



ICRW

International Center for
Research On Women

Gender and Sexuality: Implications for HIV Prevention for Women

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Key Gender-related Factors that Contribute to HIV Vulnerability

- Norms of masculinity and femininity
- Gender gaps in education
- Economic dependency
- Violence against women

ABCs Necessary But Not Sufficient

- ABCs are outcomes, not strategies
- To succeed for women, they need an enabling environment
- Gender-responsive programming to address underlying conditions is essential
- Need an ABC-Plus approach

Framework for a Gender-based Response

- Do no harm
- Address gender differences
- Trigger transformation in gender roles/relationships
 - ❖ Link HIV and AIDS services to other programs
 - ❖ Encourage equitable partnerships through service provision
 - ❖ Utilize participatory group processes
- Empowering approaches
 - ❖ Engage women as active agents in the use of resources (e.g. education, economic assets, security)
 - ❖ Implement policies and programs that increase women's access to resources

Gender-based Violence

- Address gender differences
 - ❖ Train VCT providers to ask women about partner violence and develop appropriate disclosure plans
- Trigger transformation
 - ❖ Link to other programs
 - ❖ Implement couple counseling during VCT that promotes gender equitable partnerships and minimizes the likelihood of GBV

Gender-based Violence

- Trigger transformation (cont'd.)
 - ❖ Use participatory group activities to stimulate critical reflection and analysis about GBV and gender norms
 - ✓ Stepping Stones
 - ✓ Men as Partners
 - ✓ Program H [India: *Yari-Dosti*]

Evaluation of Program H (Brazil), *Yari-Dosti*, (India)

- Decrease in support for inequitable gender norms (Brazil & India)
- Agreement with inequitable norms associated with greater risk (Brazil), & greater partner violence (India)
- Reported STIs symptoms decreased & condom use increased (Brazil)
- Proportion of young men who agreed to “there are times when a woman deserves to be beaten” decreased from 31% to 14% (India)

Gender-based Violence

- **Empowering Approaches**
 - ❖ Catalyze community action to combat GBV locally and to advocate for policy change, while instituting services and programs that raise awareness, and treat and shelter victims
 - ❖ Promote legislation that protects women and punishes perpetrators
 - ❖ Increase women's access to economic assets which may improve her status in the home

IMAGE Project

- Micro-loans and “*Sisters for Life*” gender and HIV training program
- Participants formed a village committee to address rape and sexual abuse and led a “*16 Days of Activism*” march to end domestic violence
- After 2 years, risk of past year physical and/or sexual partner violence was reduced by 55% among participants

(IMAGE Project 2006)

Principles Underlying a Gender-based Response

- Women's vulnerabilities vary and are context specific
- Effective HIV prevention requires:
 - ❖ **Services** to provide information, technologies, skills-building, care and treatment, etc
 - ❖ **Community mobilization** to build social capital, develop local leadership, and catalyze community responses

Avahan: A Strategy Worth Monitoring

- “...it is essential to supplement the one-to-one service delivery... Such methods should include:
1. leveraging existing social networks and community structures
 2. addressing structural barriers
 3. catalyzing changes in social norms and environmental conditions”

Chandrasekaran et al. (2006)

UGANDA: The Policy Context is Critical

- Social mobilization
- Recognition by leadership of the need to “empower women”
- Creation of Ministry of Women’s Affairs
- Involvement of women’s groups
- Affirmative action policies written into constitution
- Introduction of macro- and micro-credit schemes
- Promotion of gender equity by government and NGOs

Conclusions

- Women are not monolithic — contextual analysis is important
- Services and community mobilization must occur simultaneously
- Increasing evidence base (and more needed) that justifies an ABC+ approach
- Blueprints exist that describe programs and policies to address key barriers for women
- **It can be done!**

