

COMMON THREADS TRAINING



Creating a Community of Storytellers to Combat HIV/AIDS Stigma



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National Association of People with AIDS
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Presentation Framework

- Summary
- Introduction
- Theory/Methodology
- Learning Objectives
- Conclusion
- Next Steps

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Summary



This presentation will discuss a peer-led training, Common Threads, and how this training helps HIV positive peers connect the dots between their HIV positive status and life experiences and increases their willingness to disclose and discuss their HIV positive status and life experiences with family members, partners, friends, and community members.

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Common Threads is a three day small group HIV prevention training designed to 1) reduce HIV/AIDS related stigma and 2) increase utilization of HIV services by building the capacity of women and MSM (same gender loving men) of African descent living with HIV/AIDS to effectively share their life experiences among partners, family, friends, and community members in geographical areas where there is a high incidence of HIV within the African American/Black community.

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Theory



“No need is more fundamentally human than our need to understand our experience.”

Common Threads is on the learning theory of Transformational Learning (TL). TL is based on how adults interpret their life experiences and how they make meaning out of these life experiences.

Sharon B. Merriam and Rosemary S. Caffarella,

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Training Methods

- Common Threads uses a variety of methods which enable individuals with different learning styles and coping mechanisms to come together in a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment
- Methods include sharing of information, interactive discussions, storytelling demonstrations, storytelling examples, meditations in the form of journaling, participant exchange and storytelling practice opportunities



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Training Team & Support

TRAINING

- Utilizes a training team consisting of 3 experienced HIV positive and affected trainers plus a licensed clinician/counselor

POST-TRAINING

- Utilizes the mental health and support services of participating community based organizations
- Utilizes a collaboration with a professional association to provide local referrals to community mental health services

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Curricula

- **Women**

1. HIV Vulnerability
2. Group Timeline
3. HIV Testing Experience
4. Family Tree/History
5. Personal Timeline
6. Embracing Our Vulnerabilities (Healing)
7. Practice Preparation
8. Presentations
9. Professionalism

- **MSM**

1. Use of Data
2. Story Telling and Timelines
3. Family Tree
4. Sexual Orientation & History
5. HIV & Trauma
6. Personal Story (Timeline)
7. Soul Ties (Healing)
8. Platform Skills
9. Presentations

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Sample Module Framework: Storytelling Tools



**Common
Threads
consists of 9
Modules**

- Culturally Relevant Quote
- Definitions
- Purpose
- Storytelling Tool
- Demonstration
- Group Exercises
- Culturally Relevant Quote
- Journal Mediation

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Learning Objective #1

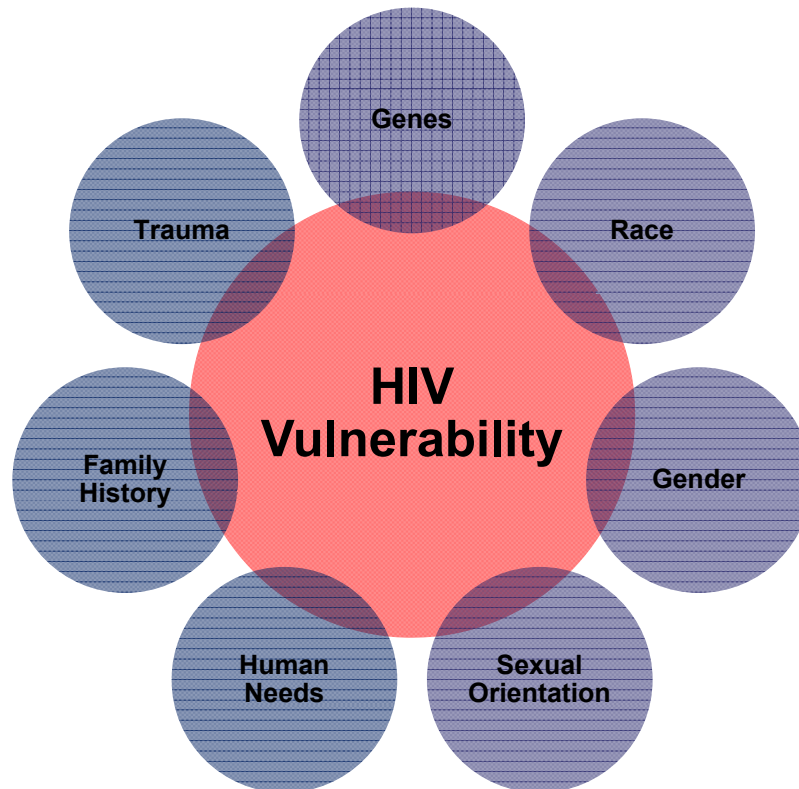


- Genetics
- Race
- Gender
- Human Needs
- Family History
- Trauma

To introduce the concept of HIV vulnerability and explore the notion that HIV vulnerability may arise from the participants' life experiences as children, teens, young adults, and adults

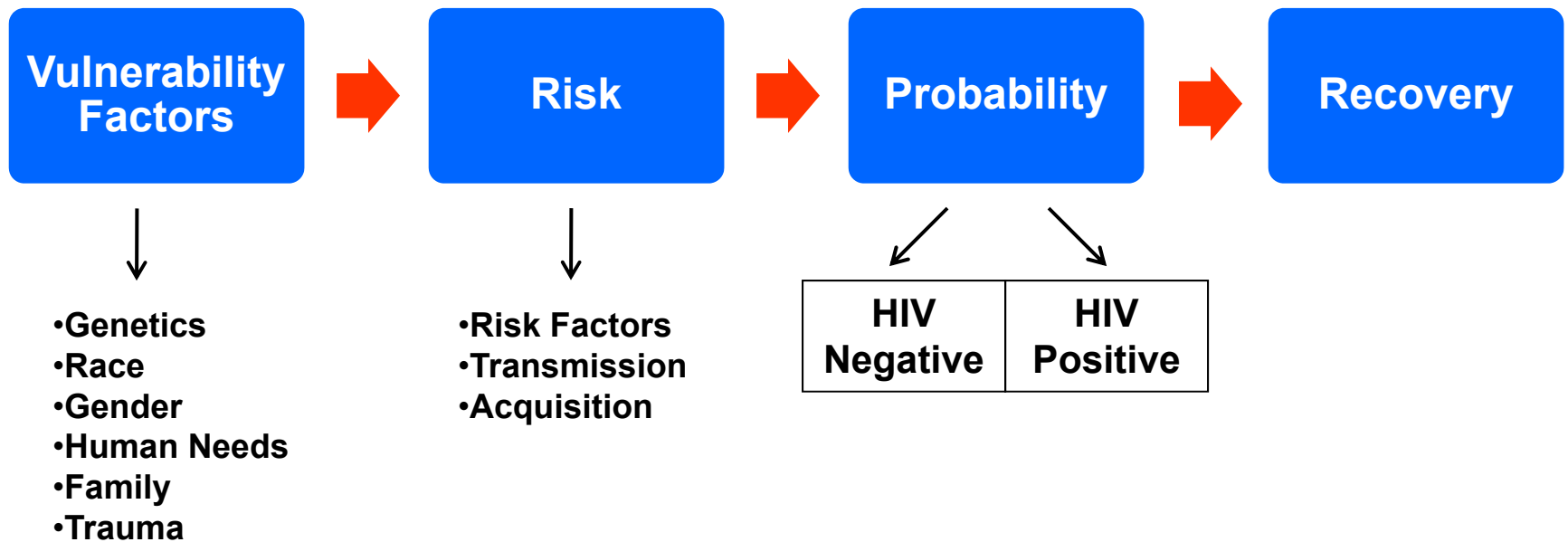
HIV Vulnerability Framework Factors

PART ONE



HIV Vulnerability Framework

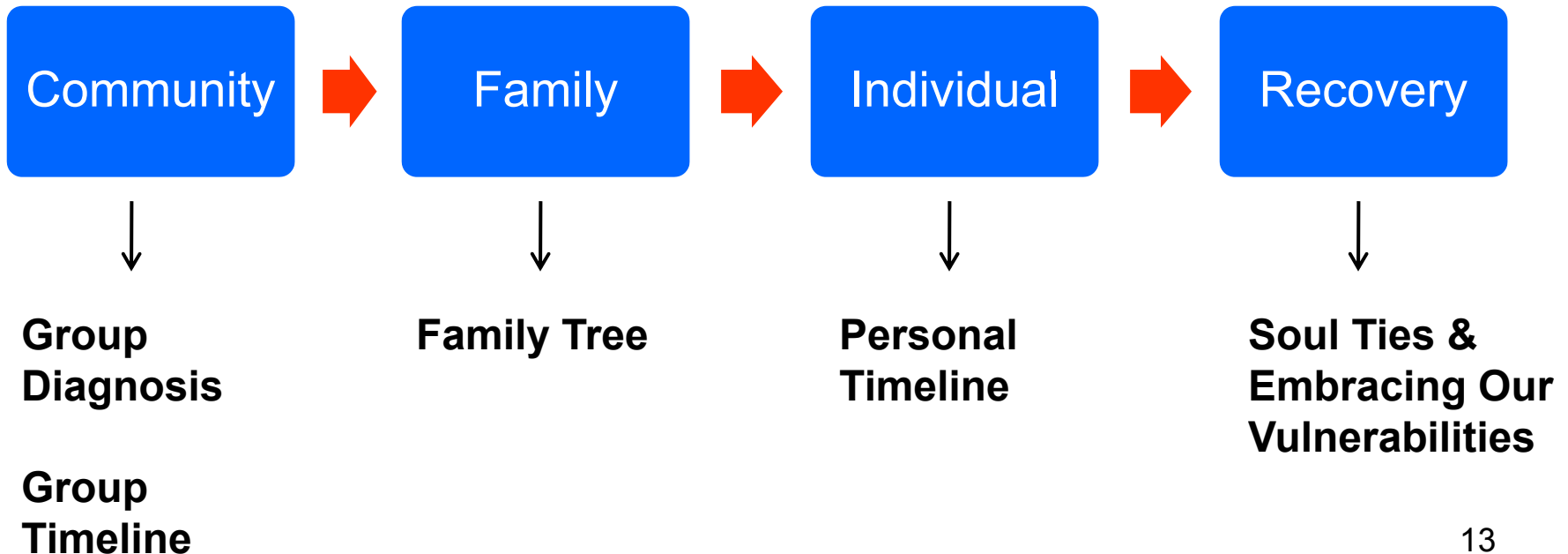
PART TWO



HIV Vulnerability Framework

PART THREE

Exploration of Vulnerabilities



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Learning Objective #2



- To demonstrate how a group timeline can be used to illustrate commonality, diversity, vulnerability, and resiliency in the life experiences of the participants
- To use the group timeline to share information on the developmental stages of humans, particularly of women and how disruptions in these stages may lead to HIV vulnerability

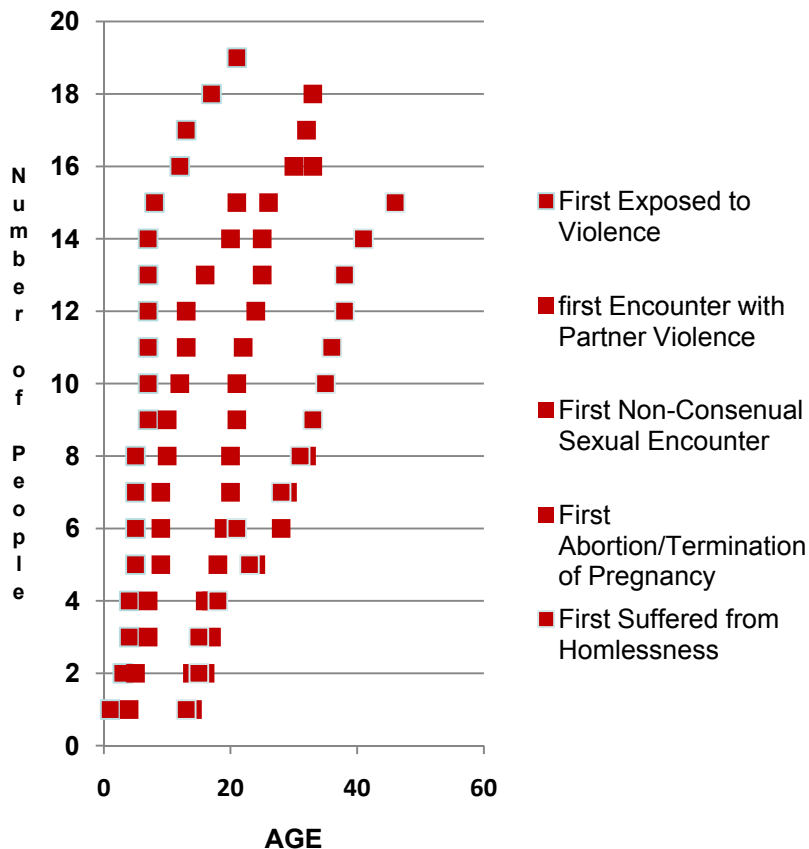
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Group Timeline Survey - Sample

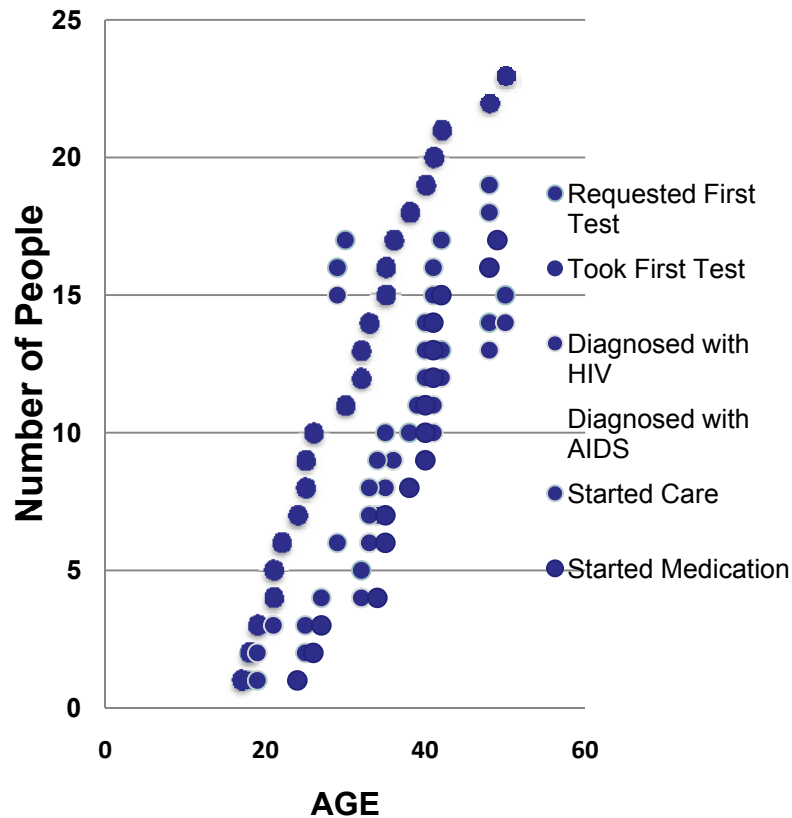
- **Personal Challenges**
 - Age you started taking care of younger relatives
 - Age you first started using drugs
- **Trauma**
 - Age you were first exposed to violence
 - Age of first non-consensual sexual encounter
- **HIV/AIDS Related**
 - Age of you took your first HIV test (actual test)
 - Age diagnosed with HIV
- **Personal Strengths**
 - Age of you first started working
 - Age you stopped using drugs

Relationship between Trauma and HIV/AIDS

Trauma (Birth – 25yrs)

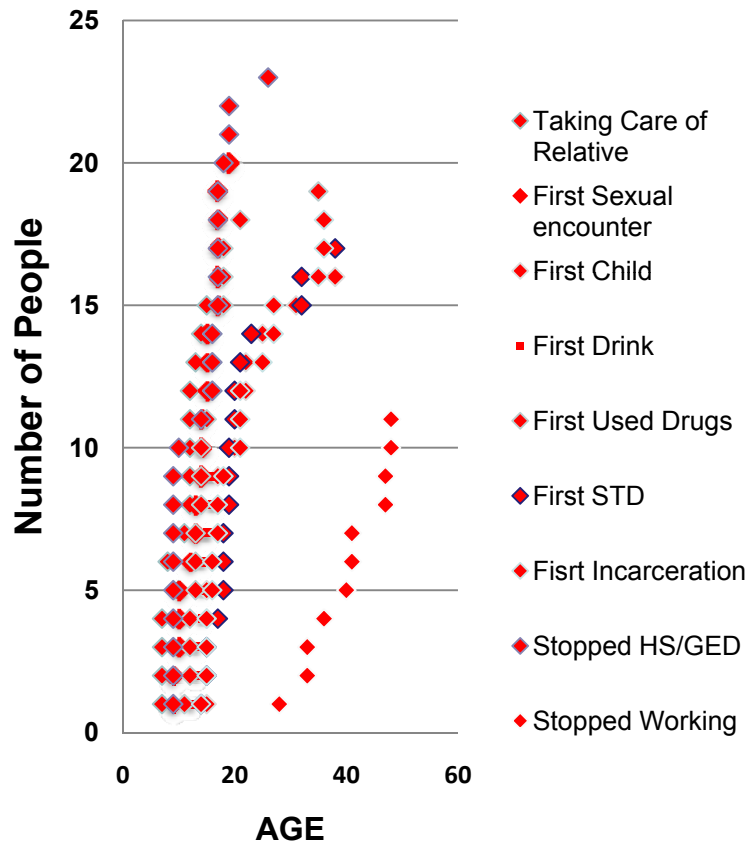


HIV/AIDS (18yrs – 40yrs)

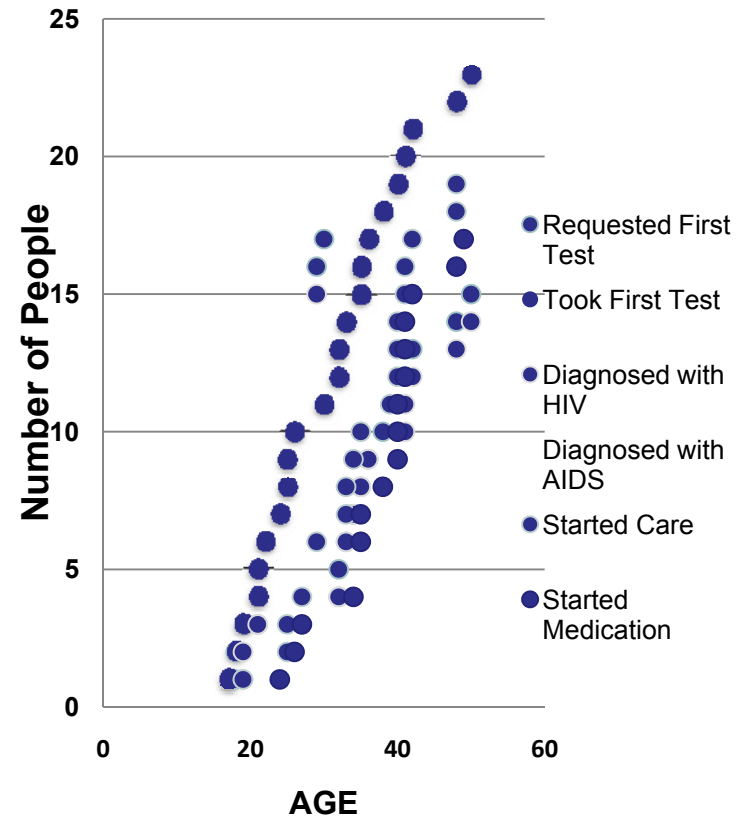


Relationship between Personal Challenges and HIV/AIDS

Challenges (5yrs – 20 yrs)



HIV/AIDS (18yrs – 40yrs)



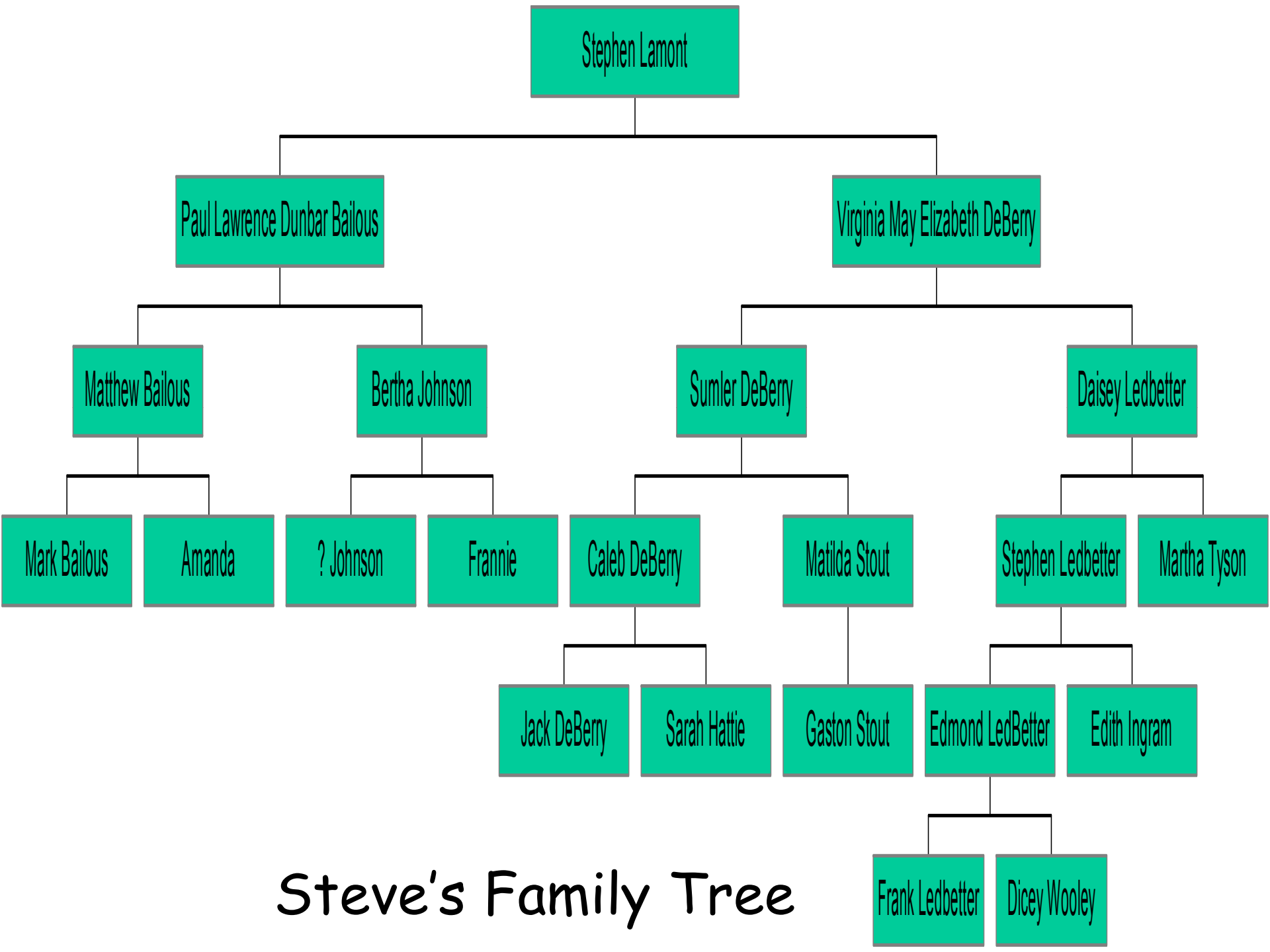
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Learning Objective #3



To teach and demonstrate the use of storytelling tools that illustrate how individuals and communities may have become vulnerable to HIV infection

1. HIV Testing Experience
2. Family Tree
3. Personal Timeline



Stephen Lamont

Paul Lawrence Dunbar Bailous

Virginia May Elizabeth DeBerry

Matthew Bailous

Bertha Johnson

Sumler DeBerry

Daisy Ledbetter

Mark Bailous

Amanda

? Johnson

Frannie

Caleb DeBerry

Matilda Stout

Stephen Ledbetter

Martha Tyson

Jack DeBerry

Sarah Hattie

Gaston Stout

Edmond LedBetter

Edith Ingram

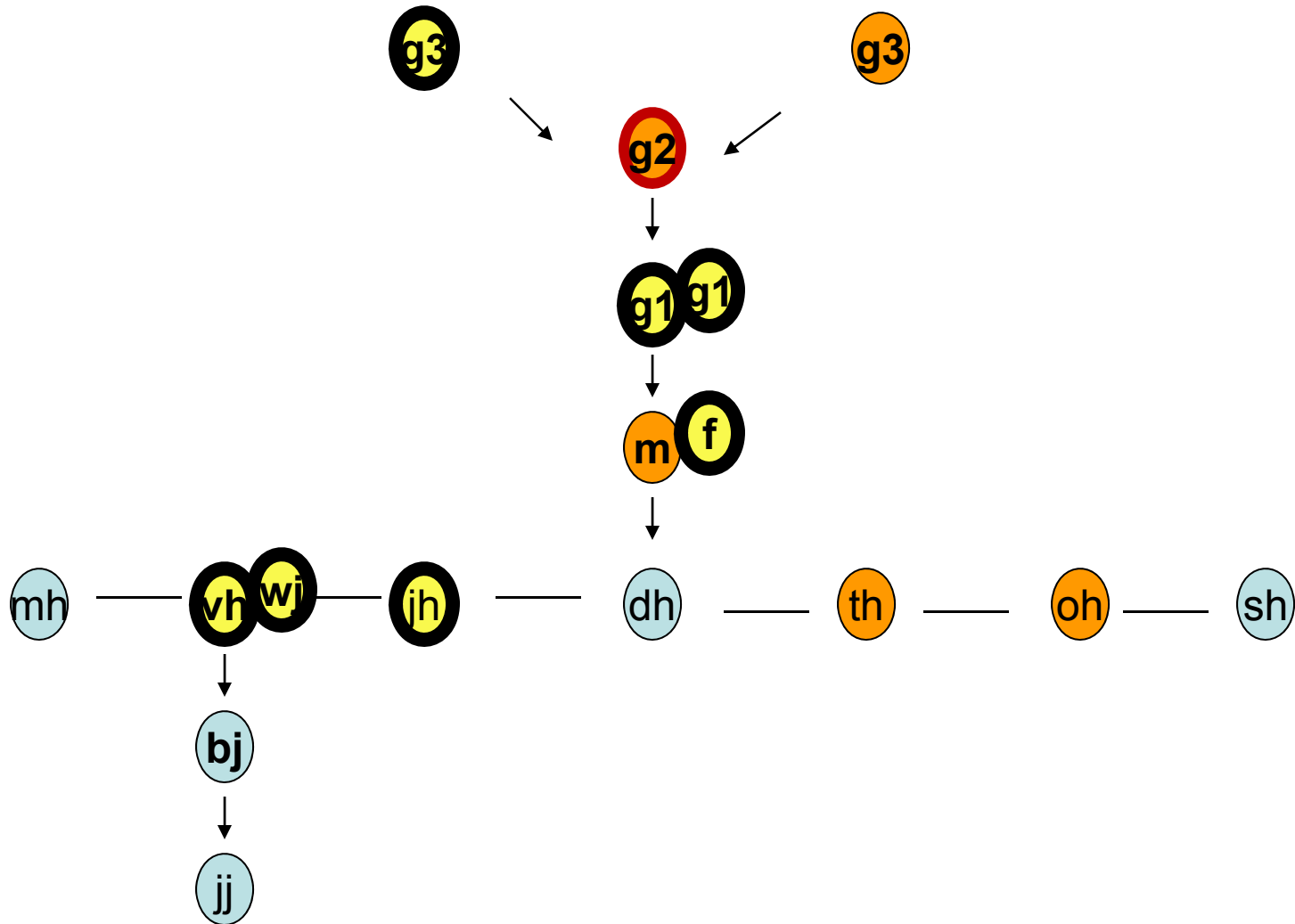
Frank Ledbetter

Dicey Wooley

Steve's Family Tree

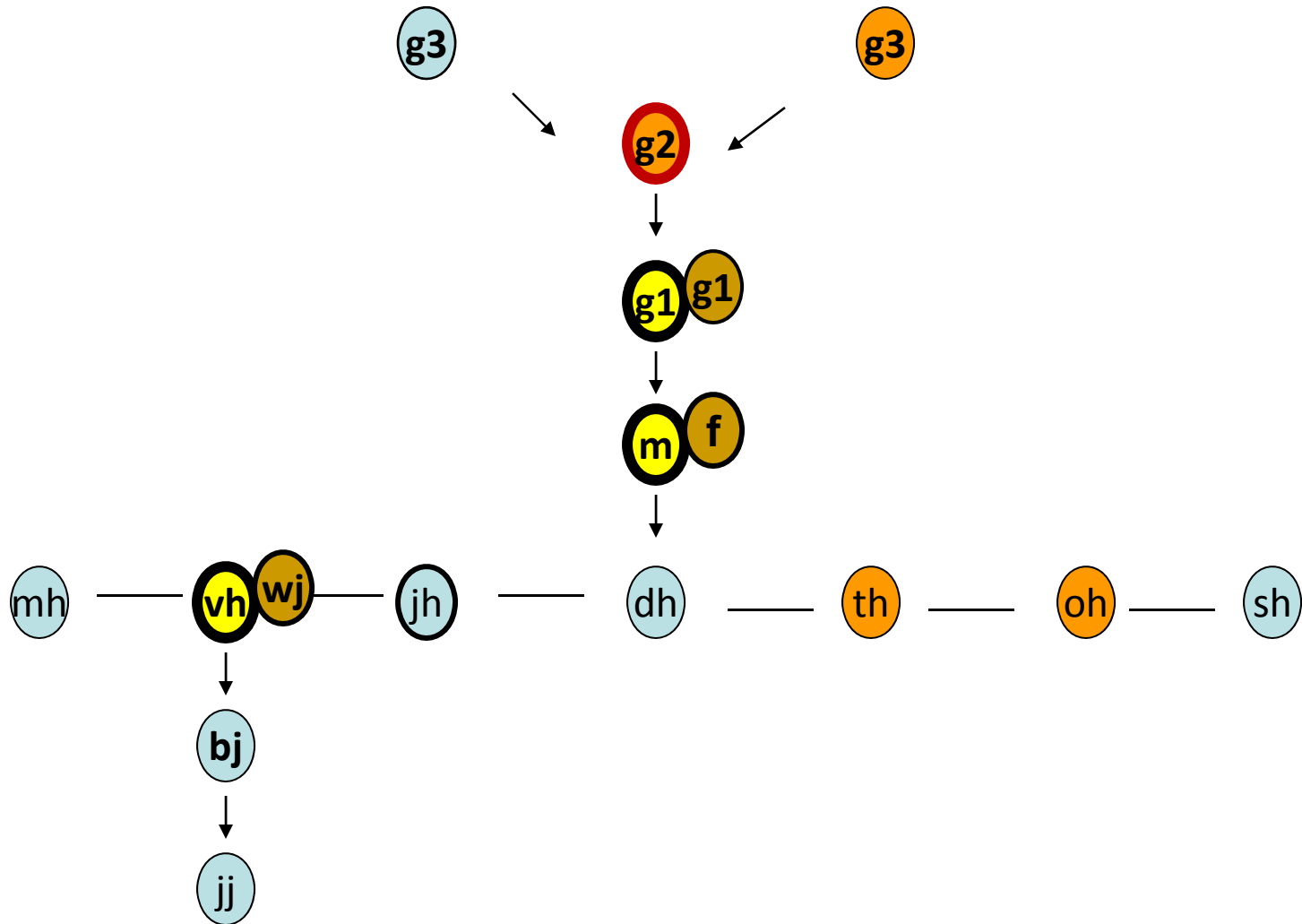
My Family Tree - Chronic Substance Use

Maternal



My Family Tree – Childhood Sexual Abuse

Maternal



Storytelling Technique -- Timeline

Trauma Timeline

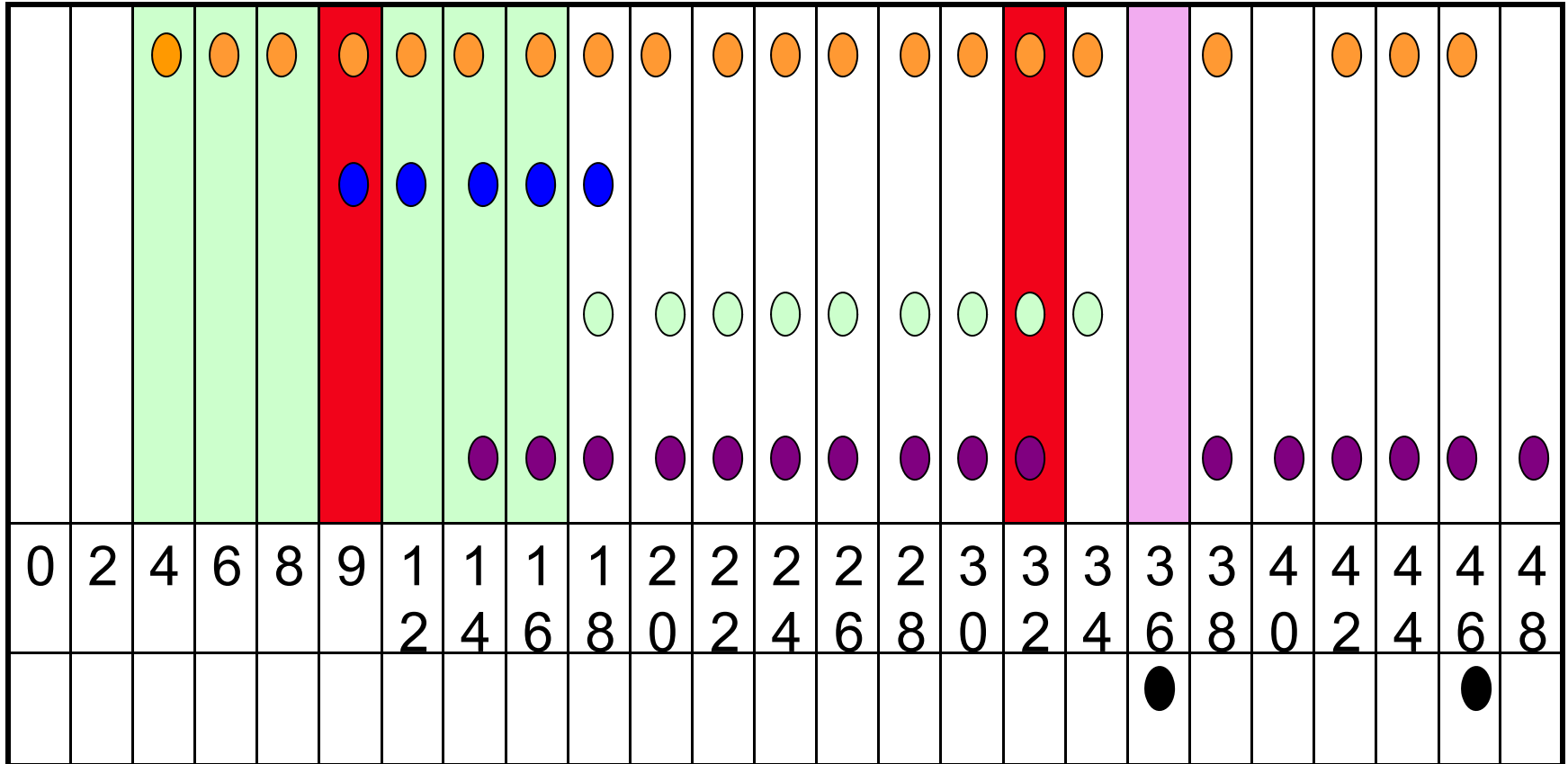
- Age first hit/beaten: 5
- Age last hit/beaten: 12
- Age of Parents' Separation: 15
- Ages attempted suicide: 16, 30
- Age of first breakup: 22
- Age diagnosed with HIV: 34

Positive Events Timeline

- Ages of Therapy: 16, 20, 37, 40
- Age stopped smoking marijuana: 35
- Age first published: 17
- Age of Teaching: 41
- Age of Ordination: 40
- Age of Graduation: 17 (HS); 21 (Coll.)

My Personal Timeline Diagram

Connecting the Dots



EXPOSURE

IMPACT

RECOVERY

Forms



- **Personal Data Form**
- **Pre and Post Assessment Forms**
- **Participant Evaluation Forms**
- **Tools**
 - HIV Vulnerability
 - Group Timeline Survey
 - HIV Testing Narrative
 - Family Tree Diagram
 - Personal Timeline Graph

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107 Participants

- **LOCATIONS**

- Atlanta, GA (24)
- Baltimore, MD (9)
- Charlotte, NC (8)
- Dallas/Fort Worth, TX (10)
- Philadelphia, PA (8)
- Orangeburg, SC (10)
- Raleigh-Durham, NC (20)
- Washington, DC (18)

- **ORGANIZATIONS** (sample)

- AIDS Atlanta
- ANIZ
- Consumer Advocacy Project (NAPWA)
- Dana Avenue
- Circle of Care (Family Planning Council)
- Metrolina AIDS Project
- Sisters Together and Reaching (STAR)
- Women Accepting Responsibility (WAR)

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Results (107 Participants)

- Combining the women and MSM populations of Common Threads:
 - 100% of the participants rated the training as an effective use of their time
 - 99% of the participants would recommend the training to other women or MSM of African descent living with HIV/AIDS
 - 95% of the participants "strongly agreed" (as opposed to "agree", "neutral", "disagree", or "strongly disagree") that "Common Threads" met their expectations

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107 Participants

- Both populations reported a significant increase (average 50%) for all skills building modules
- Over 90% of participants indicated readiness to publicly disclose their HIV serostatus and other life experiences, which made them vulnerable to HIV infection, after completing Common Threads.

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Conclusion

- People living with HIV/AIDS can process complex personal issues in a small group setting with the support of peer trainers who are willing to role model by sharing their stories and a licensed mental health professional.
- Once these personal issues are explored, people living with HIV/AIDS are more willing to disclose and discuss their HIV positive serostatus and what may have made them vulnerable to HIV.

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Acknowledgements

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- **Curriculum Writers**
 - Borris Powell
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