TOWARDS SUCCESS

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INTRODUCTION

- ✘ Religion and spirituality serves a central role in the lives of people who are HIV positive and living with other health conditions (Ammerman et al., 2002; Baskin, Resnicow, & Campbell, 2001; Demark-Wahnefried et al., 2000; Fitzgibbon et al., 2005).
- ✘ Churches and FBOs provide tangible and spiritual resources (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990).
- ✘ Churches and FBOs reach 'hard-to-reach' and marginalized members in the community (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990).
- ✘ The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has called on religious leaders to aid in the fight against HIV (CDC, 2007).
- ✘ There are some accounts of positive responses beginning in the early 1980s of churches and FBOs (Weatherford & Weatherford, 1998).
- ✘ There is a need for innovative evidence-based programs to address this health crisis.

PURPOSE

- ✘ To identify the factors that enhance or inhibit the ability of faith leaders to respond to the HIV/AIDS prevention needs of “communities in crisis”.
- ✘ To empirically investigate the processes used to develop HIV/AIDS-related education and prevention services by churches and FBOs.

PROCEDURE

- ✘ Qualitative multiple-case study design
- ✘ Questions reviewed by a committee of experts
- ✘ Conducted pilot study
- ✘ 22 participants (Ministers and Ministry/Health Directors)
- ✘ Completed in-depth interviews
- ✘ Conducted observations and review of case documents
- ✘ 14 churches located in NY, NJ, and PA

PARTICIPANTS

- ✘ College educated or doctoral training (PhD, Doctorate of Ministry)
- ✘ All, but 2 ministers personally affected by HIV/AIDS
- ✘ All of the ministry leaders involved because of professional experience (nurses, medical doctors, health educators)
- ✘ “Forward-thinking” churches and leaders - involved in social justice and social outreach

HIV/AIDS-RELATED ACTIVITIES

| Activity | Number of churches ever offered (n=14) |
|--|--|
| Distribution of literature | 14 |
| HIV/AIDS education (i.e. seminar, workshop, conference) | 14 |
| HIV/AIDS testing | 7 |
| HIV/AIDS support group | 1 |
| HIV/AIDS referral for HIV testing | 1 |
| On-site needle/syringe exchange | 1 |
| Condom distribution | 2 |
| Pastor present info from pulpit | 14 |
| Other (financial donations, community walk, health fair, prayer breakfast) | 14 |

ROLE OF THE CHURCH

- ✘ Research Question: What is the role of the church/FBOs in the fight against HIV/AIDS?
 - + Compassion and support
 - + Safe Haven
 - + Provide knowledge and education
 - + Dispel myths
 - + ABC approach
 - + Teach and preach abstinence
 - + Encourage HIV testing

BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES

- ✘ Research Question: What are the barriers and challenges that affect churches and FBOs?
 - + Stigma
 - + Homosexuality
 - + Human sexuality
 - + Apathy/Lack of urgency

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✘ Research Question: What recommendations would you make in partnering with health professionals?
 - + Respect the values of the church
 - + Build rapport
 - + Long-term commitment
 - + Church culture
 - + Avoid criticizing the church
 - + Use multiple strategies
 - + Rely on leaders within the church
 - + Involve the church in planning and implementing programs
 - + Provide more education and training
 - + Conduct needs assessments
 - + Discuss HIV-related stigma in the church

TAKE HOME MESSAGE

- ✘ Churches/FBOs are concerned about the health and well-being of its members and the larger community.
- ✘ Churches/FBOs are engaged in HIV/AIDS-related activities.
- ✘ Churches/FBOs can be used effectively to inform, educate, and to encourage testing and treatment in the community.
- ✘ Churches/FBOs are under-utilized and under-funded institutions for HIV/AIDS interventions.

TAKE HOME MESSAGE

- ✘ Ministers and ministry leaders are agents of change within the church.
- ✘ Volunteer and paid staff are available to assist with programs.
- ✘ The church is in a strategic position to reach hard-to-reach and marginalized members in the community.
- ✘ Lay health leaders are essential to implementing health programs in the church.

FURTHER DISCUSSION

- ✘ Should we mobilize other faith-based groups in addressing HIV/AIDS?
- ✘ What are expectations of churches and FBOs in regards to HIV/AIDS prevention?
 - + Are these expectations realistic?
- ✘ What are some of the things that churches/FBOs could do differently?
- ✘ How can we work together for a common cause?