

# SANKOFA FACT SHEET

March 2007

No. 13

## Project Connect-HIV Prevention for a Couple or Woman Alone

### Intervention Goals

- Increase safer sex practices among couples
- Increase relationship communications

### Brief Description

The intervention can be delivered to the couple or the woman alone. When delivered to a couple, the intervention consists of an orientation session and five relationship-based sessions delivered to each couple. An initial orientation session is delivered one-on-one to each woman and her partner. The orientation session increases participants' motivation for attendance, heightens risk awareness and prepares participants for the intervention. The five relationship-based sessions are delivered to intact intimate couples and emphasize the importance of relationship communication, safer sex negotiation and problem-solving skills. The sessions also highlight how relationship dynamics are affected by gender roles and how social supports can help maintain safer sex behavior. The intervention delivered to each woman alone is identical in content and session format as the couples intervention.



### Theoretical Basis

- AIDS Risk Reduction Model - Drawing from previously suggested behavior change theories and human sexuality studies, this model characterizes people's effort to change sexual behaviors related to HIV transmission. The model is comprised of three stages: (1) recognition and labeling of one's sexual behaviors as high risk for contracting HIV, (2) making a commitment to reduce high risk sexual contacts and increase low risk activities and (3) seeking and enacting strategies to obtain these goals.<sup>1</sup>
- Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Perspective - Focuses on an individual's relationship within his/her social contexts. Human development occurs in a set of overlapping ecological systems. All of these systems operate together to influence what a person becomes as he/she develops.<sup>2</sup>

### Intervention Duration

Six two-hour sessions delivered over six weeks.

### Deliverer

Female facilitators with a master's in social work (MSW) or social work graduate student

### Delivery Methods

Counseling, demonstrations, discussions, exercises, goal-setting, practice, risk-reduction supplies (male and female condoms), video

### Evaluation Study and Results

The original study consisted of 55 percent African-American males and females and 47 percent African-American couples. The couples and woman-alone interventions each significantly increased the proportion of protected vaginal sexual acts compared to the control group.

### Intervention Package Information

An intervention package is currently being developed with funding from CDC's Replicating Effective Programs (REP) Project. Contact Dr. Nabila El-Bassel, Social Intervention Group, Columbia University School of Social Work, 622 West 113th Street, Box 713, New York, N.Y. 10025, e-mail: ne5@columbia.edu, for details on intervention materials.

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/research/prs/resources/factsheets/print/project-connect.htm>

References: <sup>1</sup>Catania, J.A., Kegeles, S.M., & Coates, T.J. (1990). Towards an understanding of risk behavior: An AIDS risk reduction (AARM). *Health Education Quarterly*, 17, 53-72.

<sup>2</sup><http://www3.niu.edu/acad/fcns280/THEORY/tsld019.htm>

