

SEPA (SALUD/HEALTH, EDUCACION/ EDUCATION, PREVENCIÓN/PREVENTION, AUTOCUIDADO/SELF-CARE)

A small group-level intervention for heterosexually active Hispanic women/Latinas FACT SHEET

Program Overview

SEPA is an evidence-based, culturally tailored HIV/AIDS behavior change intervention for heterosexually active Hispanic women/Latinas between the ages of 18 and 44 at risk for HIV and STD infection due to unprotected sex with male partners. *SEPA* is based on Social Cognitive Theory which posits that behavior is influenced by outcome expectancies, interaction with the environment, observation, and self-efficacy. Since individuals who believe they have the capability to perform an action are more likely to engage in the action, *SEPA* employs demonstrations, role play, and other skills-building exercises to enhance the self-efficacy of Hispanic women/Latinas in condom use, condom negotiation, and partner communication.

Core Elements

Provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information to sexually active women at risk of acquiring HIV from unprotected sex with male partners in interactive, small group sessions that focus on:

- HIV and STD transmission and prevention
- Human sexuality and male and female anatomy
- Interpersonal communications
- Relationship violence
- Incorporate skill-building activities into sessions to enhance women's self-efficacy for safer sex behaviors, including demonstrations and practice exercises on male and female condom use and role plays on assertive communication with sex partners, including condom negotiation.

- Build self-efficacy and knowledge for safer sex behaviors, and improved partner communication, and violence management through homework exercises and the sharing of personal experiences.
- Show a culturally appropriate video during the first session that portrays the effects of HIV and AIDS on members of the target population and discuss what is communicated about the impact of HIV and AIDS on the community, including impact on families and women.
- Use a female facilitator who speaks and understands the language of participants. The facilitator is not a peer of participants but someone who is an experienced professional in health education, disease prevention, and risk reduction.
- Ask participants to write thank you notes to fellow participants and pledge their commitment to community health during the final session. Present a certificate to each participant who attends at least half of the sessions.
- Conduct no more than two sessions each week.

Target Population

SEPA was developed for Hispanic women/Latinas between the ages of 18 and 44 who are at risk for HIV and STD infection because of unprotected sex. Although the intervention's efficacy trial included Mexican and Puerto Rican women, researchers believe *SEPA* can be of benefit to at-risk women of diverse races and ethnicity if their prevention needs can be addressed by *SEPA's* activities. This means that *SEPA* can be adapted for women who are not Hispanic or Latino if they are in need of information on HIV and STD prevention and domestic

violence and if they need to strengthen their skills in communication with male partners, condom use, and condom negotiation. Any adaptation must maintain *SEPA*'s core elements.

Program Materials

- Implementation Manual, including: Monitoring and Evaluation Guide, Quality Assurance Guide, Technical Assistance Guide
- Facilitators Guide (curriculum for implementing SEPA)
- Participant Workbook
- "Mi Hermano" video
- CD containing electronic copies of intervention materials

Research Results

Peragallo N, DeForge B, O'Campo P, Lee S, Kim Y, Cianelli R, & Ferrer L. (2005). A randomized clinical trial of an HIV-risk reduction intervention among low income Latina women. *Nursing Research*, 54(2), 108-118.

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SEPA produced significant outcomes among low-income Mexican and Puerto Rican women between the ages of 18 and 44 in Chicago where the intervention was tested between 1999 and 2001. Compared to members of the control group, *SEPA* participants showed significant increases in:

- HIV knowledge
- Communication with partners about HIV issues
- Risk-reduction behavioral intentions
- Condom use

In addition, *SEPA* participants had significant decreases in perceived barriers to condom use.

To obtain additional information about SEPA, visit the www.effectiveinterventions.org website. If you do not have access to the web, you may also call 866.532.9565, or email interventions@danya.com.