The Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) is an Mpowerment Project collaboration across four agencies: Body Positives, In10, Native Health and PIMA Prevention Partnership in Phoenix, Arizona. The Mpowerment Project is a community level HIV prevention program originally designed to address the needs of young gay and bisexual men (see www.mpowerment.org for more information).

YEP is funded to run two Mpowerment Project programs; one for young gay and bisexual men, and another for transgender youth. Currently in year three of their five year grant, YEP has overcome several obstacles within the first two years—securing a project space, hiring and training coordinators, recruiting participants, and obtaining community buy-in.

This year, YEP hired a new trans youth Mpowerment Project coordinator, secured their own project space, and they are currently assembling a community advisory board.

Myra Jesus, the transgender YEP coordinator, is an energetic, young, Native American transwoman who says that sending the message out for safer sex practices among trans youth is what excites her most about the program. She believes that the program’s greatest success is letting trans youth know that the YEP house is a place that they can hang out and be themselves.

The Youth Empowerment Project is the only community based organization in Phoenix for trans youth to receive support in a peer-based environment.

Myra recently ran the first pilot of the M Group (a single session workshop addressing safer sex) reinvention with trans youth. Several of the participants offered to help with the next M Group.

Myra is focusing on recruiting transgender youth for the program, and is collaborating with the Phoenix Department of Public Health to conduct late night street outreach to trans youth.

Myra says that YEP overcomes their challenges by getting support from other agencies, attending conferences, participating in the Transitions Project conference calls, and receiving technical assistance.

For more information about YEP, email mjesus@bodypositive.org.

The 2008 United States Conference on AIDS featured a day long Transgender Institute hosted by the Center of Excellence for Transgender HIV Prevention, a half day Transgender Affinity Session, and several workshops addressing HIV prevention within transgender communities.

The Transgender Institute included presentations from the Center of Excellence for Transgender HIV Prevention, the Transitions Project in San Francisco, Howard Brown Health Center in Chicago, the Tanama Project in Puerto Rico, the Transhealth Information Project in Philadelphia, Lisa Agate from the Broward County Department of Health, the Youth Empowerment Project in Phoenix, Tri City Health Center in Alameda County, and TRANS THRIVE in San Francisco.
Agencies Implementing Transgender HIV Prevention Interventions:

AIDS Healthcare Foundation, and The Asian & Pacific Island Wellness Center: An Mpowerment adaptation. apiwellness.org/trans_thrive.html


Howard Brown Health Center: TWISTA, Transgender Women Informing Sisters on Topics of AIDS. A SISTA adaptation. www.howardbrown.org

La Clinica del Pueblo: An Mpowerment adaptation. www.lcdp.org


Prevention Training Centers (PTC’s) provide free and low cost trainings for organizations on a variety of topics related to service provision and HIV prevention. Some of the trainings the Transitions Project recommends include: Adapting Evidence Based Interventions, Comprehensive Introduction to Effective STD/HIV Behavioral Interventions, Group Facilitation Skills for STD/HIV Prevention Interventions, Meeting the HIV/STD Prevention Needs of Transgender Clients (Western Region only), Selecting Behavioral Interventions, and STD Overview for Non-Clinicians.

There are four Prevention Training Centers in the United States, divided up by region:

1. Eastern Region (Rochester, NY PTC) www.urmc.rochester.edu/chbt/
2. Central Region (Denver, CO PTC) www.denverptc.org
3. Southern Region (Dallas, TX PTC) www.utsouthwestern.edu/utsw/home/educ/prevtraincenter/index.html
4. Western Region (Oakland, CA PTC) www.stdhivtraining.org

Upcoming Conferences

Equality and Parity II: A Statewide Action for Transgender HIV Prevention and Care

In 2005, the California State Office of AIDS organized the first Equality and Parity conference in San Francisco, California. Over the course of two and a half days, more than two hundred prevention and care providers, activists and community members convened to share information and experiences and openly dialogue about the state of the HIV epidemic among transgender communities in California. To build upon the success of this conference, and the subsequent growth in the response to HIV as it affects transgender people, the second Equality and Parity conference has been planned for January 26th through 28th, 2009 in Los Angeles. www.equalityandparity.org

2009 Philadelphia Trans Health Conference

The Philadelphia Trans Health Conference brings together transgender and gender-variant people, partners, allies, and healthcare providers for three days of workshops, keynotes, discussion, and networking. Because quality accessible, respectful healthcare is linked to self-determining our bodies and identities in a larger world, this conference seeks to explore themes related to enjoying rich, full lives, and building movements and communities for justice.

The first day focuses on provider training and the last two days, focus on transpeople and our health concerns.


2009 United States Conference on AIDS

The United States Conference on AIDS (USCA) is the largest AIDS related gathering in the United States. The 2009 USCA will have a special focus on HIV prevention within transgender communities.

The 2009 USCA will occur at the Hilton San Francisco Hotel in San Francisco, California from October 29th –31st.

USCA Deadlines:
Abstract Submission: April 24, 2009
Scholarship Application: July 10, 2009
Early Bird Registration: July 17, 2009
Hotel Reservations: September 25, 2009 www.2009usca.org
Adapting Evidence Based Interventions

Projects implementing CDC approved Evidence Based Interventions with transgender populations must adapt the intervention to address the needs of transgender communities. Adaptation occurs when key characteristics or activities are changed within an intervention without changing or contradicting the core elements (McKleroy et al, 2006). Core elements are the essential components that reflect the theory behind the intervention and are the pieces that make the intervention effective. Key Characteristics of an intervention include activities and delivery methods that can be modified to be culturally appropriate.

The Center for Disease Control (2006) recommends the following steps in the Map of Adaptation Process: assess, select, prepare, pilot, and implement.

1. Assess: (a) The target population through the identification of risk factors, behavioral determinants, and risk behaviors; (b) Research available evidence based interventions; (c) Identify stakeholders and receive their input; (d) Assess the capacity of the agency to implement the EBI.
2. Select: Utilizing the assessment information, the agency will select the EBI that best fits the population and fits within the agency capacity.
3. Prepare: (a) Make changes to the original EBI; (b) Organization preparation such as hiring and training new staff; (c) Pre-test the adaptation with a community advisory board.
4. Pilot: Create an implementation plan for the adapted EBI to guide the adaptation and then pilot the adaptation with the target population, documenting any future changes that should be made.
5. Implement: Ensure thorough process evaluations and outcome evaluations.

References:

CDC Funded DEBI’s for Adaptation with Transgender Populations

The Mpowerment Project
A community-level intervention for young men who have sex with men uses a combination of informal and formal outreach, discussion groups, creation of safe spaces, social opportunities, and social marketing to reach a broad range of young gay men with HIV prevention, safer sex, and risk reduction messages.

SISTA: Sisters Informing Sisters about Topics on AIDS
A group-level, gender- and culturally-relevant intervention, designed to increase condom use with African American women. Five peer-led group sessions are conducted that focus on ethnic and gender pride, HIV knowledge, and skills training around sexual risk reduction behaviors and decision making.

Healthy Relationships
A five-session, small-group intervention for men and women living with HIV/AIDS. It is based on Social Cognitive Theory and focuses on developing skills and building self-efficacy and positive expectations about new behaviors through modeling behaviors and practicing new skills.

Introducing... Yavanté Thomas-Guess

Yavanté Thomas-Guess is a new Capacity Building Assistance Specialist on the Transitions Project. A Jewish African American Transgender Male, Yavanté brings a wealth of experience in HIV prevention to the Transitions Project. He currently serves as the co-chair for San Francisco Transgender Empowerment Advocacy and Mentoring (SF TEAM) and is a councilmember for the San Francisco HIV Prevention Planning Council (HPPC).

Yavanté began his work in HIV prevention in the 1990’s with a needle exchange program in Atlanta. He believes that HIV prevention involves addressing the whole person, including addiction, depression/mental health needs, HIV status, housing situation, educational level or employment needs.

When he’s not advocating for change in transgender communities, Yavanté can be found writing and spending quality time with his wife.

Yavanté can be contacted by email at: yavante.thomas-guess@ucsf.edu, and by phone at (415) 597-8009.
The Transitions Project provides capacity building assistance (CBA) and technical assistance to community based organizations (CBOs) and health departments throughout the US to promote knowledgeable, sensitive, and effective HIV/AIDS prevention for transgender communities of color and HIV+ transgender people. This CDC-funded capacity building project is the first of its kind to address the HIV prevention needs of transgender communities. Estimates of HIV prevalence among transgender women, especially transgender women of color, have been the highest for any risk group in the US.

The Transitions Team is available for consultation, training, capacity-building and technical assistance throughout the United States. Please let us know what we can do to assist your organization to effectively address the needs of trans and gender variant persons in your community.

The Transitions Project is a program of the Center for AIDS Prevention Studies at the University of California, San Francisco.

What’s New in Trans News!

1. Congressional Hearing on Transgender Issues
   Congress held the fist ever hearing on transgender issues on Thursday, June 26th: "An Examination of Discrimination Against Transgender Americans in the Workplace." The National Center for Transgender Equality posted testimony from several witnesses as well as links to You Tube video of the hearing at: http://nctequality.org/hearing.html.

2. New Publication from the National Center for Transgender Equality
   The National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) recently released it’s newest publication, "Opening the Door to the Inclusion of Transgender People: The Nine Keys to Making Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Organizations Fully Transgender Inclusive." The publication is available on the NCTE website: www.nctequality.org/Resources/opening_the_door.pdf

3. World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH)
   In July 2008, WPATH released the “Clarification on Medical Necessity of Treatment, Sex Reassignment, and Insurance Coverage in the USA”. This document states that transgender related surgeries are medically necessary and has broad implications for trans-related health care coverage. www.wpath.org

4. American Psychological Association

Do you have an exciting piece of transgender news? Email it to luis.gutierrezmock@ucsf.edu