Description

Turning Point’s Sista to Sista program provides services to African American women residing in the metro Twin Cities. The program targets African American heterosexual women 16 to 65. The goal of the program is to increase knowledge of safer sex practices within this community and to determine what makes members of the community take risks. As a part of the evaluation process for the Sista to Sista program, a survey is conducted to collect data to gain insight about why members of the target population participate in risky behaviors that contribute to increase risk to contracting HIV. The results from the survey inform the program on designing standard HIV/AIDS risk reduction interventions and providing supplemental mental health services.

Project Rationale

Turning Point’s Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative project, Sista to Sista, goal is to increase knowledge of HIV/AIDS within African American women age 16 to 65 because African American women. African American women are the second largest group in which new cases of HIV/AIDS are occurring according to the latest Minnesota Department of Health surveillance data. Sista to Sista will improve the prevention of health disparities by addressing the prevention interventions and then infusing them with mental health components that address the root causes of why women of this age range choose to participate in risky behaviors that contribute to contracting HIV.

Population Served & Geography

African American women between the ages of 16 to 65 who live in North Minneapolis mainly within the 55411 zip code area include the neighborhoods of Jordan, Old Highland, and Near North.

Project Partners

African American AIDS Task Force, Wayside Supportive Housing, and Park Avenue Treatment Center.

Program Contact

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Turning Point, Inc. is a part of the Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative (EHDI) through Minnesota Department of Health’s Office of Minority and Multicultural Health
Successes

- Building new relationships with partner organizations to reach HIV positive women.
- Appearing on the KMOJ talk show, Voices, allowed the Sista to Sista program to reach a large audience by utilizing the airwaves to increase the reach of knowledge about our program.
- Outreach tables were set up during neighborhood events.
- 3 to 4 young women consistently attended a small group that was hosted through Plymouth Christian Youth Center Alternative High School.

Challenges

- One of the challenges to the Sista to Sista program had was in establishing a regular group that was intended for the program. We had to redesign our strategies so that we could take our intervention to other agencies and places, providing one session of HIV/AIDS risk reduction and education.

Cost Savings

African Americans accounted for an estimated 44% of all new HIV infections among adults and adolescents (aged 13 years and older) in 2010, despite representing only 12% of the US population; considering the smaller size of the African American population in the United States, this represents a population rate that is 8 times that of whites overall. In 2010, African American women accounted for 6,100 (29%) of the estimated new HIV infections among all adult and adolescent African Americans (CDC, “HIV Among African Americans”. Web. 14 May. 2014). The cost of new HIV infections in the United States in 2002 is estimated at $36.5 billion, including $6.7 billion in direct medical costs and $29.7 billion in productivity losses. Direct medical costs per HIV infected African American were estimated to be $180,900 in 2002 (Hutchinson et al., “The Economic Burden of HIV in the United States in the Era of Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy: Evidence of Continuing Racial and Ethnic Differences”. Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome 43.4, 2006.) Any efforts to reduce the number of cases of HIV infection have impact on cost savings for the state of Minnesota.

Key Evaluation Findings 2012-2013

Turning Point’s Sista to Sista program provides one-session education sessions to groups to provide HIV/AIDS risk reduction education that include demonstrating the use of male and female condoms, proper condom usage, and other risk reduction techniques designed to reduce infection risks.

All participants in 2012-2013 outreach programs were able to demonstrate the correct use of male and female condoms. Fifty-two percent of participants increased their knowledge in HIV/AIDS risk reduction from pre to post test scores by more than a ten percent increase.