

WILLOW

Women Involved in Life Learning from Other Women: A Small Group-Level, Social Skills Building and Educational Intervention for Women Living with HIV/AIDS

FACT SHEET

Program Overview

The WILLOW intervention is a social-skills building and educational intervention for adult women living with HIV. It consists of 4 four-hour sessions which are delivered by two trained adult female facilitators, one of whom is a woman living with HIV. The small group sessions consist of 8–10 women living with HIV and are conducted in a community-based setting. An adaptation of the SISTA intervention, WILLOW emphasizes gender pride, informs women how to identify and maintain supportive social networks, teaches coping strategies to reduce life stressors, enhances awareness of STD transmission and HIV reinfection risk behaviors, teaches communication skills for negotiating safer sex, reinforces proper and consistent condom use, distinguishes between healthy and unhealthy relationships, and defines types of abusive relationships and their effect on a woman's ability to negotiate safer sex practices.

Core Elements

1. Conduct small group interactive sessions that are supportive and meet the goals of the intervention.
2. Implement WILLOW with heterosexual women 18-50 years of age who are living with HIV/AIDS and who have known their HIV serostatus for at least 6 months in settings that offer HIV/AIDS services to HIV-positive women.
3. Use two skilled adult female facilitators to implement WILLOW sessions, at least one of whom is a woman living with HIV/AIDS.
4. Use materials that are gender and culturally appropriate to foster self-worth and self-efficacy.
5. Train women in coping, decision making, goal setting, condom negotiation, and proper condom use skills, all of which are supportive of safer sexual behaviors.

6. Teach women about social support networks, STD and HIV reinfection, and educate women about consistent and proper condom use to support their decision making about sexual health issues.
7. Inform women about aspects of healthy and unhealthy relationships and types of abuse as related to the negotiation of safer sexual practices.
8. Use an educational and informational focus in the sessions as opposed to a counseling and services provision focus.

Target Population

WILLOW is designed for heterosexual women, regardless of race or ethnicity, living with HIV/AIDS who are 18-50 years of age and who have known their HIV serostatus for at least 6 months.

Program Materials

- Implementation Manual
- WILLOW Poster and Materials CD
- Evaluation Field Guide and Instruments

Research Results

As compared to the comparison group, women who completed the WILLOW intervention were found to be more likely to report:

- Reduced unprotected vaginal sex
- Reduced new STDs
- Increased condom use

More Information on WILLOW

For more information about WILLOW or to get your name on a list for future training, please visit our web site at www.effectiveinterventions.org. You may also call us at (800) 462-9521 or email us at interventions@aed.org.

Wingood, G. M., DiClemente, R. J., Mikhail, I., Lang, D. L., Hubbard-McCree, D., Davies, S. L., et al. (2004). A randomized controlled trial to reduce HIV transmission risk behaviors and STDs among women living with HIV: The WILLOW program. *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*, 37, S58-S67.