What’s Love Got To Do With It?: Black Community-Based Organization Providers’ Views on Culturally Specific Psycho-Social Factors Influencing Sexual Risk Among Young African American MSM

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Presentation Overview

- Introduction
- Icebreaker—Who’s in the room?
- *What’s Love Got To Do With It?:* Provider’s Views On The Psychosocial Factors That Influence Risk Behavior Among Young African American Men Who Have Sex With Men
- Where Do We Go From Here?: Small Group Activity—Storytelling and interviewing exercise
- Reporting Out: Whole Group
- Q & A, Closing
What’s Love Got To Do With It?:

Provider’s Views On The Psychosocial Factors That Influence Risk Behavior Among Young African American Men Who Have Sex With Men
Aims of This Research

*To gain an understanding of psycho-social influencing factors
*To appreciate how psycho-social influencing factors shape sexual risk behavior among YAA/MSM
*To utilize insights gleaned in this workshop to develop ways to effectively intervene on factors contributing to sexual risk behavior among YAA/MSM
Overview

- Background
- Methods
- Data Analysis
- Prominent Culturally Specific Psychosocial Factors Related to HIV Risk Behavior
- Where Do We Go From Here?: Small group activity-Storytelling and interviewing
- Reporting Out: Whole Group Activity
- Q & A/Conclusion
Background

Over-representation of AIDS cases among African Americans—e.g., African American made up approximately 50% of all HIV/AIDS cases in 2005 in the 50 states and DC.

Young AA MSM were 2-to-3 times more likely to be HIV-infected compared to white gay and bisexual men (CDC 2005, Six-city study).

Scant information about the culturally specific psycho-social factors influencing risk of YAA MSM.
Methods: Research Questions

* What factors do you think place YAAMSM at risk for contracting HIV?
* How does religion influence sexual risk-taking among young Black MSM?
* How does family affect sexual risk-taking behavior among young Black MSM?
* What role does bisexuality play in the sexual risk-taking behavior of young AAMSM?
* What is the influence of labels for sexual identity?
* What do you see as the influence of racism on YAAMSM’s sexual risk-taking behavior?
* How do you think homophobia influences sexual risk taking among young AAMSM?
* What do you think the relationship is between SES and risk-taking behavior for YAAMSM?
Methods

- 18 front-line CBO employees (mostly program coordinators) recruited
- Diverse in terms of location, size of organization
- Interviewed for 90-120 minutes
- Topics: attitudes about fit between evidence-based HIV/AIDS prevention models and clients’ needs; experience implementing evidence-based programs with clients, and psychosocial factors that influence sexual risk behaviors among young Black MSM
Data Analysis

- Extensive notes were taken during telephone interviews
- Recorded verbatim statements, whenever possible
- Data were coded thematically and validated with other members of research team
7 Culturally Specific Psycho-social Factors of Sexual Risk Behaviors For YAMS

- Sexual Orientation Identity
- Sexual Orientation Label
- Racism and Internalized Racism
- Homophobia and Internalized Homophobia
- Shame-filled Religiosity
- Familial Stigmatization and Rejection
- Sexual-Economic Status
Sexual Orientation Identity

“Identifying [as gay] gives more awareness of what you’re doing and what may not be safe. If you are hiding who you are, you don’t have to have safe sex because you are not gay.”
“I think that a lot of people do base what they are willing to do on the identity of their partner. If someone identified as DL, one may be willing to have a certain kind of sex with that person that they wouldn’t do with someone who identified as a queen.”
Racism and Internalized Racism

“Racism impacts people’s lives in so many ways. Racism makes poverty more pervasive among Black folks, creating conditions where people are forced to be sex workers to get their needs met. Racism impacts the ways I think I should behave as a Black man and that impacts how I believe sexually. Racism prevents me from accessing prevention health services in the gay community and that prevents me from doing what I need to do to be safe.”
Homophobia and Internalized Homophobia

“In the same way that racism keeps someone from accessing health services in gay communities, homophobia keeps Black MSM from seeking health services in Black communities. Homophobia keeps many social organizations, like churches, from having health services for HIV/AIDS. There is a secret sex culture among Black men that is driven by homophobia. Men who are having secret sex are less likely to know about how to protect themselves.”
Shame-filled Religiosity

“Religion does influence them. Religion tells them they are an abomination before God. It all ties into self-esteem. As along as church teaches HIV as punishment for gayness, these negative message will continue to affect the self-esteem of young [African American] MSM and then their low self-esteem will orient them to value their own lives less and take more risks…People hide their sexuality. When you do anything in the dark, everything is rushed and there is not time for safety talks and condom negotiation.”
Familial Stigmatization and Rejection

“We have learned from a young age that homosexuality is taboo. You couldn’t open up to your family and ask questions. Basically, people learn as they play. As a result, lots of stuff we do is secretive and full of risk — taking place at night or in the dark. And then, when you haven’t learned to communicate with your family, this inability also translates over into communication with sexual partners about sexual practices.”
“Sometimes men enter into relationships that are unhealthy. The person with the money is able to wield control...If I am driving his car and eating his food, sometimes people in those situations feel like they have to do whatever they are asked to do. I know people who are in situations like that who were asked to be in threesomes and foursomes. This person is what stands between you and a park bench...”
Where Do We Go From Here?:
Small Group Activity—Storytelling and interviewing
Reporting Out: Whole Group Activity
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