

# Perceptions of Fidelity & Adaptation in Evidence-Informed Interventions by Women of Color Sexuality Educators

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## Background & Rationale

### Youth Sexual Health Outcomes in the US

In the US, youth disproportionately experience negative sexual health outcomes. Compared to their peers in other developed nations, youth ages 15-24 make up one-fourth of the sexually active population, but account for half of all new STI cases each year. Furthermore, 6% of all young women ages 15-19 experience pregnancy.

### Young Women of Color (YWOC)

YWOC, particularly African American/Black and Latina/Hispanic, between the ages of 13-24 years, are among those most vulnerable to unintended pregnancy and STIs. Myriad complex factors contribute to increased vulnerability to unintended pregnancy, STIs and HIV for YWOC including: (1) living in communities that experience a higher prevalence of HIV than other communities; (2) socioeconomic factors such as poverty, financial dependence on male partners, lower self-esteem, and experience with dating violence; and (3) lack of access to culturally appropriate, youth-friendly reproductive and sexual health care and services. At the end of 2010, 82% of adolescent young women living with HIV in the United States were YWOC, despite the fact that together, they represent only about 30% of US women these ages.

### Evidence-Informed Interventions

Success or failure of the transfer of prevention technology to practitioners occurs by determining community capacities and preparedness to adopt/adapt high-impact interventions to effectively manage implementation. Experts argue for evidence-informed interventions (EII), as opposed to evidence-based interventions (EBI), as the best way to incorporate research in applied settings. EBIs are solely guided by recommendations from current evidence, whereas EIIs recognizes and incorporates the practitioner's judgment and professional expertise in the context of program implementation.

### Federally-Funded Behavior Change Interventions

Federal funding (HHS, OAH, CDC, NIH R01s) prioritizes EBIs over EIIs, and defines program efficacy using *implementation fidelity* – the degree to which programs are implemented as written. Concurrently, experts recognize that in comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), sexuality health educators (SHEs) adapt interventions to the needs of their audience. However, there is limited understanding of how, why and when adaptations are made.

### Women of Color Sexuality Health Educators (WOC SHEs)

Exploring adaptation with SHEs who implement programming that is intended for YWOC has potential to bolster the ways in which those programs can remain efficacious while adaptation takes place on-the-ground. In an effort to best serve YWOC, WOC SHEs – who often have shared cultural understanding – are frequently hired and trained to implement these programs. These SHEs are uniquely positioned to provide detailed background about the contextual forces that influence program adaptations.

### Innovation

WOC SHEs are uniquely positioned to provide insight and clarity on the complex matrix of factors influencing program adaptation – especially if their personal characteristics mirror their intended audience. Current initiatives could be strengthened with a clearer understanding of implementation practice, including driving forces behind adaptation and the associated risks and benefits. Black Feminist Thought, Theory of Gender and Power, and Social Constructivist Theory anchor this inquiry.

## Aims of the Study

In order to ensure that CSE program outcomes prioritizing young people are realized, researchers need a better understanding of the driving forces behind CSE program adaptation that is taking place during workshops. Specific research aims for this proposed study are as follows:

### Aim 1:

Explore WOC SHEs' perspectives of contextual factors that drive adaptations to the ways that evidence-informed sexual health education curricula is implemented in a community-based organization (CBO) setting; and

### Aim 2:

Identify possible implications of WOC SHEs' adaptations on program development, training, monitoring and evaluation

### Sub-Aim 1:

Identify possible benefits of adaptation as it relates to program monitoring/process evaluation (that is not required by funders or other stakeholders) in order to uncover new data and/or recycle data into strengthening future program implementation

### Sub-Aim 2:

Identify possible disadvantages to the tailoring of curricula that occurs as a result of adaptation

## Proposed Plan of Inquiry

This is exploratory study uses qualitative methods, purposive sampling and an inductive approach. Focus groups will explore perceptions of adaptation and fidelity with WOC SHEs currently implementing CSE behavioral interventions with YWOC (n=25-70). Focus groups will be audio recorded, transcribed and analyzed using Grounded Theory.

### Recruitment

Participant recruitment began in August 2015 using nonprobability, purposive expert sampling via personal and professional networks. Potential participants were recruited via social media and email blasts to complete an eligibility and demographic questionnaire housed at [www.sexedstudy.org](http://www.sexedstudy.org). To date, 86 individuals have completed the screener; 62% are eligible for participation. Recruitment is ongoing; focus group facilitation and data analysis will begin in November 2015.

### Focus Groups

The PI will moderate and audio record focus groups with an experienced note taker. Discussions will be transcribed under PI supervision by two trained undergraduate researchers using NVivo software. Data analysis will focus on theoretical saturation using Grounded Theory method.

### Incentives

Participants will receive refreshments, 1 round trip NYC MTA MetroCard, and be entered into a raffle to receive 1 of 3 \$100 Amazon gift cards.

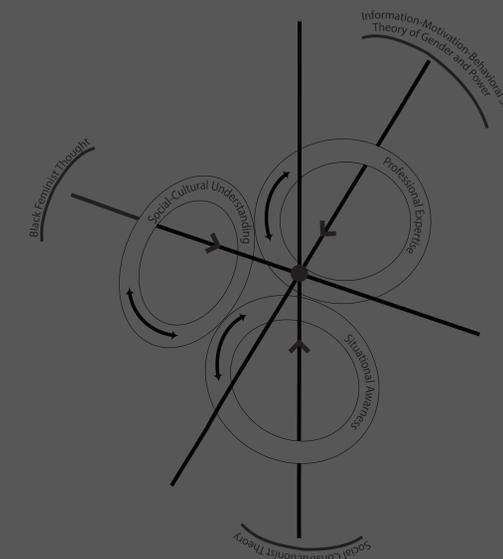
## Next Steps

Participant recruitment began in August. Focus group composition and facilitation will take place in November, until saturation is reached. Focus groups will be audio recorded and transcribed. A note taker will be present for all data collection, and analyzed using Grounded Theory.

## Conceptual Framework

Focus group discussions will inquire about the following topics in the context of fidelity and adaptation of CSE program implementation:

Socio-Cultural Understanding	Professional Expertise	Situational Awareness
<i>Personal (shared) experiences related to:</i>	<i>Facilitation experience related to:</i>	<i>Multi-level perception skills related to:</i>
Ethnicity	Training	Emotional Intelligence
Language	Programmatic Goals	Interacting Dynamics of:
Socio-Economic Status	Learning Objectives	• Group
Gender Identity	Interaction with Agency Staff	• Community
Sexual Orientation	Funding	• Individuals
Immigration Status		
Age		



## Dissertation Committee

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