Prevention & Outreach Challenges
HIV & Older Adults

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HIV & Older Adults Initiative: Capacity Building, Training & Technical Assistance

- New York City Council Older Adults HIV Prevention & Education Initiative
- Partnered with aging & HIV services providers
- Created & implemented over 25 curriculum modules
- Provided hundreds of trainings on HIV & older adults (Overview, Epidemiology, Comorbidities, Mental Health, Health Literacy, Prevention, Treatment, Stigma, etc.)
- Tailored and implemented Community PROMISE, a CDC approved DEBI, for the first time with OA population
- HIV Testing Campaign for Adults 50+
- Social Messaging Campaigns & Materials (English, Spanish, Chinese, Haitian Creole & Russian)
MAC AIDS Fund

Four Part Program:
- Needs Assessment
- Comprehensive Two-Day Training
- Two-Day Hands-On Follow Up Training
- Mentorship Program in New York City

Cities:
- Miami/Fort Lauderdale & New Orleans
- Washington DC/Baltimore & San Francisco/Oakland
- Columbia, S.C. & St. Louis
- Los Angeles & San Juan, P.R.
HIV & Older Adults: Lessons Learned

Cultural and resource differences exist between two service delivery systems

Aging Services

AIDS Service Organizations
Cultural Differences

– Communication difficulties; differences in jargon
– Human and other resources – more limited staff availability
– Prerequisites for involvement in senior centers and programs much less stringent than for ASOs
– Little information is known about HIV in this population – many myths, much stigma
Prevention Challenges: 50+

- Persons 50+ have many of the same risk factors for HIV as do younger people.

- Many older people are sexually active but may not be practicing safer sex to reduce their HIV risk.

- Older women are especially at risk because age-related vaginal thinning and dryness can cause tears in the vaginal area.
Some older persons inject drugs or use substances that can increase their risk for HIV infection. HIV transmission through injection drug use accounts for more than 16% of AIDS cases among persons aged 50 and older.

Compared with younger people, some older adults may be less knowledgeable about HIV and therefore less likely to protect themselves.

Many do not perceive themselves as at risk for HIV and do not use condoms. Most do not get tested for HIV.
Prevention Challenges: 50+

• Health care professionals may underestimate their older patients’ risk for HIV and thus miss opportunities to deliver prevention messages or offer testing, which delays care

• Physicians may misdiagnose HIV, in the absence of testing, because symptoms can mimic those of normal aging, such as fatigue, weight loss, and mental confusion

• HIV stigma may be more severe among older adults leading them to hide their diagnosis from family and friends, thereby limiting or precluding potential emotional and other support

• In particular, older people of color, among others, may face discrimination and stigma that can lead to later testing, diagnosis, and reluctance to seek services
Health Belief Model: Case Study

• Sylvia is a 76-year-old female living in a senior residence. She has been having unprotected sex with her partner, Robert, for three years. But she is also aware that Robert is having sex with several other women in the residence. Since there are so few men in the residence she finds attractive, Sylvia decides she’s OK with this. When you mention HIV risk to her, Sylvia laughs and says HIV isn’t really something that occurs in her age group -- so she isn’t concerned.
Most HIV prevention messaging campaigns and materials do not target older adults
Older Adults
Marketing Materials

HIV doesn’t care how old you are...

More than 2 out of 3 people living with HIV in NYC are over 40, and 1 in 3 are over age 50.

Stop HIV/AIDS

Funded in whole by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Conózcalo. Combátal o. Derrótelo.

Detenga el SIDA.

Learn It. Fight It. Defeat It.

Knowledge Stops AIDS

Fundéd in whole by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Your Community Needs Your Wisdom to...

Stop HIV/AIDS

Su Comunidad Necesita de su Sabiduría

Para Detener el SIDA

Fundéd in whole by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

¿No es hora de que conozca la verdad

SOBRE EL VIH?

Isn’t It About Time You Knew...

The Truth About HIV

Fundéd in whole by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Some say HIV’s only for young folks.

You’ve lived too long to believe that nonsense.

Get tested for HIV.

Think you’re too old for HIV?

Think again.

One in every six new cases in NYC is found in people over 50.
Some say HIV’s only for young folks.

You’ve lived too long to believe that nonsense.
Get tested for HIV.

Las personas mayores también pueden tener VIH....

En la Ciudad de Nueva York, dos de cada tres personas VIH positivas tienen 40 ó más años de edad, y una de cada tres tiene más de 50.
Checklist for Healthy Aging

Aging can be hard, aging with HIV can be harder!

- HIV can progress faster in older adults
- HIV positive older adults are 3 times more likely to get sick
- More than 1 in 3 people living with HIV in NYC are over age 50.

GET INFORMED, GET TESTED

For more information about free and confidential HIV testing

call: 1-800-541-2437 or 1-800-TALK-HIV

or go to: www.hivtest.org

Funded by: The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
First booklet for and about older adults with HIV
First HIV prevention booklet targeted to older adults
“Have Sex?” Bus Shelter Campaign
June 2011, New York City
“Have Sex?” Bus Shelter Campaign
June 2011, New York City

English & Spanish
Bus Shelter Campaign Challenges

• Widespread public campaigns can be expensive. This campaign ran for one month in 160 bus shelters at a cost of more than $100,000.
• The images must be engaging, if not provocative, and the messages brief and readable as the posters constantly scroll and you may have the attention of passersby for but a few moments.
• Given the Metropolitan Transportation Agency’s rules, the campaign could not be placed within 100 feet of schools or churches due to the words “sex” and “condom” being prominently featured. Because there are many schools and literally hundreds of churches near bus shelters in high-incidence areas in New York City key locations could not be included.
Questions/comments/resources regarding ACRIA’s HIV & Aging Initiatives

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