

THE MPOWERMENT PROJECT

A Community-Level HIV Prevention Intervention for Young Gay, Bisexual, and other Men Who Have Sex With Men (YGBMSM) FACT SHEET

Program Overview

The Mpowerment Project was developed for YGBMSM ages 18-29. It focuses on increasing HIV testing; decreasing sexual risk behavior among HIV-positive (i.e., prevention with positives), HIV-negative, and YGBMSM who do not know their HIV-status; and distributing condoms and lubricant. The intervention is run by a core group of 12-20 young men from the community and paid staff. The program is based on seven guiding principles which are used for adapting the intervention to diverse populations and settings, and relies on the following set of six integrated core elements:

- *Core Group:* The intervention is run by a Core Group of 12-20 YGBMSM who, along with other volunteers, design and carry out all project activities.
- *Formal Outreach:* Teams of YGBMSM go to locations frequented by other young men to discuss and promote frequent HIV testing and safer sex, distribute condoms and lubricants, and deliver appealing literature on testing and HIV risk reduction. Additionally, the team creates their own social events (e.g., Sunday dinners, video parties, picnics, and discussion groups) to attract YGBMSM, in order to promote frequent HIV testing and safer sex, to build community, and to recruit YGBMSM to M-groups.
- *M-groups:* These peer-led, 3-hour meetings of 8-10 YGBMSM discuss factors contributing to infrequent or no HIV testing and unsafe sex among the men (e.g., increasing motivation for frequent HIV testing, meeting partners online, beliefs that safer sex is not enjoyable, and poor sexual communication skills). Through skills-building exercises, the men practice safer

sex negotiation and correct condom use skills. Participants receive free condoms and lubricant and are trained to conduct informal outreach.

- *Informal Outreach:* Informal outreach consists of YGBMSM discussing the need for frequent HIV testing and safer sex with their friends in their social networks, both verbally and through texting messages to friends.
- *Ongoing Publicity Campaign:* The campaign attracts men to the project by word of mouth and publicity-related outreach at bars/clubs, and through online methods.
- *Project Space:* Ideally, the project has its own physical space where most social events and meetings are held and which serves as a drop-in center where YGBMSM can meet and socialize during specified hours.

Target Population

The Mpowerment project targets YGBMSM (ages 18-29).

Program Materials

- . Program implementation manual
- . M-group facilitator guides
- . Facilitator training video

All materials are available online at www.mpowerment.com

Research Results

The Mpowerment Project yielded the following results in the young gay men who participated:

- . Participants significantly decreased their

rates of unprotected anal intercourse.

For More Information on the Mpowerment Project:

To obtain additional information about the technical assistance system and/or to get your name on a list for a future training, **please visit our website**

www.effectiveinterventions.org. If you do not have access to the web, you may also call (866) 532-9565 or email interventions@danya.com.

Kegeles, S.M., Hays, R.B., Coates, T.J. (1996). The Mpowerment Project: A Community-level HIV Prevention Intervention for Young Gay Men. *American Journal of Public Health*, 86 (8), 1129 – 1136.

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