

Healthy Love Party

Courtesy of Lisa Diane White, Director of Programs, SisterLove, Inc.

Through a series of hands-on exercises and role play attendees will have the opportunity to build skill in cultural sensitivity as it relates to issues of women and sexuality.

Participants are taught correct condom use and disposal.

Participants are provided information that will help them reconsider their assumptions or beliefs regarding personal risk for contracting HIV or other STDs.

Detailed Description of the Intervention Program Activities

The following is a brief description of the intervention, which is divided into three components.

The first component, called "**Setting the Tone**," contains the following two exercises:

- **Fantasy Name:** The goal of this exercise is to help participants relax and feel comfortable about discussing sexuality and sexual behaviors that might place them at risk for HIV infection and transmission. Participants are asked to select a sexy fantasy name by which they will be referred throughout the duration of the workshop. Participants introduce themselves by their fantasy name, which helps them feel more comfortable and facilitate discussion of sexual issues
- **Synonyms:** This exercise helps women to recall and acknowledge their feelings, attitudes and beliefs about words often associated with sex and sexuality. The facilitator writes the following words at the top of a large sheet of paper: "penis," "vagina," "sex," and "masturbation." Each sheet of paper is then attached to the walls of the room and participants form groups near each sheet to brainstorm synonyms for the word, while one of them writes the synonyms on the sheet. After everyone has provided a synonym, a volunteer is asked to read the list aloud so that everyone feels the effects of hearing words that often trivialize or denigrate human sexuality, especially the sexuality of women. This is followed by a discussion, led by the facilitator who highlights the positive words in the participants' lists. The facilitator only uses these positive words for the rest of the presentation.

The second component of HLPW is called "**The Facts**," and contains the following three exercises:

- **HIV/AIDS Fundamentals:** This is the central informational component of the HLPW. The facilitator writes down the acronyms "HIV" and "AIDS" on sheets of paper, and asks the participants for the meaning of each letter. This activity leads to a discussion of HIV and AIDS, and how the virus is transmitted.

- Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs): Participants learn the names of the most common STIs, the mode of transmission and common symptoms. The aim of this activity is to provide basic information about STIs and their impact upon those living with HIV. The activity also gives women the opportunity to share what they know about STIs.
- The Look of HIV/AIDS: The purpose of this activity is to dispel the myth that one can visibly tell whether someone is living with HIV or AIDS and to provide information about the incidence of HIV and AIDS in the United States. Participants learn about the signs and symptoms of HIV infection and various HIV testing options. Anonymous and confidential testing and HIV statistics for women of color are discussed. Participants are then encouraged to get tested and know their status.

The third and final component is called "**Safer Sex**" and is comprised of the following activities:

Risk Assessment: This exercise provides participants with information that will help them reconsider their assumptions or beliefs regarding personal risk for contracting HIV or other STDs. Participants are taught how to rate their own risk according to their past and/or current sexual behaviors. The aim of this activity is to provide participants with an opportunity to assess their personal risk of contracting a sexually transmitted disease and HIV.

Condom Demonstration: In this exercise participants are taught correct condom use and disposal. Participants are then given a chance to place a condom on a penis model.

Condom Race: This is a fun, competitive exercise that gives participants another chance to practice correct condom use in a realistic atmosphere (e.g., lights off and music playing). The time pressure of this exercise simulates circumstances when women may need to rapidly place a condom on an impatient partner.

Female Condom Demonstration: Many women may have never seen a female condom and may not know how to use one. Participants learn basic facts about the female condom, and discuss its ability to reduce the risk of transmitting or contracting HIV and other STIs. This exercise provides participants with an opportunity to apply a female condom using a vagina model.

Oral Sex: The objective is to demonstrate how participants can reduce their risk of transmitting or contracting HIV and other STIs during oral sex. Participants learn the proper technique for engaging in safer oral sex which includes the use of dental dams or plastic wrap, "cheeking" (applying a condom orally), and the use of lubricants.

High, Low, No Risk: The purpose of this activity is to provide participants with a final opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned about the ways HIV and other STIs are transmitted. Participants are randomly given cards that describe risk activities (e.g., "anal sex without a condom"). They are then asked to read the card and say whether the activity is high-risk, low-risk or no-risk for contracting or transmitting HIV. Then the entire group is asked if they agree with the participant. The Facilitator guides the group in a discussion of the activity and risk level.