

THE MPOWERMENT PROJECT

A Community-Level HIV Prevention Intervention for Young Gay Men FACT SHEET

Program Overview

The Mpowerment Project was developed by and for young gay men ages 18-29. The intervention is run by a core group of 10-15 young gay men from the community and paid staff. The young gay men, along with other volunteers, design and carry out all project activities. 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 young men can meet and socialize during specified hours. The program relies on a set of four integrated activities:

- *Formal Outreach:* Teams of young gay men go to locations frequented by young gay men to discuss and promote safer sex, deliver appealing informational literature on HIV risk reduction, and distribute condoms. Additionally, the team creates their own social events (e.g., dances, video parties, picnics, and discussion groups) to attract young gay men and to promote safer sex.
- *M-groups:* These peer-led, 2-3 hour meetings of 8-10 young gay men discuss factors contributing to unsafe sex among the men (e.g., misconceptions about safer sex, 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 young men discussing safer sex with their friends.
- *Ongoing Publicity Campaign:* The campaign attracts men to the project by word of mouth and through articles and advertisements in gay newspapers.

Core Elements

The core elements of Mpowerment include:

- Recruiting a core group of young gay men to design and carry out project activities
- Establishing a project space where many of the project activities can be held
- Conducting entertaining, venue-based (e.g., bars, community events) outreach by teams of young gay men
- Sponsoring social events to promote community-building among young gay men.
- Convening peer-led, one-time discussion groups.
- Conducting a publicity campaign about the project within the community.

Target Population

The Mpowerment project targets young gay and bisexual men (ages 18-29).

Program Materials

- Overview video of the program
- Program implementation manual
- M-group facilitator guide
- Facilitator training video

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 (800) 462-9521 or email interventions@aed.org.

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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