

HIV PREVENTION STRATEGIES FOR BLACK AND LATINO MSM

Strategic Overview

The rates of HIV infection for Black and Latino men who have sex with men in this country remain alarmingly high. Although we still do not have a complete understanding of all of the factors that have led to the disturbingly high prevalence of HIV in these communities, it has become clear that individual behavioral choices are not the only contributor driving these numbers. The multiple layers of stigma and other social and cultural factors that shape these men's experiences must be examined and addressed as part of a comprehensive intervention strategy to reverse this trend. HIV prevention providers; who primarily work on the individual-level intervention of counseling, testing, and referral, nonetheless have a key role to play in countering the negative messages these young men often receive and forging a relationship with them that supports their efforts to maintain optimal health.

Additional Resources

[HIV Prevention among Black/African American Gay, Bisexual, and Other Men Who Have Sex with Men: Highlights of Activities of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) overview of CDC strategies for addressing HIV prevention among Black MSM

[Addressing Stigma: A Blueprint for Improving HIV/STD Prevention and Care Outcomes for Black & Latino Gay Men](#) report by NASTAD and NCSA aimed at understanding and addressing stigma to facilitate access to HIV prevention services that respects gay men/MSM from diverse backgrounds

[Best Practices in HIV Prevention: Translating Innovation into Action](#) summary of effective HIV prevention strategies, including those addressing disparities among Black and Latino MSM

Strategy #1: Targeted Prevention Messaging Campaigns

The goal of developing HIV prevention messages is to reduce the barriers to HIV testing and promote its benefits. Messages should reframe negative attitudes and beliefs with positive ones. Important areas to address are perceptions of sexual risk behaviors, HIV-related stigma, and self-efficacy towards HIV testing. Crafting messages to specific target populations results in smaller and more meaningful messaging which can be more impactful.

The CDC's [Act Against AIDS](#) is a five-year national prevention campaign to raise HIV awareness and increase testing, particularly among gay and bisexual men, African Americans, Latinos, and other communities at increased risk. Act Against AIDS consists of several concurrent HIV prevention campaigns and uses mass media (TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, and the Internet) to deliver important HIV prevention messages. Two campaigns, in particular, encourage Black and Latino, respectively, gay and bisexual men to get tested for HIV.

[Testing Makes Us Stronger](#) is the latest phase of a social marketing campaign that encourages Black gay and bisexual men ages 18-44 (with an emphasis on 18-24 year-olds) to get tested for HIV. The campaign was developed with input from a panel of Black gay and bisexual community leaders, physicians, researchers and key stakeholders, as well as through materials testing and focus groups with more than 400 Black gay and bisexual men. Campaign ads in national magazines and targeted websites, as well as local advertising and materials distribution in target cities; emphasize the importance of getting tested for HIV regularly to help

stop the spread of the epidemic. The campaign also includes a Facebook page and a dedicated website with a suite of campaign materials available for individuals and organizations to download and distribute.

[REASONS/RAZONES](#) is the newest HIV testing campaign under the CDC Act Against AIDS initiative. The bilingual campaign is the agency's first national effort to encourage HIV testing among Latino gay and bisexual men, who are among those hardest hit by HIV in the United States. The campaign asks gay and bisexual Latinos "What's your reason?/¿Cuál es tu razón?" for getting an HIV test through a series of campaign materials that feature men sharing their reasons for getting tested for HIV. REASONS/RAZONES uses images of family, friends, and partners to emphasize a strong sense of self, family, and community. The campaign also includes information about accessing fast, free, and confidential HIV testing. The campaign's bold images and messages will appear in mobile and online advertising, national and local print and outdoor/transit advertising in target cities. REASONS/RAZONES includes a Facebook page and a dedicated website with a suite of campaign materials available for individuals and organizations to download and distribute.

Materials from both of these campaigns are free for use by partnering agencies and available at the CDC's [Act Against AIDS](#) website. Below are some recommended activities for how to use materials to promote HIV prevention services:

1. Use the [Let's Stop HIV Together campaign PSA](#) and the [Start Talking. Stop HIV. behind-the-scenes video](#) as an audio-visual during events, meetings, etc.
2. Download [print-ready versions of campaign materials](#) (posters, brochures, and palm cards) for distribution in the partnering agency's community
3. Disseminate [campaign materials](#) at pride events, conferences, speaking engagements, national and regional galas and other community events
4. Embed [campaign web banners](#) on partnering agency's website and social media platforms
5. Include campaign materials via printed and digital communication platforms (e.g., Equality Magazine, Facebook, website)
6. Share [HIV prevention videos](#) on YouTube
7. Encourage Facebook followers to "Like" campaign pages
 - [Act Against AIDS](#)
 - [Testing Makes Us Stronger](#)
 - [Reasons/Razones](#)
8. Follow us on Twitter [@talkHIV](#)
9. Promote activity with colleagues and partners via e-communication, social media platforms, etc.
10. Use [syndicated content](#) from the CDC on partnering agencies' websites

Additional Resources

[Act Against AIDS Leadership Initiative \(AAALI\)](#) a network of national-level organizations that focus on African Americans, Black men who have sex with men (MSM), and the Latino community

[HIV Prevention Messages Targeting Young Latino Immigrant MSM](#) article describing a community-based participatory research approach to develop [Tu Amigo Pepe](#), a campaign to promote HIV testing among Latino MSM

Strategy #2: Mobile Testing Services

Several factors contribute to suboptimal rates of testing, especially among Black and Latino MSM. The stigma attached to seeking HIV prevention and care services affects HIV testing rates among MSM. Some men who do not identify as gay might not feel comfortable utilizing services at HIV organizations that are affiliated with the LGBTQ community or which have primarily gay-identified clients. At the same time, these same men may not wish to reveal their sexual orientation to their primary care physician and may be reluctant to seek testing in traditional healthcare settings. Recent immigrants, especially those without legal immigration status, may avoid HIV testing at a health clinics for fear of exposing their undocumented status. Furthermore, many men, in general, do not have a usual place to receive health care, and so offering testing in non-traditional, non-medical settings may increase access.

Mobile testing programs provide hard-to-reach populations opportunities to access HIV prevention services and information. Interventions may involve partnerships with venues such as nail salons, barber shops and hair salons, farmer's markets, clothing stores, church festivals and other local events. A strong relationship with community partners is key to the success of this strategy and may require a significant investment of time and attention.

Additional Resources

[Bathhouse and "Know On The Go" Mobile HIV Testing Projects](#) a case study of two programs that provide sexual health services to gay men and other men who have sex with men who might not otherwise access these services

[Staff Strategies for Improving HIV Detection Using Mobile HIV Rapid Testing](#) an article describing strategies that are used to engage HIV testing clients in mobile testing and linkage services

[Where MSM Have Their First HIV Test: Differences by Race, Income, and Sexual Identity](#) an article reviewing initiatives to increase HIV testing in nontraditional locations and testing patterns among segments of MSM population

[The Bronx Knows HIV Testing Initiative Final Report](#) a summary of a successful testing initiative using mobile testing and community partnership strategies

Strategy #3: Other Effective Behavioral Interventions

CDC maintains an online compendium of evidence-based behavioral interventions (EBI) and best practices that have been scientifically proven to significantly reduce HIV risk or promote HIV care. Training and materials necessary to implement the interventions are available. A number of these interventions are designed to target Black and Latino MSM.

[Mpowerment](#) is a community-level intervention is for young gay and bisexual men of diverse backgrounds. It mobilizes men to reduce sexual risk taking, encourages regular HIV testing, builds positive social connections and supports peers to have safer sex.

[Many Men, Many Voices \(3MV\)](#) is a seven-session, group-level HIV and STD prevention intervention for Black gay men. The intervention addresses factors that influence the behavior of Black men who have sex with men, including cultural, social, and religious norms; interactions between HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases; sexual relationship dynamics; and the social and psychological influences that racism and

homophobia have on HIV risk behaviors. 3MV is designed to be delivered by two culturally competent facilitators in groups of up to 12 clients.

[d-up: Defend Yourself!](#) is a community-level intervention designed for and developed by Black men who have sex with men (MSM). *d-up!* is designed to promote social norms of condom use and assist Black MSM to recognize and handle risk related racial and sexual bias.

[Popular Opinion Leader](#) is a community-level intervention that involves identifying, enlisting, and training key opinion leaders to encourage safer sexual norms and behaviors within their social networks through risk-reduction conversations.

Additional Resources

[The Adaptation Guide: Adapting HIV Behavior Change Interventions for gay and Bisexual Latino and Black Men](#) basic information, resources and tools for those who deliver HIV prevention interventions to gay and bisexual Latino and Black men