

Locally-Developed HIV/AIDS Prevention Intervention Profile



Michigan

Project Title: Prevention Options for Positives (POP)
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Population(s) served by this intervention: HIV-positive men who have sex with men (MSM) of all races and ages

Length of time this intervention has been funded: 7 years

Goals and objectives:

Prevention Options for Positives (POP) aims to reduce HIV/STD transmission risk by helping HIV-positive MSM increase their knowledge of HIV transmission behaviors, build skills to reduce HIV transmission and STD acquisition and address psychosocial issues that may contribute to risk behavior.

Intervention specific activities:

POP is guided by Social Cognitive Theory and Theory of Reasoned Action and includes:

- 6 peer-facilitated group-level intervention (GLI) sessions

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Topics addressed include: Communication, psychosocial issues affecting gay men with HIV, safer sex knowledge and negotiation, substance use and disclosure of HIV status.

- 3-5 individual-level intervention (ILI) sessions conducted by a prevention counselor trained in the POP ILI model

Topics addressed mirror those of the GLI sessions: Assessment and goal setting in sexual risk behavior, substance use, disclosure and the utilization of partner counseling and referral services.

POP sessions: Provide for the exploration of the impact/importance of community norms on prevention issues; utilize skills-building exercises employing modeling and practice and utilize culturally specific role plays and exercises

Social determinants of health/co-morbidities addressed by this intervention:

STD
Substance use/abuse

New technologies utilized in this intervention:

Mobile phones
Social networking websites (e.g. Facebook, MySpace, etc.)
Listservs
Party lines

Use of these technologies was not part of the original curriculum or implementation protocol but has been implemented over time. They are used to assist with recruitment and retention and to keep POP cohorts in contact post-intervention.

Costs of developing and implementing this intervention:

State funds were used in the development and initial implementation of the intervention. Cost for formative research and evaluation of the pilot curriculum and subsequent curriculum refinement/packaging over a two-year period was approximately \$200,000.

Formative research and evaluation was conducted in collaboration with a partner community-based organization (CBO), where a peer from the partner CBO served as the project coordinator dedicating approximately .75

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FTE to the project. Additional support was provided by an evaluation consultant for approximately 10 hours per week over 50 weeks.

At four CBOs with a history of serving HIV-positive MSM, a combination of state and federal funds was used for initial implementation. Replication efforts were supported through collaboration between state staff and the CBO project coordinator. We estimate that POP currently requires approximately \$22,500 per cycle.

Evaluation findings related to this intervention:

Pre-tests, post-tests as well as six-month follow-up data were collected. Upon conclusion of these evaluation activities, minor adjustments were made to the curriculum and intervention interval and the intervention was replicated at four CBOs with a history of serving HIV-positive MSM. Minor adjustments were made to the curriculum based on information gained during the first cycle of replication as well.

POP has been shown to be effective in reducing the number of occasions HIV-positive MSM had unprotected anal sex; decreasing the number of occasions of unprotected anal sex while using substances; increasing disclosure of HIV status to sex partners and family/friends, as well as increasing opportunities for HIV-positive MSM to receive mental health, substance use and related referrals via prevention programs.

See "Additional Resources" for more program evaluation results.

Additional Outcomes: POP had a positive impact on recruitment in that former project graduates often became involved in recruitment activities back into the program with their friends or others who they knew to be HIV-positive MSM. Additionally, many sites had "after-POP" groups that formed at the request of the graduates to continue work relative to the goals of POP.

Lessons Learned:

Need: Support/Assistance for Agencies: It was extremely important that when transitioning from demonstration project to the first cycle of replication, ongoing quality assurance, technical assistance and evaluation activities were made available to participating agencies. Effective utilization of process evaluation tools assisted in measuring fidelity as well as analyzing any need for adaptation in the field.

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Need: Agency Facilitator Engagement: Actively engaging the facilitators replicating the project helped with buy-in and improved recommendations for any needed adaptations.

Need: PLWHA's Engagement and Feedback: The initial needs assessment, community forums and focus groups that guided the development of the POP curriculum were completed with the assistance of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in Michigan. Once POP was fully implemented, the benefit of having HIV+ individuals involved in the formative work became very clear. Participants said in the beginning of the project, and continue to echo the sentiments: "Having a moment to stop and think about how to keep myself and others safe, without being judged for it, has helped me to understand I am in more control than I thought".

After completion of POP cycles, many agencies found that the graduating cohort desired to continue as a group to provide a continuing platform for peer support of risk reduction and disclosure behaviors. These graduate groups have been very helpful in assisting in recruiting activities for upcoming POP groups.

Additional Resources:

Fact Sheet: "Prevention Options for Positives"

Lapinski, M.K., Randall, L.M., Peterson, M., Peterson, A. and Klein, K.A. Prevention Options for Positives: The Effects of a Health Communication Intervention for Men Who Have Sex with Men Living With HIV/AIDS. *Health Communication*. 2009; 24(6), pp. 562-571