

7th ANNUAL IRIS HOUSE SUMMIT

Women As
The Face
of AIDS



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Common Threads' ME Circle Project

Advancing Economic Opportunities for Women Living with HIV/AIDS

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National Women and AIDS Collective

Women as the Face of AIDS

2012 Iris House Summit

May 4, 2012





Learning Objectives

- This workshop will provide attendees with the opportunity to:
 - Examine ways that women become vulnerable to HIV.
 - Examine how gender-specific programming for women living with HIV/AIDS can result in increased enhanced social empowerment and/or financial self-sufficiency.
 - Learn how their participation in business and microenterprise programming has impacted the lives of women living with HIV.



COMMON THREADS TRAINING



Creating a Community of Storytellers to Combat HIV/AIDS Stigma

“No need is more fundamentally human than our need to understand our experience.”



Just Cause Consulting (2012)

COMMON THREADS

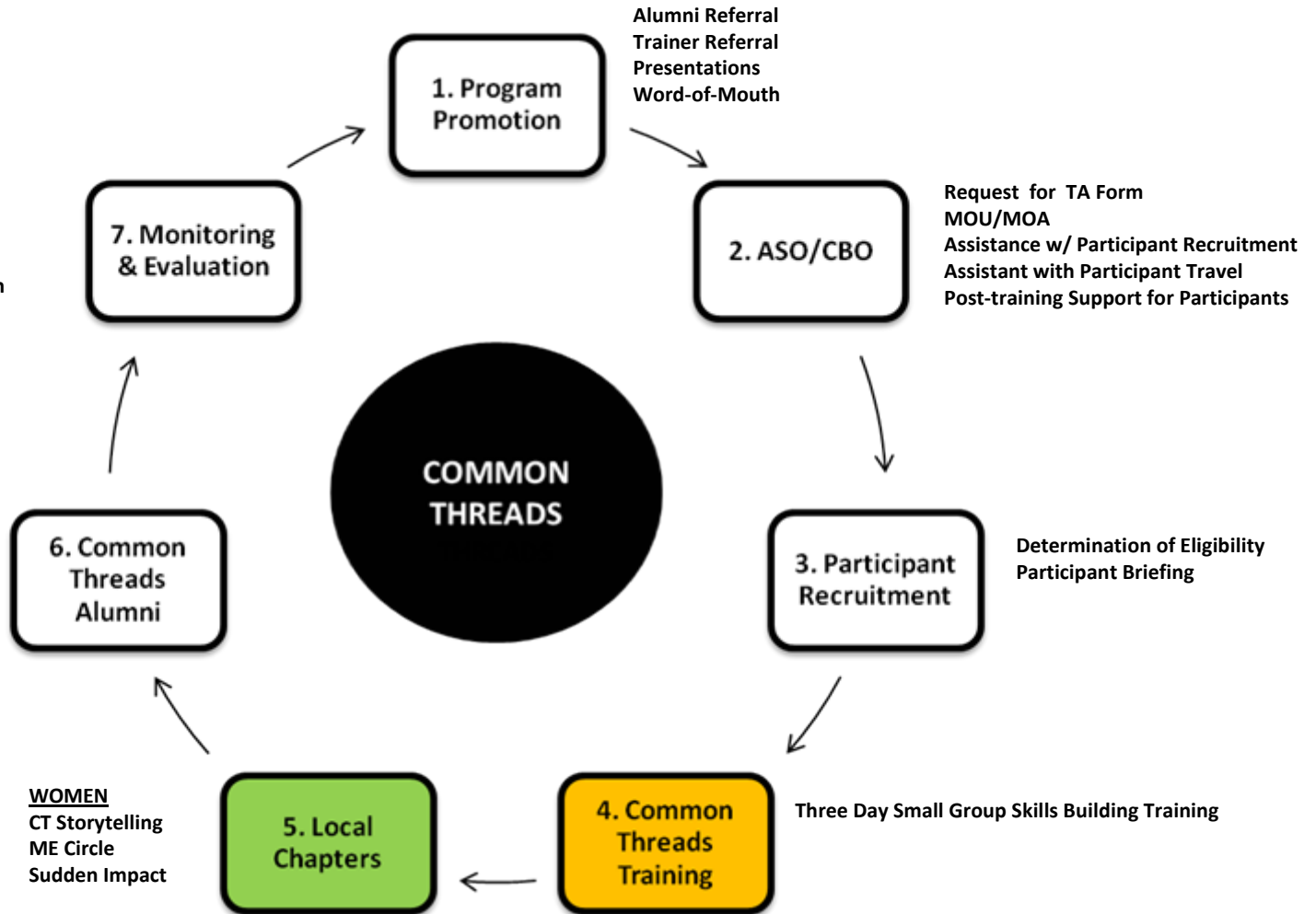


Common Threads is a three day small group HIV prevention training designed to 1) reduce HIV/AIDS related stigma and 2) increase utilization of HIV services by building the capacity of women of African descent living with HIV/AIDS to effectively share their life experiences among partners, family, friends, and community members in geographical areas where there is a high incidence of HIV within the African American/Black community.



COMMON THREADS

Program Components





HIV Vulnerability

Questions for Discussion



- What is HIV risk?
- What is HIV vulnerability?
- What are some of the factors that can lead to HIV vulnerability?





Defining HIV Risk and Vulnerability

UNAIDS (2007)

- **Risk** is defined as the probability or likelihood that a person may become infected with HIV. Certain behaviors create, increase, and perpetuate risk. Examples include:
 - unprotected sex with a partner whose HIV status is unknown,
 - multiple sexual partnerships involving unprotected sex,
 - and injecting drug use with contaminated needles and syringes.





Defining HIV Risk and Vulnerability

UNAIDS (2007)

- **Vulnerability** results from a range of factors outside the control of the individual that reduce the ability of individuals and communities to avoid HIV risk.
 - These factors may include:
 - lack of knowledge and skills required to protect oneself and others;
 - factors pertaining to the quality and coverage of services (e.g. inaccessibility of service due to distance, cost or other factors); and





Defining HIV Risk and Vulnerability

UNAIDS (2007)

- These factors may also include:
 - societal factors such as human rights violations
 - social and cultural norms.
 - Such violations in the form of practices, beliefs and laws that stigmatize and disempower certain populations, limiting their ability to access or use HIV prevention, treatment, care, and support services and commodities create or exacerbate individual and collective vulnerability to HIV.





Vulnerability Reconsidered

- **IMPACT OF VULNERABILITY**

Other than demographics, the more vulnerabilities (conditions and/or circumstances) a woman is exposed to, the more likely a woman is going to be in harm's way to acquire or transmit HIV person OR the more likely a woman may take potentially harmful risks, which may arise out of choice, need and/or desire.

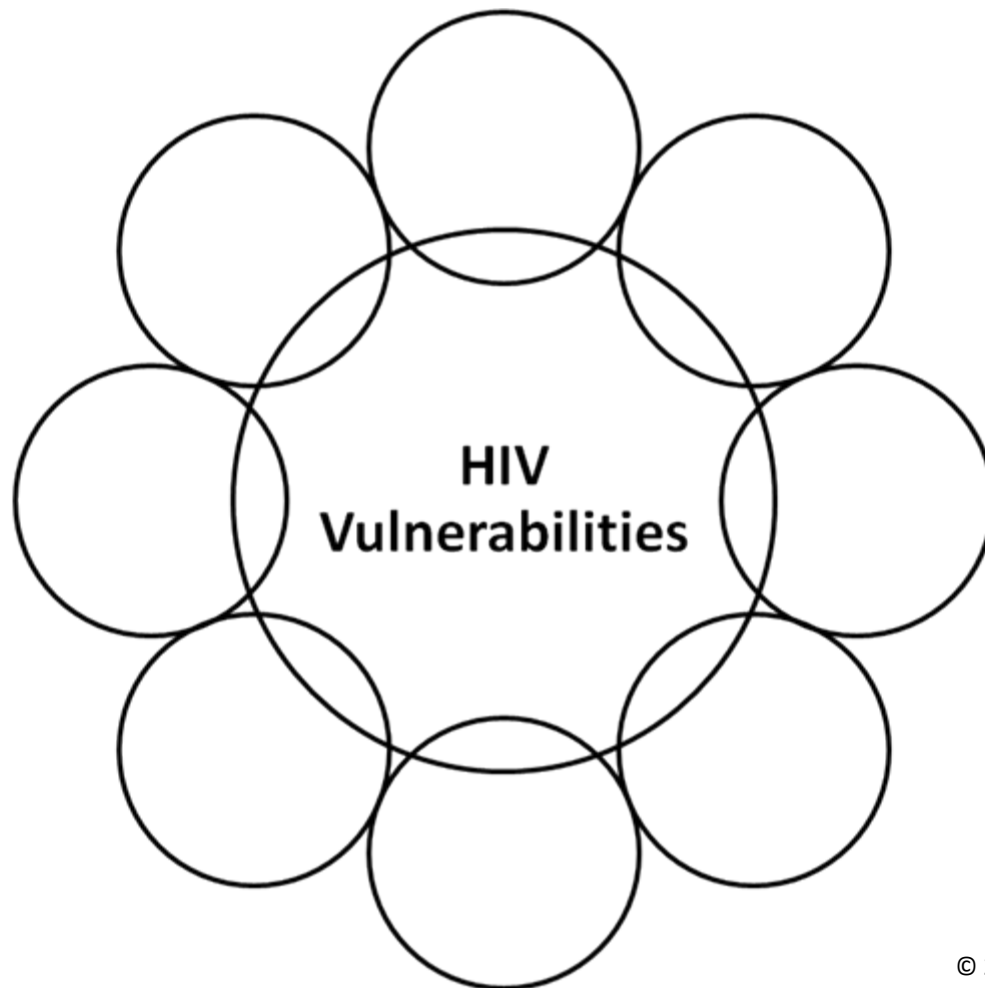




EXERCISE

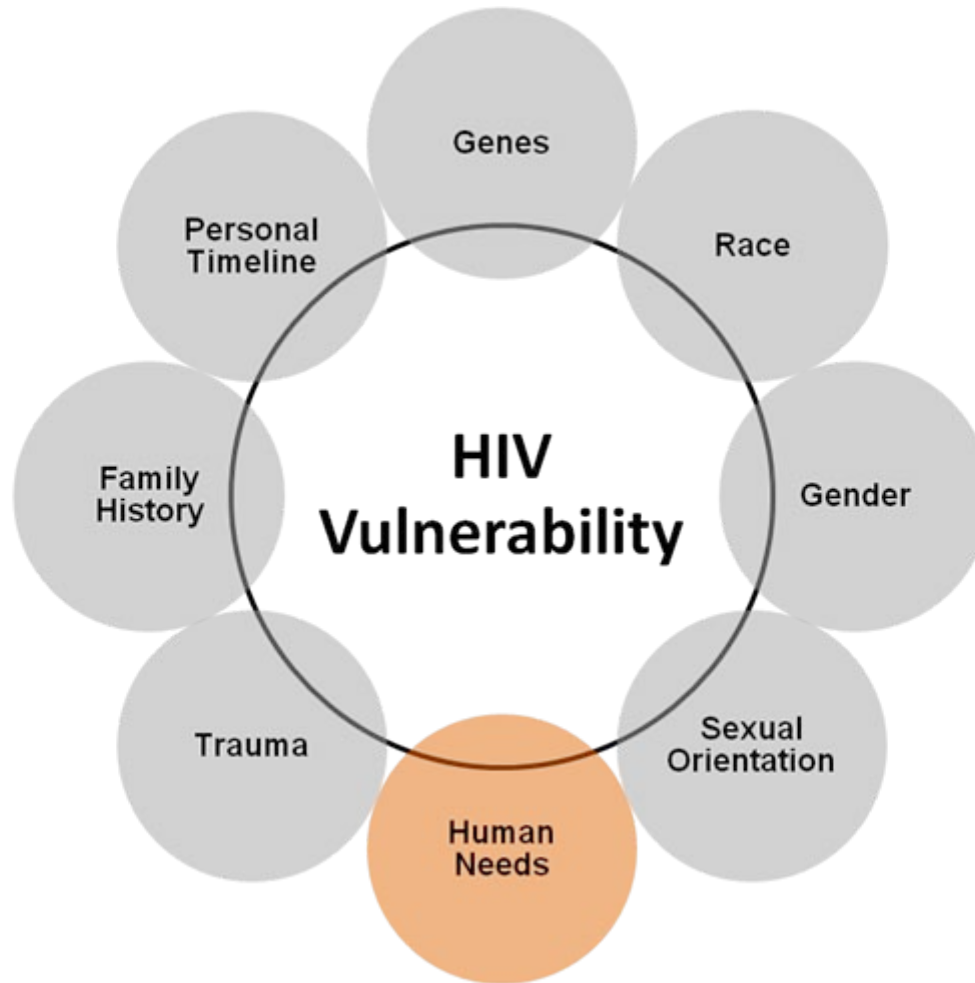
Identifying HIV Vulnerabilities

Our Community: Women





Primary Factors Leading to HIV Vulnerability





Factor: Human Needs - Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

See Attachment #1

Self-
Actualization
Spiritual
Needs

Esteem Needs

Love and Belonging
Needs

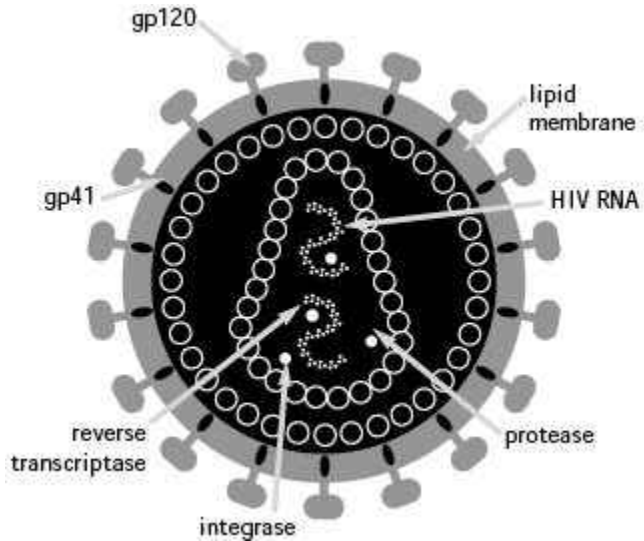
Safety Needs

Physiological Needs

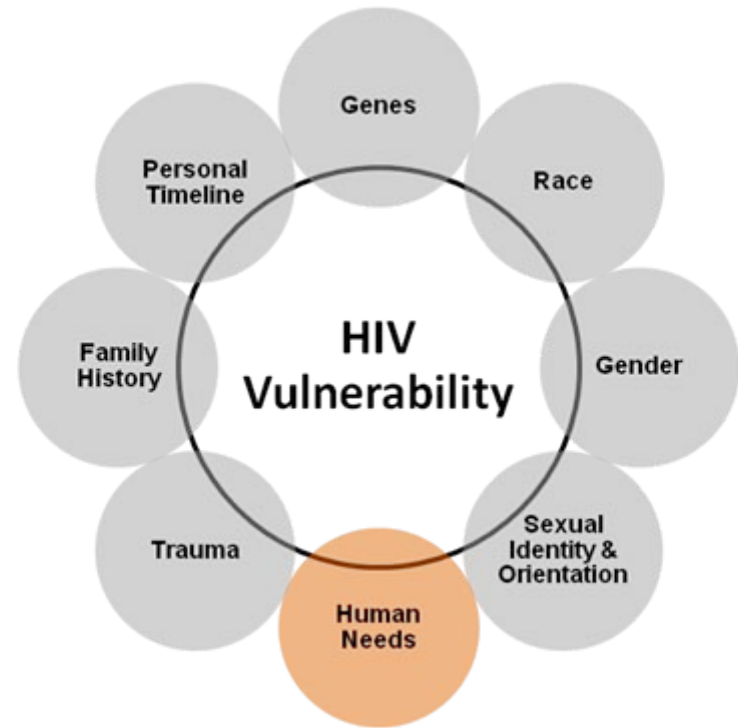




See the Resemblance?



The HIV Virus
thebody.com



The Microenterprise (ME) Circle



Social Determinants

Human Needs



For women living with HIV/AIDS
one of the most impactful
social determinants
is poverty.



Social Determinants

Human Needs



- None of us want to live in poverty but what are we doing about it?
 - Question: How many of you look at your finances on paper? Have a household budget?
- Exercise: Where Do I Stand Financially?
 - See Attachment #2



Annual Income

Where do you stand?

- Income level (percentile) and median income (rounded) in 2001:
 1. Level 6 (90 to 100) \$170,000
 2. Level 5 (80 to 89.9) \$99,000
 3. Level 4 (60 to 79.9) \$65,000
 4. Level 3 (40 to 59.9) \$40,000
 5. Level 2 (20 to 39.9) \$24,000
 6. Level 1 (19 or less) \$10,000



Social Determinants

Human Needs



- Socio-economic conditions can impact a woman's vulnerability for HIV infection, her ability to access programs to address her vulnerabilities and needs, and/or her ability to care for herself and successfully live with HIV/AIDS.
- Microenterprise has become a useful and valuable income generating alternative for addressing vulnerabilities arising out of poverty.



The ME Circle



- The ME Circle is a personal and group sustainability vehicle designed to ensure that women living with HIV/AIDS are not solely dependent on public benefits and resources to live a quality life.
 - Local economic collectives support their ongoing efforts with monies collected from the microenterprise circles or the ME Circles.





The ME Circle

Benefits

- Shared responsibility.
- Increased knowledge investment
- Group motivation: This increases members' confidence in investing
- Strengthened friendship
- Savings

Challenges

- Membership challenges
- Formal vs. informal structures
- Financial instability





The ME Circle

Requirements

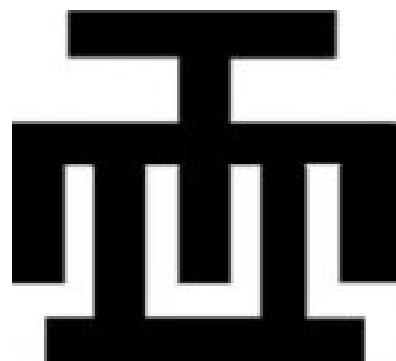
- Graduates of Common Threads
- Attend ME Circle Training
- Organize economic collective
 - Coordinator
 - Bookkeeper
 - Note Taker



Reporting

Tools

- Notebook
- Revenue & Expense Report



The Measuring Stick Crafting Circle Projects

Juanita Williams

The Measuring Stick Crafting Circle

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My living quilt with the Names Project



Jewelry



Hand painted
pillow of
Ndebele women



yo-yo quilt
made with
596 yo-yos





“Olivia”



Heineken bottle figurines



“Frances”



“Sophia and
King Charles”

Door stopper
made of
brick
resembling a
sofa





12" flower pot saucers with painted Adinkra symbols





Hand painted wall hanging





Hand appliqué baby blocks





Another Kwanzaa wall hanging



Common Threads

" Am I a Reflection of You ? "



Women of South Carolina



Red Ribbon Earrings

Common Threads
"Am I a Reflection of You?"

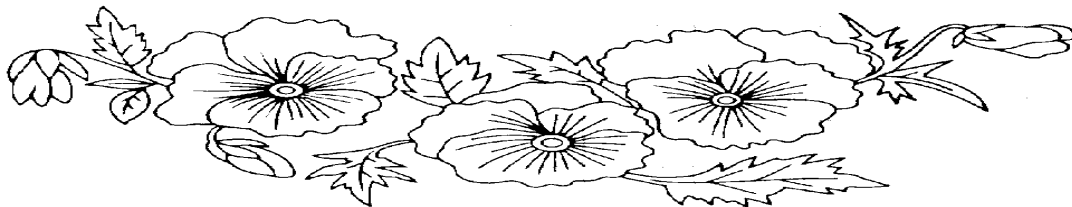


Women of South Carolina





Red Ribbon Earrings



Red Ribbon Earrings

Common Threads
"Am I a Reflection of You?"



Women of South Carolina



Earrings

Common Threads
"Am I a Reflection of You?"



Women of South Carolina



Earrings Gloire

Common Threads
"Am I a Reflection of You?"



Women of South Carolina





Benefits

- Outcomes as result of the ME Circle
 - Peace of mind
 - Sisterhood
 - Networking
 - Development of new skills
 - Motto: Sharing our talents and saving lives!
 - Money in the Bank
 - Supports conference attendance
 - Community speaking engagement
 - Group meetings
 - Re-investment to keep the group going





Are You Ready?

- **Is there a talent or service you can do?**
 - Make a list of 10 things you like to do.
 - Highlight the ones you are really good at and that people will pay you for doing.
 - If you could acquire 3 additional skills what would they be?
 - What 3 outrageous things would you try if no one knew about it?
 - So when are you going start?





COMMON THREADS

Contact Information

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COMMON THREADS

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