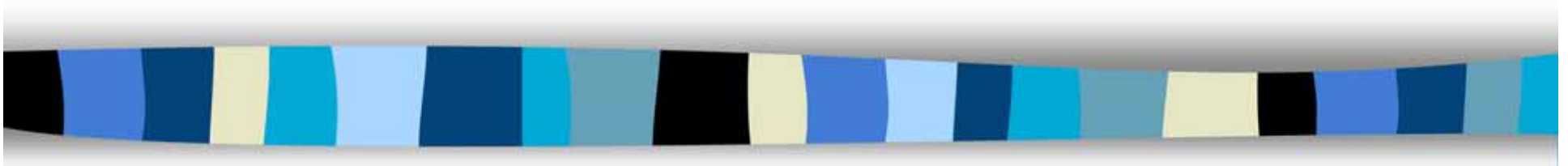


A Sexual Networks Based Approach to HIV Prevention: Process and Next Steps



Strategy Lab Call - 9.19.07

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STOP AIDS Project



What to expect

- Outline of our experience in implementing a sexual networks approach:
 - Background
 - Assessment and measurement of network factors
 - Intervening on networks
 - Next steps



Background: STOP AIDS Project

- STOP AIDS has been doing community-based HIV prevention for over 20 years
 - Based in San Francisco; serving gay, bisexual and transgender men
 - community organizing: outreach, condom distribution, workshops, community forums, social marketing campaigns, and Prevention with Positives program
 - Relationships with key community members, popular opinion leaders, venue owners, CBOs, and other stakeholders
 - **Why we switched to network interventions... behavior change is not enough; we recognize the importance of network and contextual factors in HIV risk**



Background: Goal

- Our goal is to develop behavioral programs and self-sustaining structural interventions that modify network structure and/or intervene on network factors in order to reduce HIV transmission among MSM in San Francisco



Background: Getting started

Without data on sexual networks in San Francisco, we needed to start somewhere... we developed 6 “proxy” networks:

- bars/clubs
- gyms
- commercial/public sex venues
- Internet
- leather/kink venues
- venues where African-American MSM meet



Assessment & measurement

- During our standard outreach we conduct behavioral risk assessments (BRA) with about 2000 MSM every year
- Our BRA is used to guide outreach conversations about risk and to collect information about our target population
 - Our data is routinely used by SFDPH, Office of Epidemiology and Surveillance, as well as by researchers throughout SF and nationwide



Assessment & measurement

- We modified our behavioral risk assessment tool to include:
 - Questions about respondent's last 3 partners (race, age, HIV status, risk behavior, type of relationship, and where met partner)
 - Whether respondent had engaged in concurrent sexual partnerships
 - Where respondent typically meets his sex partners



Assessment & measurement: Disassortative mixing

Steps:

- Identify venues in which high-risk MSM and low-risk MSM are most likely to overlap (mixing venues)
- Develop indicators to rank mixing venues
- Conduct ethnographic assessment of venues, including observations and interviews with patrons and gatekeepers
- Develop interventions to reduce disassortative mixing



Intervention ideas

- Outreach to venues that represent places or social networks where MSM meet other MSM
 - Mixing venues
 - HIV/STD testing at targeted venues (with RV)
 - Working toward changing the networks themselves
 - We're using interviews to listen to the community and identify places/times/ideas that are ripe for intervention:
 - Example - barbacks against barebacking
 - Example - intervention at "firesales" (helping people make informed choices)
- Circle-back and share info with community; helping people make informed decisions about venues



Next steps

- Bringing ideas to CABs and other community members
- Piloting interventions