

PLANNED PARENTHOOD® OF NEW YORK CITY

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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Fran Harmon and Amelia Liero

National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices Manila Consulting Group, Inc.

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25 February 2013

Dear Drs. Harmon and Liero,

We are writing to provide information about the funding, implementation and feasibility of the Healing Our Women Intervention provided at Planned Parenthood of New York City's Project Street Beat (PSB) program. PSB is an award-winning HIV-prevention and access-to-care program known for its success in reaching individuals at high risk who do not typically access traditional health care, including substance users, sex workers, and the homeless. PSB provides comprehensive HIV prevention services to high-risk, underserved communities in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Northern Manhattan, where staff provide outreach and education, testing for HIV and sexually transmitted infections, and enrollment in PSB's array of supportive services including comprehensive risk counseling, support groups, evidence-based group interventions, and case management.

In response to our consumers' needs for an intervention that addresses sexual trauma, in 2008 PSB received a grant from the New York City AIDS Fund (NYCAF) to begin the HOW intervention at PSB. Dr. Gail Wyatt provided the 40 hour training of staff facilitators and implementing and evaluation of the first round of HOW with groups of women in the Bronx and Brooklyn. During 2010, a second grant from the NYCAF funded PSB to continue to implement and evaluate the HOW intervention for HIV+ women and to adapt the intervention for HIV negative, but at high risk, women. After this funding ended, the New York State AIDS Institute agreed to fund HOW as an on-going part of PSB's programming. In 2011 and 2012 PSB was awarded additional grants from the MAC AIDS fund to deliver specialized HOW adaptations for younger women and transgender women. PSB now also provides regular facilitator training to new PSB staff and other organizations around New York City.

Over the last 5 years, we have been able to provide the HOW intervention to 90 women. Although a variety of funders have supported implementation and pilot evaluations of HOW at PSB, they have not been able to provide the level of funding that would be necessary to carry out a large-scale randomized controlled trial of intervention efficacy. We do have pre-experimental data (indicators measured at pre- and post-intervention), but in a clinical setting without sufficient funding, we cannot maintain a control group or long-term follow-up samples sufficient in size for statistical power. Nonetheless, we closely monitor process, acceptability, and fidelity.

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Offering HOW at PSB is highly feasible. We are able to provide incentives to attend the sessions, ancillary supportive services to the intervention including substance use and sexual risk reduction, individual counseling, and transition to medical care. Participant satisfaction is very high (mean= 4.55, standard deviation=.49) on a scale from 1 to 5 measuring comfort in the group; recognizing personal needs; taking care of oneself; and perceived helpfulness. Retention is also high with 82% finishing the program. Fidelity is measured by an outside observer in the groups using a curriculum content checklist and facilitator quality scales. Curriculum adherence is high at over 90% of curriculum content performed accurately.

Although PSB provides many different types of services, HOW is unique in its focus on trauma and mental health, which so many of our consumers have experienced and are part of the co-factors associated with HIV transmission. CDC support critical to maintain the momentum of HOW implementation and provide a foundation to seek research funding for an RCT in an organizational setting in NYC.

Thank you for your time and effort in reviewing HOW. We hope this information provides some context about the implementation and importance of HOW in the work we do with women in New York City.

Sincerely,



Lisa Colarossi, Ph.D.
Associate Vice President for Research and Evaluation



Daphne Hazel, Ed.M.
Associate Vice President for Project Street Beat

Cc: Philippe Hispiche