

Background



- IFH COMPASS Dept. consists of several programs supporting HIV positive clients in various ways
- Ryan White funded grant expanded scope of services to include support groups
- The benefits of support group interventions for people living with HIV/AIDS are well established

social benefits - related to coping with and adjusting to with stigma, discrimination, and disclosure.

clinical benefits - linked to reduced mortality, morbidity, and retention in care.

Our Positive Patients



- 1100 served annually (Approx. 450 served at Harlem clinic)
- Predominately Black & Latinx
- Medicaid eligible, lower income
- Approx. 60% Male, 40% Female (5% transwomen)
- Heterosexual transmission risk – most commonly identified risk
- Co-occurring disorders – Mental health, substance use

Objective

This project set out to explore the effectiveness of peer-led groups as a form of social support among women living with HIV receiving primary care and supportive services at Harlem Clinic



Design

- Groups (2-5 ppl), Health Promotion Curriculum
- Meeting monthly (now bi-monthly) @ FPCH
- Organic, informal and peer-led group space
- Minimal-to-no facilitator involvement
- Flexible start/end times
- Group norms, dates/times, topics – participant driven



Setting

- Family medicine, FQHC, in East Harlem
- Joint Commission accredited, PCMH Level 3
- Not typical space for groups, peer-led groups



Participants



- 5 self identified women of color
- Living with HIV since at least 2000
- Having less than 2 people aware of HIV status
- Shared experiences re: disclosure
- Shared life experiences
- Not accessing group services (internally or externally)

Intervention

- “what we want (from the group)
- “what we expect (from each other)
- Privacy
- Peer Support
- Respect
- Participation

Group Norms

- Date/year
- Foundational
- Normalization
- Sameness

Sharing Diagnosis

- Members “pitch” topic, group agrees/disagrees
- Topics evolve, themes emerge
- No more than 2 per group

Group Topic

- Members take turns speaking
- facilitator keeps rotation/flow

Sharing the Room

- “Ask” method from curriculum used to foster discussion
- Several “Ask”s pulled from HIV & Me and Building Social Supports

Ties to Health Promotion

- Open group
- 2-4 members per group
- Regular participants welcomed/oriented new attendees

Group status

COMPASS Women's Group

Oct 14th and 28th

Fridays

230-4pm

Family Health

Center of Harlem

1824 Madison

2nd Floor Conf.

Room, SIDE B

Vanessa Pizarro,
LMSW

212-423-4500

Ext 4573

YOU ARE YOUR BEST THING.
TONI MORRISON



COMPASS Women's Group

Nov 10 & 29th

Thurs & Tues

330-5pm

Family Health

Center of Harlem

1824 Madison

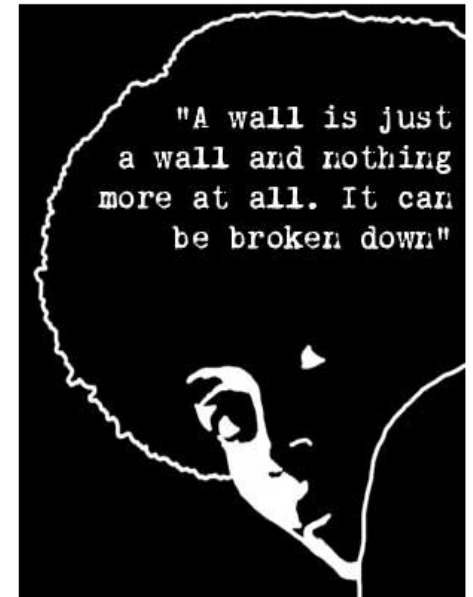
2nd Floor Conf.

Room, SIDE B

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212-423-4500

Ext 4573



~Assata Shakur~

Results

- 5 unique participants (more than 3 groups for 1 yr)
- Surveys collected, interviews conducted (overwhelmingly positive responses)
- Specific responses to “why they attend this group at their medical office rather than other groups”

“With my peers,
right here at my
doctors office”

“We get to
the bottom
of things”

“I like the
women in
the group”

“The group
has more
privacy”

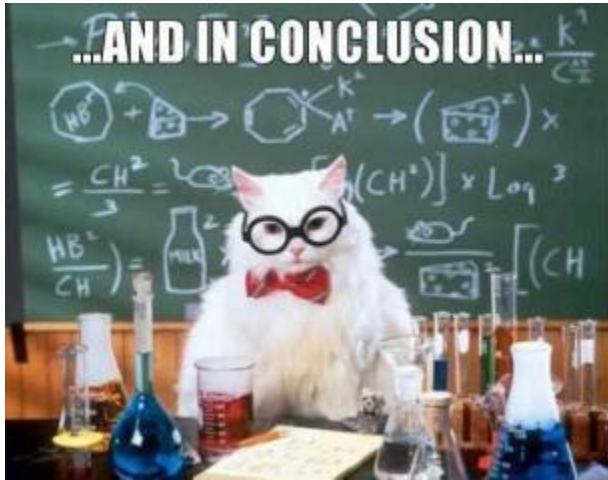
“We all have
the same
situation”

Results



- Chart reviews of 5 unique participants, prior to group start to present
- 4 of 5 women needing, but not in formal mental health therapy, attend group as alternative
- No correlation with viral suppression and retention , all retained/suppressed prior

Conclusions



- Richer and more animated discussions
- Expressed a found “sameness”, sense of ownership
- Expressed want to not be “othered”
- Stigma, fear, past neg. disclosure experience sole barrier to including negative women in group
- Expressed normalcy for group over individual therapy

Resources

- Liamputtong, Pranee, Niphattra Haritavorn, and Niyada Kiatying-Angsulee. "HIV and AIDS, Stigma and AIDS Support Groups: Perspectives from Women Living with HIV and AIDS in Central Thailand." *Social Science & Medicine* 69.6 (2009): 862-68. Web
- NYC Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene Bureau of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Care and Treatment Program (Version 5.0). *Care Coordination for People Living with HIV, Program Manual, (2015)*; <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/ah/carecoordination-manual.pdf>
- NYC Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene Bureau of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Care and Treatment Program, *Health Promotion Curriculum Facilitator's Guide (2009), 2nd Edition*; <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/ah/facilitator-guide.pdf>