

Getting Started

Agency Assessment

If you are considering **Nia** as a prevention program, it is important to assess whether or not this intervention is appropriate for your agency. First, check your agency's cultural competency for implementing an intervention designed for African American men who have sex with women. Then, look at other ways in which the intervention may or may not be a good fit for your agency. One way to do this is with the checklist below.

Checklist of Appropriateness of Intervention

The purpose of this checklist is to stimulate thinking and engage key people in dialogue, so they might ask each other the right questions to determine if your agency should implement **Nia**. The checklist also provides questions agencies need to explore when thinking about adapting the intervention and making any organizational changes required to implement the intervention. This checklist is not exhaustive, so add any agency-specific questions you feel are needed.

- ★ Does **Nia** fulfill the mission of your agency?
- ★ Does your agency have the resources necessary for the intervention?
- ★ Would **Nia** serve the needs of your population?
- ★ Does **Nia** address the factors that put individuals in your target population at risk?
- ★ Will any of your agency's organizational practices change as a result of implementing **Nia**?
- ★ What type of organizational changes will need to occur?
- ★ Will implementing **Nia** change your agency's relationship with prevention and/or services agencies?
- ★ Does your target population need an intervention which deals with safer sex decision-making skills and the negotiation of safer sex practices?
- ★ How does **Nia** fit into your current prevention services?
- ★ Will **Nia** be more effective than current prevention services for the target population?
- ★ What is your agency's philosophy of prevention? What are the values, attitudes, and beliefs of your staff about prevention? What is your staff's commitment to prevention services for individuals who are at high risk for HIV?
- ★ What were your agency's prior prevention programs, and how effective were those programs?
- ★ Does your agency have the resources necessary for the intervention?

Agency Readiness Assessment

If you decide **Nia** is appropriate for your agency, you will then need to check your agency's readiness to implement the **Nia** intervention, in terms of commitment, capacity, and resources. On page 16 is a brief self-assessment form intended to help you in this process. Additional information about most topics listed can be found in this guide and/or the **Nia** package appendices; where information is not otherwise available, the form references the Program Manager's Guide. See the first column in the form for relevant document(s) and page number(s).

In general, commitment refers to an agency's resolve to assign the time, effort, and funding or other resources needed to implement the intervention. For example, if an agency wants to use a current employee as one of the **Nia** facilitators, they need to commit to assigning a large portion of that person's existing duties to a different or new employee. It is also important to have the commitment of any staff members who will impact or be impacted by the program. For example, the front desk person might have to stay late one day a week to keep the doors open for group members.

Capacity refers to the ability of the agency to add **Nia** to their current programs without damaging existing services. For example, a small agency may have only one program manager who is already working at full capacity. If that person has to spend 50 percent of his/her time on **Nia** during the start-up period, the agency may not have staffing options to deal with the program manager's other duties, even on a short-term basis.

Resources include funding, staff, space, and equipment, but it can also refer to collaborations, existing or potential. For example, if an agency does not have a group meeting space or the funds to rent one, they still might have the resources to provide this through an agreement with another organization. One of the reasons to look at resources at this point is to ensure your budget reflects the actual funds needed to implement the intervention.

Commitment, capacity, and resources will vary depending on the topic area in the assessment form. For example, the sixth topic is "access to Community Advisory Board (CAB) to review all materials for cultural sensitivity." Commitment here would refer to the agency's commitment to use their CAB for this program, the CAB members' willingness to review **Nia** materials, and, if no CAB exists, the staff commitment to spend the time and effort involved in recruiting members and setting up the board. Capacity would refer to the staff being able to find and motivate appropriate members, schedule and run meetings, and adapt materials as suggested. Resources could include a meeting space, funds or donations for snacks or other incentives, and equipment for showing **Nia** videos and movie clips.

In order to help your agency measure its readiness to implement **Nia**, please think about each item on the Agency Readiness Self-Assessment form on pages 16-18. Decide whether or not your agency has the adequate commitment, capacity, or resources needed. If so, indicate that by placing a check mark (✓) in each appropriate column. Make notes

in the “Ways to Improve Readiness” column for each topic about how you plan to build your commitment, capacity, or resources in that area.

Even if you place a check in all three columns of each question, it is possible to improve your agency’s ability to implement **Nia** with success. The CDC funds a number of training and capacity building organizations; many of these specialize in behavioral interventions like **Nia**. You can find more information and available trainings at www.cdc.gov/hiv/cba or work with your project officer or contract manager to identify the best resources for your agency.

If your agency has identified any barriers to being fully ready to implement **Nia**, the next step is to develop a plan to address each of the barriers individually. It is important that your agency look for ways to involve the community in the process of overcoming the identified barriers. Identify the many types of people and organizations that can help you make **Nia** a success with your clients; getting them to “buy in” to what you are doing is a crucial step. These people and organizations are your stakeholders. See the Securing Stakeholders’ “Buy-in” section, starting on page 34, for more information and related forms.

Another important step is to identify one or more people willing to serve as the intervention champion. Someone enthusiastic and knowledgeable about **Nia** may have the most success helping to secure “buy-in” and in building commitment, capacity, and/or resources necessary for implementation. If your agency does not have and cannot find anyone who is willing to be a champion for **Nia**, it may be a sign that this intervention is not right for your agency. For example, if your agency is having trouble finding a group facilitator, you could identify other agencies in your area that conduct small groups with a similar population. Your champion could ask each if they would be willing to collaborate with you on implementing **Nia**. If they are open to the idea, the champion can set up a meeting to discuss sharing their facilitators and what you might provide to their agency in return. You might also consider other ways to work together. These could include:

- ★ Setting up a Community Advisory Board,
- ★ Renting/borrowing a meeting space for groups,
- ★ Recruiting participants,
- ★ Conducting evaluation,
- ★ Securing incentives,
- ★ Reviewing movies for potential new clips, and
- ★ Sharing equipment.

Agency Readiness Self-Assessment

Does Our Agency Have What is Needed for Nia?	Commitment	Capacity	Resources	Ways To Improve Readiness
1. To implement the entire six hours of the Nia intervention multiple times? (Starter Kit: page 3)				
2. To complete 3 days of training on Nia ? (Starter Kit: pages 21, 46)				
3. To evaluate original videos and clips and, as needed, select and edit up to four new videos and six scenes from popular movies appropriate for target population? (Starter Kit: page 20, and Appendix G)				
4. Sufficient funds to implement Nia ? (Starter Kit: pages 19-25)				
5. Access to Program Review Panel to review all materials for appropriateness? (Appendix B)				

Agency Readiness Self-Assessment

Does Our Agency Have What is Needed for Nia?	Commitment	Capacity	Resources	Ways To Improve Readiness
6. Access to Community Advisory Board to review all materials for cultural sensitivity? (Appendix F)				
7. Access to possible recruitment venues that are frequented by men who have sex with women? (Program Manager's Guide, page 60)				
8. Access to and rapport with target population? (Starter Kit: page 44)				
9. Access to location appropriate for conducting Nia groups (large enough for up to 12 people to sit in circle, plus equipment in #10 below)? (Program Manager's Guide, pages 58-59)				
10. Access to TV/VCR or DVD player with remote, easel, easel chart paper, and markers? (Starter Kit: pages 21, 23-24)				
11. Ability to generate database for data collected, manage database, and use basic commands for aggregating and reporting data? (Program Manager's Guide, page 80)				

Agency Readiness Self-Assessment

Does Our Agency Have What is Needed for Nia?	Commitment	Capacity	Resources	Ways To Improve Readiness
12. One program manager to conduct evaluation and QA activities @ 50% full-time (FTE) during preparation stage/25% FTE during delivery of sessions? (Starter Kit: pages 20-22)				
13. One experienced, culturally competent male facilitator, preferably a peer, at 100% FTE? (Starter Kit: pages 20-22, 44, and Appendix C)				
14. One experienced, culturally competent female facilitator who is assertive and non-threatening at 100% FTE? (Starter Kit: pages 20-22, 44, and Appendix C)				
15. One or more people who are willing to serve as “Nia’s champion”? (Starter Kit: page 15)				