

# THE FUTURE IS OURS



## The Future Is Ours (FIO) HIV Risk Reduction Intervention Fact Sheet

### The Future Is Ours (FIO)

**FIO** is an eight-session HIV prevention intervention delivered to high-risk heterosexual women in a group setting. **FIO** is guided by three major theories, Modified AIDS Risk Reduction Model (M-ARRM), Social Learning Theory, and Gender Theory. The goal of **FIO** is to empower women to reduce unsafe sexual encounters by increasing the use of male and female condoms and alternative protection strategies including sex without penetration, getting tested for HIV jointly with a partner along with mutual monogamy and a safety agreement, deciding to be celibate, and refusing unsafe sex or deciding to not get involved with a partner who will not use condoms.

### Target Population

**FIO** is a gender-specific HIV/STD risk reduction intervention designed for heterosexually active, at-risk women of diverse ethnicities (African-American/Black, Caribbean, Latina, White), ages 18 to 30, who are not injection drug users, are HIV-negative or of unknown status, are not pregnant or trying to become pregnant, and who live in communities where rates of HIV and other STDs are high.

### Research Results

In the original research, **FIO** was found to be effective in reducing unprotected vaginal and anal intercourse in both the short-term (one month after the intervention) and long-term (12 months after the intervention). This included both increasing use of male and female condoms and reducing the number of sexual contacts.<sup>1</sup>

### The FIO Intervention Package Development

Replicating Effective Programs (REP) is a CDC-initiated project that identifies HIV/AIDS prevention interventions with demonstrated evidence of effectiveness. REP supports the original researchers in developing a user-friendly package of materials designed for prevention providers. **FIO** is one of the REP interventions and is the product of extensive collaboration among researchers, a community advisory board, and other community agencies. The package has been field tested in several community agencies and clinics across the United States by non-research staff.

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<sup>1</sup> Ehrhardt, A. A., Exner, T. M., Hoffman, S., Silberman, I., Leu, C-S., Miller, S., & Levin, B. (2002). A gender-specific HIV/STD risk reduction intervention for women in a health care setting: short- and long-term results of a randomized clinical trial. *AIDS Care*, 14(2), 147-161.

## **FIO Core Elements**

- Enable women to personalize their risk for HIV and other STDs and identify gender-related barriers to safer sex
- Encourage women to prioritize safer sex
- Reinforce women's sexual and relationship rights
- Affirm a positive view of women's sexuality and safer sex
- Emphasize that women have choices in how to protect themselves
- Provide accurate information about HIV/STD risk and testing
- Build skills for safer sex
- Teach women how to address negative reactions and resistance to safer sex, to recognize and deal with relationship violence and other forms of abuse

## **FIO Key Characteristics**

The Key Characteristics of FIO are:

- Project FIO was designed for HIV-negative, young adult (18-30) women who are living in high HIV-prevalence, urban neighborhoods and attending a clinic for family planning services.
- Project FIO was designed for ethnically diverse women. The research population was 72% Black (African American or Caribbean), 17% Latina, and 11% white and other ethnicities. The effect of the intervention did not differ among groups.

## **Target Audience:**

- Young women (18-30 years)
- Ethnically diverse women
- At-risk women who have sex with men
- Women living in communities where rates of HIV and other STDs are high

## **Session Structure and Logistics:**

- Create groups of eight to twelve women to build group cohesion and support
- Conduct sessions in an enclosed space that is conducive to confidentiality, but large enough to allow the participants to move around
- Conduct sessions once a week to allow women time to practice the material

## **Techniques and Tools:**

- Use a variety of tools for skill-building including demonstration, practice, discussions, and goal setting
- Use a variety of techniques to help women change their thoughts including sharing of personal experiences, letter writing, the Feeling Thermometer and relaxation
- Build group cohesion through "Thanks" Chips which allow participants to get and give positive reinforcement
- Use multi-cultural role-plays to stimulate discussion

## **Package Contents:**

- Program Manager Guide
- Facilitators Guide with accompanying video
- Starter Kit with an Implementation Plan
- Technical Assistance Guide
- Marketing Brochure

## **Intervention Training**

Program staff members from agencies interested in adopting *FIO* should use the contact information that is provided to obtain details on the availability of training and resources required to receive training on the intervention.

## **Technical Assistance**

A technical assistance manual is provided. Additional information regarding TA may be obtained from the listed FIO contact.

**For More Information on the *FIO* Project Package**

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