

BLACK WOMEN AND

HIV/AIDS:

***CONFRONTING THE
CRISIS AND PLANNING
FOR ACTION***

NASTAD Regional Conference

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NOTHING BUT THE FACTS.....

- Although African Americans make up less than 13% of U.S. population, 49% of new HIV/AIDS cases
- Men make up 64% of HIV/AIDS cases among African Americans
- Of all African American men living with HIV/AIDS, 48% were related to male-to-male sexual contact, 23% related to drug use, and 22% linked to high-risk heterosexual contact
- African American women ages 13 and older accounted for 66% of HIV/AIDS cases among women
- Of all African American women living with HIV/AIDS, 80% were related to high-risk heterosexual contact

**AND MANY OF THESE WOMEN
ARE IN THE CHURCH**

Why target women in the church?

- **They are sexually active**
- **They are often not aware of the risks**
- **They are often afraid to discuss their sexually**
- **They need to practice safe sex**
- **They need to know their status**
- **They need to use their influence to help decrease the spread of HIV/AIDS in our communities**

WORKING WITH WOMEN IN THE BLACK CHURCH

- **Open and honest dialogues in a church setting**
 - **Seeing the correlation between sexuality and spirituality**
 - **Moving beyond abstinence in HIV/AIDS prevention education**
 - **Merging religion and reality**
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THE CHALLENGES:

- **Letting go of the dichotomy between the church and the world**
- **Creating a safe haven for dialogue and honest dialogue for all persons**
- **Being open to sexual diversity**
- **Lifting the self-esteem of women in the church to the end that they protect themselves from sexual and physical abuse**
- **Fostering a true sense of sisterhood in the church**

THE REWARDS:

- **Untapped population**
- **Transformation of mindsets**
- **Churches/temples/mosques are a great asset for alerting the community**
- **Reaching the next generation**
- **Developing a strong resource base**
- **Saving many lives**
- **Decreasing the spread of HIV/AIDS in our communities**

WORKING WITH THIS TARGET POPULATION

- **Church Affiliation**
- **Churches in the community**
- **Churches that serve your clients**
- **Past experiences**
- **Those who advertize as willing to serve
infected and afected persons**
- **Family and friends**

GETTING STARTED....

- **Sensitizing key leadership**
 - **Determining community resources**
 - **Training a peer-educators group**
 - **Establishing church ownership of the ministry**
 - **Planning a Church and Community Forum**
 - **Assessing the results of the forum and establishing the ministry**
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Understanding Religious Polity

- Who is the official head of the church?
- Who has the authority to give permission?
- What is the correct protocol?
- Who has the information I need?

Things That Might Help

- Meeting with leaders of the church (get permission first)
- Refreshments, certificates and other incentives
- Pamphlets for bulletin and distribution
- Letters of thanks
- Plaques

Traps To Avoid

- Not talking to the pastor
- Not talking to *key women leaders in the church*
- Not being clear about what you need them to do
- Not following-up
- Assuming that they will take the lead and follow through

Maintaining an HIV Ministry.....

- **HIV/AIDS Ministry is not a one-shot deal**
 - **HIV/AIDS Ministry is not an add-on ministry**
 - **HIV/AIDS Ministry is the responsibility of the entire church**
 - **HIV/AIDS Ministry must be more than “charity” work.**
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Faith Community Baptist Church

- **Inner city church serving the communities of Fairfield, Whitcomb, and Creighton Courts in Richmond, Virginia**
- **HIV Prevention Education in the Faith Community**
- **Facilitator for other African American churches**
- **Traget populations include African American women, men, youth, clergy, and congregations**