

## Faith-Based HIV Prevention for Young Black MSM

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### Project Description

The goal of this project, which was originally conducted in collaboration with the Unity Fellowship Church Movement, was to determine what approaches to HIV prevention for young Black men who have sex with men could be implemented by faith-based organizations.

We assessed the capacity, interest and attitudes of certain Black churches towards HIV prevention by conducting 22 semi-structured telephone interviews with representatives of select Black churches in California. Additionally, we conducted six focus groups with young Black MSM:

- Two groups with young Black MSM who did not attend church to discuss their attitudes towards churches running HIV prevention programs
- Two groups with HIV- or unknown HIV status young Black MSM to discuss their opinions and experiences regarding HIV testing and the role that church-based interventions could play in encouraging testing
- Two groups with HIV+ young Black MSM to discuss issues related to HIV treatment and support for positive people, particularly through church-based interventions

After analyzing the results of the focus groups and interviews, we collaborated with two Boards of Cultural Experts, men and women from faith-based organizations, who helped interpret the study's findings and made recommendations about the foundations for HIV prevention interventions for Black faith-based organizations.

### Interesting Findings

Four different patterns of acceptance for homosexuality and HIV prevention:

Acceptance	Homosexuality	HIV Prevention		
		Groups for young men	HIV testing at church	Condom distribution
Non-condemning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" philosophy</li> <li>• Homosexual women and men &amp; homosexuality never discussed explicitly</li> </ul>	Reluctant	Averse	Uncomfortable
Accepting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual orientation never publicly discussed</li> <li>• Gay-friendly &amp; covertly accepting of homosexuality</li> <li>• Sexual identity mostly expressed outside of church</li> <li>• "Open Closet" phenomenon</li> </ul>	Reluctant	Moderately supportive, but not at church	Against
Open and Affirming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentioned in church bylaws</li> <li>• Openly gay clergy</li> <li>• Many openly LGBTQ members</li> <li>• Ministries for gays and lesbians</li> <li>• Activism &amp; visibility mostly within church context</li> </ul>	Open	Hesitant	Reluctant
Radically Inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity of sexual orientation, sexual identity, theology and race</li> <li>• Highly visible in "gay circles" and mainstream religious and political circles</li> <li>• Engaged in social activism</li> <li>• All forms of sexual self expression equally validated</li> </ul>	Quite amenable	Supportive	Open