

A Single Session, Group-level HIV Prevention Intervention for African American Women

The Research

The Science Behind the Package

Healthy Love is a single session, evidence-based, safer sex intervention for African American women based on the Health Belief Model and Social Cognitive Theory. The goals of **Healthy Love** are to reduce unprotected sex with male partners and the number of sex partners; as well as to increase sexual abstinence, consistent use of condoms and other protective barriers, and the number of women who get tested for HIV and receive their test results. The intervention achieves these goals by improving participants' HIV/AIDS-related knowledge, as well as positive attitudes about sex and sexuality; and increasing condom use/safer sex skills and individuals' self-efficacy.

Target Population

Healthy Love is designed for African American women, 18 years of age and older, who are not pregnant or intending on becoming pregnant in the next 6 months. Even though Healthy Love was only tested with African American women, the intervention may also be tailored for women of other race/ethnicities and groups of women with mixed ethnicities.

Intervention

Healthy Love is a 3-4 hour intervention that consists of 12 activities (with an opening and closing) that comprise three intervention categories: Setting the Tone, The Facts, and Safer Sex. Two culturally competent female facilitators deliver the intervention to groups of women ranging from 5-14 participants in an informal setting of the group's choosing (must provide a confidential and conducive learning environment). **Healthy Love** provides participants with HIV/STD-related facts, a personalized risk assessment, condom negotiation techniques, and multiple condom use skills-building activities delivered in a fun, sex-positive environment. The intervention activities include discussions, demonstrations, role plays, and skills-building opportunities. Safer sex kits (containing condoms, dental dams, personal lubricants and educational materials) as well as an optional HIV testing opportunity are provided to participants at the end of the interactive session.

Research Results

Behavioral assessments conducted at baseline and at 3- and 6-months follow-ups showed that among intervention participants:

- Consistent condom use at last vaginal, anal, or oral sex with any male partner increased (significant findings at 3- and 6-month follow-up)
- Women tested for HIV and receiving test results increased (significant finding at 6-month follow-up)
- **Healthy Love** participants had greater improvements in condom use self-efficacy, attitudes about condom use, and HIV knowledge than comparison participants.

For Details on the Research Design

Diallo, D. D., Moore, T. W., Ngalame, P. M., White, L. D., Herbst, J. H., & Painter, T. M. (2010). Efficacy of a single-session HIV prevention intervention for black women: A group randomized controlled trial. *AIDS and Behavior*, 14, 518-529.

The Package Developed from Science

CDC's Replicating Effective Programs (REP) Project works with researchers to translate evidence-based HIV/AIDS prevention intervention protocols into a package of user-friendly materials for use by prevention providers in the field. The foundation of the REP **Healthy Love** intervention package is the Implementation Manual (IM) which provides how-to guidance on all aspects of implementation. Reviewed by a community advisory board and field tested with HIV prevention service providers in the field (non-research staff trained to deliver the intervention), REP assessed the utility of the IM and refined all intervention package products based on successes/challenges, and lessons learned experienced during pilot and field testing. Thus, the **Healthy Love** intervention package is based on the original research and supplemented by information gathered through the replication process to develop a set of user-friendly products.

Core Elements

Core elements are aspects of the intervention that must be maintained without alteration by implementing agencies in order to achieve the same outcomes as the intervention research.

Content Core Elements

1. Provide basic HIV/AIDS and STD education.
2. Provide basic facts about condoms and other safer sex tools.
3. Provide information on correct steps for male and female condom application and condom negotiation techniques.

Pedagogical Core Elements

4. Normalize attitudes about sex and sexuality through open communication to reduce sexual stigma.
5. Conduct a personal risk assessment to increase participants' self-awareness of personal risk behaviors.
6. Provide demonstrations and practice opportunities to build skills for correct condom use.

Implementation Core Elements

7. Implement **Healthy Love** with a skilled group facilitator who: 1.) is the same gender as the target population; 2.) possesses a cultural understanding of and can relate to the group receiving the intervention; 3.) has training and experience in HIV/AIDS and STD prevention, sexual/reproductive health, and health education; 4.) can demonstrate use of safer sex materials and tools and facilitate role-plays and skills practice taught in **Healthy Love**; 5.) is engaging, energetic, and fun; and 6.) can create a safe, culturally appropriate, and nonjudgmental environment to facilitate open discussions about sex and sexuality.

Package Contents

The **Healthy Love** package is comprised of an intervention Starter Kit, Implementation Manual, and Technical Assistance Guide.

For More Information on the **Healthy Love** Intervention Package

To find out more about package availability and future trainings, please visit <http://effectiveinterventions.org>.