

2009 National HIV Prevention Conference

Title: Collaboration of State Health Department and Universities to Develop Fidelity and Outcome Monitoring Models for Effective Behavioral Interventions (EBI)

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Abstract Body:

Issue: In order to provide effective, behaviorally based HIV prevention interventions, the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Division of HIV/AIDS Services, (NJDHSS, DHAS) conducted a state-supported roll out of five Effective Behavioral Interventions (EBIs) including SISTA, Healthy Relationships, Safety Counts, Many Men, Many Voices and Voices/Voces in 2006. Grantees receiving HIV prevention funds from NJHSS, DHAS were encouraged to research and select the EBI appropriate for their identified target population.

Within the first year of implementation NJDHSS, DHAS found that community-based organizations (CBOs) were finding it inherently difficult to achieve and maintain fidelity to the EBI curricula. In addition, recruitment and retention rates indicated poor outcomes. To address these issues, NJDHSS, DHAS partnered with technical assistance providers at Rutgers University HIV Prevention Community Planning Support and Development Initiative (HPCPSDI) to develop a model of training, technical assistance and monitoring to increase fidelity and outcome successes for CBOs across the state.

Setting:

There are currently 36 CBOs delivering EBI interventions to communities across the state of New Jersey.

Project:

A project to address the technical assistance and training needs of CBOs delivering EBI curricula was developed in 2006. This project was piloted for the Sisters Informing Sisters about Topics on AIDS (SISTA) intervention with the intention to duplicate it for all EBI interventions. SISTA was chosen first because in New Jersey, 36% of those living with HIV/AIDS are women and four out of five women living with HIV/AIDS are women of color (NJDHSS, DHAS, 2007).

There are currently 22 agencies in 15 New Jersey cities that conduct the SISTA intervention at 36 sites with African American and Latina women.

“Jersey SISTAs” is a program of support, technical assistance, and monitoring for SISTA facilitators across the state of New Jersey. It is administered by NJHSS, DHAS and Rutgers HPCPSDI. This model relies on increasing support to facilitators and supervisors in the form of education and community building. Components of the program include:

- training of SISTA facilitators available in-state by nationally certified instructors;
- a SISTA facilitator sharing program to ensure that SISTA interventions can continue in the event of staffing shortages
- bi-annual supervisors trainings that include:
 - an overview of the SISTA curricula
 - an overview of resources needed to implement the intervention
 - an overview of quality assurance/evaluation methods required
 - brainstorming barriers and learning about best practices
- enhanced evaluation materials (i.e. forms for tabulating outcomes at an individual and group level, a standards matrix, etc.);
- internet based supports including:
 - a website that houses the latest intervention materials, additional materials to enhance service delivery (i.e. gender and ethnic specific poems, videos, stories, etc.), and an achieve of communication threads
 - a listserv for information sharing, brainstorming, and problem solving
- quarterly meetings for all facilitators that include:
 - materials review
 - in-service topics determined by the group
 - brainstorming and problem solving
 - program planning
- agency site visits to monitor fidelity to the SISTA model and to provide hands-on technical assistance for quality assurance activities

Results:

Facilitators and supervisors report increased self-efficacy in delivering the SISTA intervention as a result of the Jersey SISTA model of support.

The consumer data shows increased retention as well as increased scores between pre/post testing. This reflects increased HIV prevention knowledge and decreased risk activities.

In addition, outcome data reflects:

- increased communication between facilitators, supervisors, funders, and technical assistance providers
- increased supervisor capacity to monitor and mentor facilitators,
- increased fidelity to the training curriculum,
- increased SISTA cycles per agency,
- increased graduates per agency,
- increased Individual Level Interventions (ILIs) provided at strategic points during SISTA cycles

Lessons Learned: Providing a comprehensive model of support that includes education, a venue for peer-support, and on-going technical assistance for agencies providing EBIs to their target populations increases: (1) the effectiveness of agencies in providing the intervention; (2) cost effectiveness of providing the intervention; (3) fidelity to the curricula across agencies; (4) increases in recruitment and retention rates of consumers and (5) positive changes in lowering high-risk behaviors.