

A Community Participatory Approach to Developing and Implementing a Multi-level Female Condom Intervention

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The Female Condom (FC)

- ❖ Introduced by the Female Health Co. worldwide in 1992 and in the U.S in 1993, the FC is the most effective woman-initiated prevention option for HIV/STI prevention and reproductive planning.
- ❖ Though studies have shown high acceptability rates in various populations globally, FC use remains low.
- ❖ The greatest limitations to FC use are that they are difficult to find in the community, are rarely promoted or viewed by health and service providers as a viable prevention option, and are severely rationed by public health organizations.



Community-Based FC Intervention

- ❖ A multi-level approach to increase community-wide availability, accessibility and support for the FC is required to change the environment that curtails FC adoption.
- ❖ Evidence increasingly supports the development of multi-level interventions, using a community-empowerment model to mobilize interested sectors of the community.
- ❖ Community-based collaborative research is the most promising approach to meet the challenges of developing and testing community empowerment multi-level interventions.

Enhancing HIV Prevention Through Multi-level Community Intervention to Promote Women-Initiated Prevention Options

Research Questions:

- ❖ Can we recruit, mobilize and build capacity of a **Community Action and Advocacy Board (CAAB)** to develop, implement and evaluate a multi-level intervention to promote availability, accessibility, and support for FC?
- ❖ Can CAAB-developed multi-level intervention result in:
 - ❖ Expected outcomes at the community (macro), organizational (meso), and individual (micro) levels?
 - ❖ Individual's improved FC knowledge, positive attitudes and increased FC use?
- ❖ Are these outcomes sustainable over time?

Research Methods:

- ❖ **Formative Assessment** – qualitative and quantitative assessments of Hartford neighborhoods where interventions might be implemented, FC might be available, and participants might be recruited.
- ❖ **Community Assessment (observations and interviews every 6 months)** - to assess where FC are available; to document changes in availability of, access to, and support for FC; and to document evidence of CAAB interventions and their effects.
- ❖ **Cross-sectional Survey (Baseline, 12, 24 & 36 months)** - with 400 men and women to measure change in knowledge, attitudes, and use of FC, as well as recognition and exposure to CAAB interventions and perceived change in FC presence and support.
- ❖ **Community Capacity Building Intervention** - Creation and training of local CAAB. Sessions included group identity and skills-building exercises, use of a systematic method to conceptualize and detail intervention plans incorporating elements of evidence-based interventions.
- ❖ **Qualitative Process Evaluation** - observations of CAAB training and multi-level interventions.



FC Availability in Hartford, CT

- ❖ To date we have visited all locations (pharmacies, health and service organizations, grocery, convenience and adult retail stores) city wide that could carry FC.
- ❖ FCs are unavailable at pharmacies, grocery and convenience stores where male condoms are sold.
- ❖ Some social service organizations, drug treatment facilities and clinics provide FC for free. They are limited in quantity and it is difficult to find staff that are trained or comfortable with demonstration.
- ❖ Some adult retail stores carry FC. Exorbitant cost makes them inaccessible, especially to those at highest risk.

CAAB

A diverse group of 20 local health and social service providers, women's health and/or HIV prevention advocates, case managers, health administrators, and community residents and activists.

Mission Statement

To educate people about the female condom, to increase its availability, accessibility, & use for HIV/STI & pregnancy prevention.



SWEETINNERPOWER
sexual wellness education
+ empowerment training

CAAB Logo

Capacity Building Training

1-Day Retreat

Establishing Ground Rules
Female Anatomy and the Female Condom
Project Design and Goals
CAAB Roles and Responsibilities
Ethical Dilemmas

10 Bi-Weekly Training Sessions (2.5 hours)

Session 1: Developing a CAAB Identity: Mission Statement & Logo Development
Session 2: CAAB Brand Identity & Identifying CAAB Connections
Session 3: Brainstorming Community-Level Interventions & Prioritizing Actions
Session 4: Brainstorming Organizational-Level Interventions & Prioritizing Actions
Session 5: Brainstorming Individual/Peer-Level Interventions & Prioritizing Actions
Sessions 6-9: Designing Interventions Part 1- 4
Session 10: Celebration & Intervention Planning

Follow-Up Monthly Meetings (2.5 hours)



CAAB Achievements to Date

- ❖ Development of Group Identity
 - ❖ Name, logo & mission statement
- ❖ Formalization of Group
 - ❖ Voicemail, email, postal address & business cards
- ❖ Leadership Structure
 - ❖ Leadership team & Intervention coordinators
- ❖ Development of a Multi-level Intervention

Lessons Learned in CAAB Development

- ❖ Importance of fostering ongoing interactions and communication that engender mutual respect and recognition of the contributions and experiences of each person. It is difficult but essential to maintain equity within the group.
- ❖ To successfully implement interventions, capacity building needs to continue throughout intervention development until the plans are fully realized and ready for implementation.
- ❖ Ongoing infrastructural support is essential to sustain the CAAB even after the training component has finished.
- ❖ Continuous efforts to maintain group identity and group cohesion are essential, particularly if subgroups are created naturally or when members are working on subcomponents of the intervention.

CAAB Roles & Responsibilities

- ❖ To become a unified coalition to design, implement & evaluate a multi-level FC intervention in Hartford.
- ❖ Contribute to project process & outcome evaluation:
 - ❖ Feedback on training and capacity-building curriculum
 - ❖ Ongoing documentation of intervention delivery
 - ❖ Documentation of activities beyond intervention period
- ❖ Participate in next steps for CAAB sustainability and program expansion.

SWEET Inner Power Multi-level Intervention

Girl's Night Out (Individual-Level)

1-hour FC educational and skills building session focused on women's empowerment, negotiation of condom use and sensualization of the FC for female and male pleasure.

FC Presentation/Workshop (Organizational-Level)

30-minute presentation/workshop to encourage incorporation of FC education/promotion and support into standard delivery of services.

SWEET Inner Power Facebook Page (Community-Level)

Facebook page with interactive messages and mechanisms to further social marketing of the FC to local "friend" networks.