

Utilizing Mental Health Counseling in African American Men who have Sex with Men Minority Populations as a Primary and Secondary HIV Prevention Tool

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ABSTRACT

Counseling can be extremely helpful as an HIV Prevention tool from the framework that often people engage in either risky or self-destructive behaviors due to a variety of other factors such as depression , low self-esteem, as well as a lifetime of neglect, deprivation and abuse. As a secondary prevention tool mental health counseling will address underlying causes for self-destructive behavior in HIV+ individuals and lead to less risk taking, and healthy disclosure. The U.S. Surgeon General has reported that overall only one-third of Americans with a mental illness or a mental health problem get care. Yet, the percentage of African Americans receiving needed care is only half that of non-Hispanic whites (U.S. Surgeon General, 1999)

INTRODUCTION

In this model counseling services will be provided by a Licensed Professional Counselor, or Licensed Clinical Social Worker. In addition to collaborations with various agencies providing services to at-risk populations, social marketing campaigns aimed at venues frequented by at risk populations will be employed; resulting in HIV+, and high risk HIV- individuals accessing mental health services. Individuals accepted into care will have a plan developed with a counselor, which will include a course of counseling ranging from 3 months to one year.

AFRICAN AMERICAN MSM SEEK MENTAL HEALTH CARE LESS FREQUENTLY THAN MAINSTREAM

- One study reported that nearly 60% of older African American adults were not receiving needed services.
- African Americans are more likely to use emergency services or to seek treatment from a primary care provider than from a mental health specialist.

EXAMINING DISCOMFORTS

- Preliminary assessments
- Introductory education is perceived innocuous
- Counselor availability to tease out true conditions versus false alarms
- Evaluations at end of counseling term

HISTORICALLY MARGINALIZED GROUPS EXPERIENCE COMPOUNDED PROBLEMS

- Gives rise to increased instances of mental health issues
- Risky behavior
- Early intervention is essential

NEGATIVE INTERNALIZED MESSAGES (HOMONEGATIVITY)

- Leads to increased, risky, self-destructive behavior (Roseman, 2008)
- Cultural norms
- Adjustment Disorder
- Anxiety
- Depression

AFRICAN AMERICAN MSM ARE ISOLATED, AND LACK FAMILY MODELING AND SUPPORT

- Homophobia, racism and poverty also place young MSM at risk.
- Homophobia, racism and poverty also place older MSM at risk.
- Limited places to meet socially (Spikes, 2001)

AFRICAN AMERICAN MSM SEXUALITY IS MULTIFACETED

- Sexuality can be viewed in congruence with income levels, education, employment (McGruder, 2008)

PSYCHOSOCIAL HISTORY AS A PRECURSOR TO MENTAL ILLNESS

- Sexual abuse
- Witnessing domestic violence
- Parentification
- Parental emotional co-dependence

AFRICAN AMERICAN MSM RECEIVE NEGATIVE PEER AND SOCIETAL MESSAGES

- Can result in accelerated self-destructive behaviors and increased mental crisis

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

- Helping professionals may have bias
- Countertransference may be present

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