

P3 Primary Prevention for Positives

If every new HIV infection involves an HIV+ person, why do most prevention programs only target HIV- persons? In the Fall of 2000, AIDS Partnership California (APC) initiated the primary Prevention for Positives (P3) Initiative, awarding grants to six ethnic minority CBOs to conduct formative research on what people of color with HIV want and need in an HIV prevention program. Three CBOs also developed HIV prevention programs based on the formative research findings. Because little is known about the prevention needs of people with HIV, conducting formative research is key to developing interventions that are effective, culturally competent, and welcomed by the community served.

HIV+ Monolingual Latino men who have sex with men

Bienestar Human Services
Los Angeles County, CA



Target audience

Bienestar Human Services serves the Latino community at seven community service centers in Los Angeles County, CA. For the P3 project, Bienestar began

"Mano a Mano," focusing on monolingual Spanish-speaking Latino men who have sex with men (MSM).

Why Latino MSM?

- In Los Angeles County in 1998, Latinos accounted for the largest proportion (42%) of persons diagnosed with AIDS.
- 62% of all Latino AIDS cases were among MSM.
- 20% of all persons diagnosed with AIDS in Los Angeles County were

born outside of the US. Of those, 50% were born in Mexico, 8% in El Salvador, 5% in Guatemala, 4% in Cuba, 3% in Honduras.

- Monolingual Latinos have greater difficulty accessing services due to language barriers.

Needs identified through formative research

During the formative research phase, Bienestar conducted focus groups and individual interviews with HIV+ Latino MSM, hosted a round table with program staff and mailed surveys to 245 Latino MSM. Here's what the men said they wanted:

- Culturally affirming, safe spaces that **develop self esteem, empowerment and accountability** for one's own health and the health of sexual partners.

- **Culturally and linguistically appropriate** education regarding HIV care, treatment and prevention along with associated issues such as **racism, family, financial stress and loneliness.**
- Skills building workshops on **how to communicate with partners, negotiate safer sex and disclose HIV status.**
- Information on how to date and **feel integrated into the Latino MSM HIV+ community.**
- Information and **support for serodiscordant couples.**

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HIV+ Monolingual Latino men who have sex with men (MSM)

"It's about time to recognize that we (the HIV+ community) are still practicing sex and we will continue doing it."

- Male, 25, HIV+ for 2 years

Intervention design

- **Skills Building Workshops**
"Armonias": Five-session workshop series (2 series for couples, 3 for singles) that will be offered five times each at two different centers simultaneously (ten different groups altogether). Facilitated by Prevention Case Manager and Peer Counselor. Proposed topics for the sessions are:
 1. *"Yo"*: ethnic, sexual orientation, sexual roles
 2. *"Desde adentro"*: safer sex, disclosure, coming out
 3. *"Con ganas"*: desire, passion, guilt
 4. *"Tu y yo"*: relationships and communication
 5. *"Nosotros"*: community action steps, shared responsibility, leadership development
- **Retreats**
 - At the conclusion of each series of 5 sessions, participants will be invited to a graduation weekend *"retiro"*/retreat to create a community of support and to reinforce the lessons from the skills building workshops. Participants will have to attend at least 3 sessions.
 - 30 participants at each retreat, 5 retreats throughout the year.
 - Continued discussion of issues that impact community members such as: family, racism, financial stress and loneliness.
- **Ongoing Prevention Case Management**

Progress

- Through February 2002, *Mano a Mano* has:
- Conducted training for services, treatment, mental health and case management staff at Bienestar to be more familiar with prevention for positive issues.
 - Held social gathering to launch the program *"Conoce a tu media naranja."*
 - Began singles group in Hollywood and East LA.
 - Held first retreat after singles group.
 - Conducted Prevention Case Management for HIV+ Latino MSM.

Lessons learned in formative research

- Define a clear role and structure for HIV+ prevention within current HIV+ client services.
- Assure participants of confidentiality of focus groups, roundtables and mailed surveys.
- Hire staff and evaluators with cultural and linguistic experience.
- Include incentives to recognize the efforts of participants (transportation, dinner and financial assistance).

AIDS Partnership California (APC) is a private-public funding collaborative that includes foundation and corporate funders and the California State Office of AIDS. APC is a program of Northern California Grantmakers, an association of 160 foundations and corporate giving programs.
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