

Focus groups as an educational intervention for Black gay men

Bellinger, George, Jr. Mays, V.M.** and Cochran, S.D.****

**Black C.A.R.E. Project, Los Angeles, United States*

***University of California, Los Angeles, United States*

****California State University, Northridge, United States*

Objective. In order to develop effective strategies for AIDS education and prevention efforts with Black gay and bisexual men, information was gathered from diverse groups across the United States.

Methods. Six focus groups of 2-5 hours in length, each comprised of 8-10 Black gay and bisexual men, were convened in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Omaha, and Pittsburgh.

Methodology based on marketing and group dynamics was used to assess relevant factors, including language, level of knowledge and cultural determinants in HIV-related behavior.

Results. While the initial purpose of the focus groups was to assess information from the subjects, its impact was that of an educational intervention. Participants reported a desire to continue in a group format and to organize similar types of groups. Individuals previously reluctant to become involved in AIDS-related activities appeared motivated to participate because 1) the facilitator did not reside in their city and 2) networks used to compose the groups were so diverse that most members knew few of the other participants.

Conclusion. Focus groups appear to be a potential model for increasing participation by Black gay and bisexual men in AIDS-related risk reduction.

Bellinger, G., Mays, V.M. & Cochran, S.D. (1989 June 4-9). Focus groups as an educational intervention for Black gay men. Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on AIDS (p. 802; abstract no. D.667), Montreal, Canada.