

Core Elements

- 1 Coordinator(s)**
- 2 Core Group & Other Volunteers**
- 3 Project Space**
- 4 Formal Outreach**
(including Social Outreach
Events & Outreach Teams)
- 5 M-Groups**
- 6 Informal Outreach**
(which is a focus on talking with &
encouraging friends & acquaintances
to be safe & get tested for HIV)
- 7 Publicity Campaign**
- 8 Community Advisory Board**
(Optional)

mPowerment

Together
creating community
for friendship
for health
for life

Guiding Principles

Social Focus

Empowerment Philosophy

Peer Influence of Safer Sex Messages

Multi-Level Approach

Gay-Positive/Sex-Positive

Community-Building

Diffusion of Innovations

(Note: This is an abbreviated version of the Guiding Principles meant to be used as a quick reference tool. More detailed information about each Guiding Principle can be found earlier in this module.)

1. Young Men Are Very Concerned With Social and Self-Esteem Issues

The first Guiding Principle is that a successful HIV prevention intervention for young gay/bisexual men needs to tie HIV risk reduction to the satisfaction of other needs, such as developing friendships, having fun, and enhancing self-esteem.

2. Peer Influences Are Strong Among Young Gay/Bisexual Men

The second Guiding Principle is that for the Mpowerment Project to be effective in reaching young gay/bisexual men, it needs to be peer-based and use peer influence.

3. Building a Healthy Community Among Young Gay/Bisexual Men

The third Guiding Principle is that it is essential to build a young gay/bisexual men's community where men support each other about sexual risk reduction and obtaining HIV testing, where the social norms and expectations support HIV prevention, and where men help each other in coping with the stresses of being gay/bisexual.

4. Empowerment Promotes More Lasting Changes in Behavior

The fourth Guiding Principle is that the Project serves a mobilizing and empowering function within the young gay/bisexual men's community—young men take ownership of the Project rather than having others carry out the Project for them.

5. Community-Wide Change Occurs Through Interpersonal Networks

The fifth Guiding Principle is that community change comes about through "diffusion," a process of informal communication and modeling by peers within their friendship networks.

6. Pride: Gay-Positive, Ethnic/Racial-Positive and Sex-Positive Messages Encourage Behavior Change

The sixth Guiding Principle of the Mpowerment Project is that the program enriches and strengthens young gay/bisexual men's pride about who they are and encourages them to explore and celebrate their sexuality by not just focusing on condom use but by including a wide variety of safer sexual behaviors.

7. A "multi-level" HIV prevention program for young gay/bisexual men is needed.

The seventh Guiding Principle is the need for a "multi-level" approach to address the variety of factors that influence young men's risk behavior and HIV test-seeking. Since young gay/bisexual men engage in unsafe sex for a variety of reasons, interventions that focus solely on one level of factors will miss men who engage in unsafe sex for other reasons. Therefore, the Mpowerment Project, sometimes called a "combination HIV prevention approach", targets both sexual risk reduction as well as biomedical issues by encouraging testing and treatment for HIV-positive men.