Fighting HIV Stigma Through Photovoice: An Innovative Tool for Patient Education and Empowerment

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Introduction

- Many challenges in HIV family care
- HIV stigma is widespread, poses barriers to care, contributes to health disparities
- An opportunity to create a patient education and advocacy project
Photovoice

- Photovoice blends a grassroots approach to photography and social action (Wang & Burris, 1999)

Roots
- Documentary Photography
- Freirian Education for Critical Consciousness
- Feminist Theory
Photovoice Goals

1. Record and reflect community strengths and concerns

2. Promote dialogue through discussion and photos

3. Mobilize community awareness and social change
Setting/Population

- Recruited small group current and former patients at FHC Family HIV Clinic
- Several patients had been patients at Bay Area Perinatal AIDS Center (BAPAC) and Positive Health Program (Ward 86)
- Several are involved in Positive Reproductive Outcomes for HIV+ Men (PROMEN) group
Advocacy Project Design

- 3 Photovoice sessions held at FHC over 1 month
- Patients given digital cameras
- Introductory photography skills
- Critical reflection and dialogue: sharing photos with personal narratives
- Peer/group health education
- Feedback on health education tools
Results: Salient Themes

- Fighting stigma
- HIV diagnosis and disclosing diagnosis
- Medication adherence
- Emotional states – grief and hope
- Resilience in the face of challenges
- Importance of family bonds
- Surviving and thriving
- Social support/health care team – case managers, social workers, health providers
Results: Salient Themes

Societal:
- Media stereotypes
- Limited access to health resources
- HIV stigma

Community:
- Built environment: housing
- Social support and outreach programs
- Health programs
- Peer influences
- Disclosure of HIV status
- Resilience, sense of hope
- Drug use
- Self-destructive behavior
- Positive role models: Providers, Social workers, Disclosure of HIV status

Individual:
- Positive outlets for expression
- Starting a family, Reproductive health
- Surviving and thriving In different social environments
- Self-efficacy
- ARV adherence
- Family cohesion

Relationship:
- Community outreach and awareness
- Health programs
- Peer influences
- Positive role models: Providers, Social workers,
- Disclosure of HIV status
- Resilience, sense of hope
- Drug use
- Self-destructive behavior
- Family cohesion

Societal change:
- Awareness raising ➔ societal change

Starting a family,
Reproductive health
Examples of photos
“Trash”
by Deon Brimmer
“LOVE”
by Deon Brimmer
“Father & Son” by Deon Brimmer
“Staying Healthy”
by Caroline Watson
“#hivfreebaby”
By Caroline Watson
“Shedding the Leaves of Stigma” by Caroline Watson
“Padlocked Doors”
By Angela McGill
“The Paths We Walk”
-Anonymous
“Phobias”
-Anonymous
The Family Health Center HIV Clinic and Positive Health Options for HIV+ Men (PROMEN) invite you to a one-night pop-up art photography exhibit by our clinic patient artists in effort to fight HIV stigma:

FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING:

LIVING & LOVING WITH HIV

&

DEAR HIV: NOTES TO THE EPIDEMIC

StorefrontLab Art Gallery

Friday, June 27th 2014

Exhibit 6-9pm

7pm Photovoice patient artist presentations

*Light refreshments will be served
Art Gallery Exhibition: StoreFrontLab June 2014
Conclusions

- Photovoice is an empowering experiential process, peer education method
- Photovoice provided emotional wellbeing and empowerment, opportunities for advocacy
- Future directions: Group-based HIV care, strengthening collaboration and coordination of care between Family HIV Clinic, Ward 86, BAPAC, PRO Men
Thank you!

- All participants: Caroline & Deon Brimmer, Angela McGill, anonymous participants
- Rebecca Schwartz MSW
- Shannon Weber MSW, BAPAC & PROMEN
- Mina Matin MD
- Hana Lim MS4
- FHC Family HIV Clinic staff and providers
- Funding: PROMEN for food, FHC AQUILA Advocacy project funding for patient gifts, LoveYou2.org for patient gifts
- Friends and family who loaned cameras, love and patience
“Love You 2”
by Caroline Brimmer
“Flowers Bloom Even in Winter”
-Anonymous
HIV Stigma

Few Americans believe that HIV+ women should have children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>% Yes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIV+</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>59%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple sclerosis</td>
<td>37%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hepatitis C</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Down's syndrome</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schizophrenia</td>
<td>17%</td>
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</tbody>
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Base: All Respondents* (N= varies)
Q595. In your opinion, should a woman with any of the following conditions have children?
Response Options: 1 = Yes, 2 = No, 3 = Not sure 5 = Decline to answer
*Note: reduced base with “decline to answer” excluded.
HIV Stigma

If an HIV+ woman made the decision to have a child, one-third of Americans would not support her decision at all.

- Total: 23%
- Male: 21%
- Female: 24%

Support her decision fully: 46%
Support her decision somewhat: 43%
Support her decision not at all: 48%

Support her decision fully: 32%
Support her decision somewhat: 36%
Support her decision not at all: 28%

Base: All Respondents (N=4831)
Q560: If an HIV-positive woman made the decision to have a child, how likely would you be to support her decision?
Critical Discussion and Dialogue

- **P:** Describe your PHOTO.
- **H:** What’s HAPPENING in this picture?
- **O:** Why did you take a picture OF this?
- **T:** What does this picture TELL us about living with HIV?
- **O:** How can this picture provide OPPORTUNITIES for us to improve health for HIV positive patients and their families?
“Peaceful Sunset”
by Angela McGill