



Iris House

Listen-Up A Program of Iris House

The **mission of Iris House** is to provide comprehensive services and advocacy for women, families and communities infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, while simultaneously providing prevention and education services for our clients and at-risk communities. The organization's goals are to:

- Promote and support independent functioning, improve quality of life, and maintain the optimum health status of clients and their families; educate policymakers, public officials, and health and human service providers about the issues and concerns of our clients.
- Advocate for changes in policy and programs that effectively respond to the needs of those we serve.

The **goals of Listen Up**, a program of Iris House, are to educate young black heterosexual men and young men who are having sex with men (YMSM), between ages 18-24, in Substance Abuse (SA) and HIV prevention interventions. The program aims to reduce substance abuse and the transmission of HIV/AIDS among at-risk racial/ethnic minority young adults while also promoting positive communications among sexual partners to change social norms and perceptions of African American males regarding condom use.

Listen Up will engage various key leaders and members of the East/ Harlem and South Bronx communities in barber shops, community based organizations, colleges, and other community centers, through interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires, which will help achieve the following objectives:

- To create a **community needs assessment** to determine the SA and HIV prevention needs of the target population
- To **mobilize community stakeholders** including colleges and universities, public and private health organizations, service agencies and other Community Based Organizations through training and linkages to ensure quality services that are culturally competent to the target population
- To create a **strategic plan** on how *Listen Up* will be implemented within the target population

Listen Up will use **Nia**, a CDC approved DEBI, which will be implemented during a six hour, two to four session, video-based, small group-level intervention. The goals of this intervention are to educate African American men about HIV/AIDS and its effect on their community, bring groups of men together, increase motivation to reduce risks, and help men learn new skills to protect themselves and others by promoting condom use and increasing intentions to use condoms.

Nia's Target Population: African American men (ages 18 and over) who have sex with women.

Listen Up will also utilize **d-up!**, a CDC approved DEBI, that uses a community-level intervention for black men who have sex with men (MSM). *d-up!* is designed to change social norms and perceptions of black MSM regarding condom use. *d-up!* finds and enlists opinion leaders whose advice is respected and trusted by their peers. These opinion leaders are trained to change risky sexual norms in their own social networks. Opinion leaders participate in a four session training and endorse condom use in conversations with their friends and acquaintances.

d-up! Target Population: *d-up!* specifically targets black MSM who are in social networks with other black MSM.

Currently the program is seeking young men who meet the target population listed above to participate in interviews and focus groups. Incentives will be given to program participants.

For more information about Listen-Up Program and to participate in the focus groups, please contact Serge M. Jean at sjean@irishouse.org or 646-548-0100 x236.