When people with HIV are fully engaged in care they live as long as people without HIV, and they are much less likely to transmit HIV to others. Community-level interventions such as the MP can play an important role in helping young, HIV-positive gay/bisexual men:

- know their HIV status
- link to care
- stay in care over time
- adhere to HIV medication in order to achieve a low level of HIV in their bodies

We are actively researching ways to adapt the MP to help young, HIV-positive gay/bisexual men fully engage in care. This includes finding new ways for HIV+ and HIV- men to come together and support each other. Stay tuned.

We will soon be sharing our ideas through our website and social media.

We would like to hear your feedback about these suggestions and any examples of how you are putting these and other ideas into action.

3 ways the MP can address the Continuum of Care

1) HIV stigma is a barrier to engagement in HIV care because it causes people to avoid knowing their HIV status, can isolate people with HIV from the social support they need to get or stay in care, and creates a culture of secrecy that interferes with truthful communication about HIV. MP can address HIV stigma within the young gay/bisexual men’s communities. Projects can place posters around their space that address HIV stigma, host public forums, and actively work to create safe spaces where anyone regardless of status can participate in project activities.

2) MP can help create social and community norms that support young gay/bisexual men to know their status by testing every 6 months and can facilitate linkages with welcoming, supportive, and non-judgmental care providers in the community for those who test positive.

3) MP can help HIV-positive young gay/bisexual men by providing their communities with accurate and important information about medication adherence and other related information to increase HIV literacy. Additionally, MPs can help young HIV-positive men find peer support to remind them to take their pills, listen to their experiences as HIV-positive community members, and to be their allies for staying healthy.
THE NATIONAL HIV/AIDS STRATEGY HAS CHANGED THE LANDSCAPE OF HIV PREVENTION IN THE U.S.

The NHAS is a call to action to better address HIV among gay/bisexual men (particularly among men of color), to concentrate on geographic areas consistent with the epidemic, and to expand HIV prevention with HIV positive people. “High Impact Prevention” (HIP) includes increased HIV testing, Condom Distribution Projects (CDPs), as well as linkage into maintenance in care for those living with HIV. The NHAS identifies combining social, behavioral, and biomedical approaches as having the greatest impact on HIV prevention. After a careful analysis of the NHAS, we believe that the MP is fully consistent with this strategy.

MP MOBILIZES GAY/BISEXUAL MEN AND GAY/BISEXUAL MEN OF COLOR

AIDS has claimed the lives of more than 300,000 gay and bisexual men in the U.S. Gay and bisexual men account for 53 percent of the country’s estimated 1.1 million people living with HIV and for 57% of all new HIV infections. One analysis predicts that a gay man who is 18 years old today faces a two in five chance of becoming infected with HIV by the time he is 40, and HIV cases among young gay men rose between 2001 and 2006. High rates of HIV among gay/bi men are found in cities and towns of all sizes.

The MP is one of only a few of evidence-based interventions for gay/bi men, and it has been implemented by CBOs serving young African American and/or Latino MSM in Atlanta, Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, Detroit, Los Angeles, Miami, New York City, Oakland and San Diego—just to name a few. The MP creates healthy communities of young gay/bi men, and puts HIV prevention into the context of young men’s lives. To address the HIV prevention needs of gay/bisexual men, the U.S. needs more MPs, not fewer of them.

MP REACHES BOTH HIV-POSITIVE AND HIV-NEGATIVE MEN

The MP was designed to be a community mobilizing project for all young men in a community - young HIV positive and HIV negative men together, as well as men who do not know their status. We encourage projects to create a safe place free of stigma and to develop anti HIV-stigma campaigns. Some Projects have created groups for HIV-positive members to come together to discuss issues important to them. Project Spaces also provide information on accessing comprehensive counseling or case management services to link young, HIV-positive men to care. Informal outreach, one of the MP’s core elements, can be used to help encourage HIV positive members to access treatment and take their meds. Risk reduction messages are aimed at both positive and negative men.

ENCOURAGING HIV TESTING WITHIN THE MPOWERMENT PROJECT

The MP encourages peers to talk to their friends about the importance of knowing your HIV status by getting tested regularly, and getting into treatment if HIV-positive. The Project Space also has referral information on HIV testing sites and services, and the staff of most MPs are trained to provide HIV testing and counseling for their MP participants.

TOGETHER, CREATING COMMUNITIES FOR HEALTH

Download the MP Manual at mpowerment.org. It’s full of content from projects across the country. It discusses how MP can be used to motivate men to obtain testing.

Mpowerment.org features brief, 10 minute audio slide shows. We have videos specifically for Executive Directors, Funders, and Supervisors. Watch them and let us know what you think.