7th ANNUAL IRIS HOUSE SUMMIT

Women As The Face of AIDS

May 4-5, 2012 • www.irishouse.org
Common Threads’ ME Circle Project

Advancing Economic Opportunities for Women Living with HIV/AIDS

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National Women and AIDS Collective

Women as the Face of AIDS
2012 Iris House Summit
May 4, 2012
Learning Objectives

• This workshop will provide attendees with the opportunity to:
  – Examine ways that women become vulnerable to HIV.
  – Examine how gender-specific programming for women living with HIV/AIDS can result in increased enhanced social empowerment and/or financial self-sufficiency.
  – Learn how their participation in business and microenterprise programming has impacted the lives of women living with HIV.
COMMON THREADS TRAINING

Creating a Community of Storytellers to Combat HIV/AIDS Stigma

“No need is more fundamentally human than our need to understand our experience.”

Just Cause Consulting (2012)
Common Threads is a three day small group HIV prevention training designed to 1) reduce HIV/AIDS related stigma and 2) increase utilization of HIV services by building the capacity of women of African descent living with HIV/AIDS to effectively share their life experiences among partners, family, friends, and community members in geographical areas where there is a high incidence of HIV within the African American/Black community.
COMMON THREADS
Program Components

1. Program Promotion
   - Alumni Referral
   - Trainer Referral
   - Presentations
   - Word-of-Mouth

2. ASO/CBO
   - Request for TA Form
   - MOU/MOA
   - Assistance w/ Participant Recruitment
   - Assistant with Participant Travel
   - Post-training Support for Participants

3. Participant Recruitment
   - Determination of Eligibility
   - Participant Briefing

4. Common Threads Training
   - Three Day Small Group Skills Building Training

5. Local Chapters
   - WOMEN
   - CT Storytelling
   - ME Circle
   - Sudden Impact

6. Common Threads Alumni
   - Nat’l Speakers Bureau
   - Nat’l Booster Sessions

7. Monitoring & Evaluation
   - Logic Model
   - Monitoring Plan
   - Evaluation Plan
   - Quality Assurance Plan
HIV Vulnerability
Questions for Discussion

• What is HIV risk?
• What is HIV vulnerability?
• What are some of the factors that can lead to HIV vulnerability?
Defining HIV Risk and Vulnerability
UNAIDS (2007)

• **Risk** is defined as the probability or likelihood that a person may become infected with HIV. Certain behaviors create, increase, and perpetuate risk. Examples include:
  
  – unprotected sex with a partner whose HIV status is unknown,
  
  – multiple sexual partnerships involving unprotected sex,
  
  – and injecting drug use with contaminated needles and syringes.
• **Vulnerability** results from a range of factors outside the control of the individual that reduce the ability of individuals and communities to avoid HIV risk.

  – These factors may include:
    • lack of knowledge and skills required to protect oneself and others;
    • factors pertaining to the quality and coverage of services (e.g. inaccessibility of service due to distance, cost or other factors); and
Defining HIV Risk and Vulnerability
UNAIDS (2007)

– These factors may also include:

• societal factors such as human rights violations
• social and cultural norms.

– Such violations in the form of practices, beliefs and laws that stigmatize and disempower certain populations, limiting their ability to access or use HIV prevention, treatment, care, and support services and commodities create or exacerbate individual and collective vulnerability to HIV.
Vulnerability Reconsidered

• IMPACT OF VULNERABILITY

Other than demographics, the more vulnerabilities (conditions and/or circumstances) a woman is exposed to, the more likely a woman is going to be in harm’s way to acquire or transmit HIV person OR the more likely a woman may take potentially harmful risks, which may arise out of choice, need and/or desire.
EXERCISE
Identifying HIV Vulnerabilities
Our Community: Women
Primary Factors Leading to HIV Vulnerability

- Genes
- Race
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation
- Trauma
- Family History
- Personal Timeline

Human Needs
Factor: Human Needs - Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs
See Attachment #1

- Self-Actualization
- Spiritual Needs
- Esteem Needs
- Love and Belonging Needs
- Safety Needs
- Physiological Needs

(c) 2012 Just Cause Consulting
See the Resemblance?

The HIV Virus
thebody.com

(c) 2012 Just Cause Consulting
The Microenterprise (ME) Circle
For women living with HIV/AIDS, one of the most impactful social determinants is poverty.
Social Determinants

Human Needs

• None of us want to live in poverty but what are we doing about it?
  – **Question**: How many of you look at your finances on paper? Have a household budget?

• Exercise: Where Do I Stand Financially?
  – See Attachment #2
### Annual Income

**Where do you stand?**

- Income level (percentile) and median income (rounded) in 2001:
  1. Level 6 (90 to 100) $170,000
  2. Level 5 (80 to 89.9) $99,000
  3. Level 4 (60 to 79.9) $65,000
  4. Level 3 (40 to 59.9) $40,000
  5. Level 2 (20 to 39.9) $24,000
  6. Level 1 (19 or less) $10,000
Social Determinants

Human Needs

• Socio-economic conditions can impact a woman’s vulnerability for HIV infection, her ability to access programs to address her vulnerabilities and needs, and/or her ability to care for herself and successfully live with HIV/AIDS.

• Microenterprise has become a useful and valuable income generating alternative for addressing vulnerabilities arising out of poverty.
The ME Circle

• The ME Circle is a personal and group sustainability vehicle designed to ensure that women living with HIV/AIDS are not solely dependent on public benefits and resources to live a quality life.

  – Local economic collectives support their ongoing efforts with monies collected from the microenterprise circles or the ME Circles.
The ME Circle

Benefits
• Shared responsibility.
• Increased knowledge investment
• Group motivation: This increases members’ confidence in investing
• Strengthened friendship
• Savings

Challenges
• Membership challenges
• Formal vs. informal structures
• Financial instability
The ME Circle

Requirements

• Graduates of Common Threads
• Attend ME Circle Training
• Organize economic collective
  – Coordinator
  – Bookkeeper
  – Note Taker
• Reporting

Tools

• Notebook
• Revenue & Expense Report
The Measuring Stick Crafting Circle Projects

Juanita Williams
The Measuring Stick Crafting Circle
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My living quilt with the Names Project
Jewelry
Hand painted pillow of Ndebele women
yo-yo quilt
made with
596 yo-yos
“Olivia”
Heineken bottle figurines

“Frances”

“Sophia and King Charles”
Door stopper made of brick resembling a sofa
12” flower pot saucers with painted Adinkra symbols
Hand painted wall hanging
Hand appliqué baby blocks
Another Kwanzaa wall hanging
Common Threads

"Am I a Reflection of You?"

Women of South Carolina
Red Ribbon Earrings
Red Ribbon Earrings
Red Ribbon Earrings
Earrings
Earrings Glore
Benefits

• Outcomes as result of the ME Circle
  – Peace of mind
  – Sisterhood
  – Networking
  – Development of new skills
    • Motto: Sharing our talents and saving lives!
  – Money in the Bank
    • Supports conference attendance
    • Community speaking engagement
    • Group meetings
    • Re-investment to keep the group going
Are Your Ready?

- Is there a talent or service you can do?
  - Make a list of 10 things you like to do.
    - Highlight the ones you are really good at and that people will pay you for doing.
  - If you could acquire 3 additional skills what would they be?
  - What 3 outrageous things would you try if no one knew about it?
- So when are you going start?
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