

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND FAITH INVOLVEMENT IN SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

CALCASA 2019 Statewide Conference • September 5, 2019



Ice Breaker: Talk with Your Neighbor

Talk to the person next to you and find 2 things you have in common that has nothing to do with work



Coalition Overview: Who We Are

Community Advisory Coalition

- Community engagement approach
- Guides the WeCanStopSTDsLA movement

WeCanStopSTDsLA Movement

- Youth-focused
- Leverage collective resources



Why WeCanStopSTDsLA?

- STDs are on the rise
- About 50% of the 20 million new cases of STDs each year are in young people ages 15-24
- STDs can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility, babies born at low birth weight and other health concerns
- Sexual and reproductive health matters are impacted by social determinants as well as other matters such as violence and (un)healthy relationships

Our Approach Includes:

- Working to increase dialogue in the community to gain wider community support and help reduce stigma
- Engaging multiple stakeholders and champions to deal with these problems

Talk with your Neighbor

Why might you need a variety of stakeholders and champions at the table when conducting a community health initiative?

Objectives

At the end of this presentation, participants will be able to:

- List three strategies for recruiting and retaining partners and supporters representing different fields and areas of expertise
- Identify at least three methods essential to sustaining a community coalition of a diverse group of stakeholders
- List three strategies for engaging faith communities

RECRUITING AND RETAINING STAKEHOLDERS

Recruiting and Retaining Stakeholders

- Identify issue(s) that are important to groups of people; find a lane to address the issue(s)
- Set values and the desired end result so that people know what they are agreeing to and signing up for
- Working with a planning team, determine who else is needed. Be sure to develop bridges with champions who are doing the work already
- Utilize relationships to bring people to the table and/or into the conversation
- Think of non-traditional partners and reach out to them

SUSTAINING A COALITION



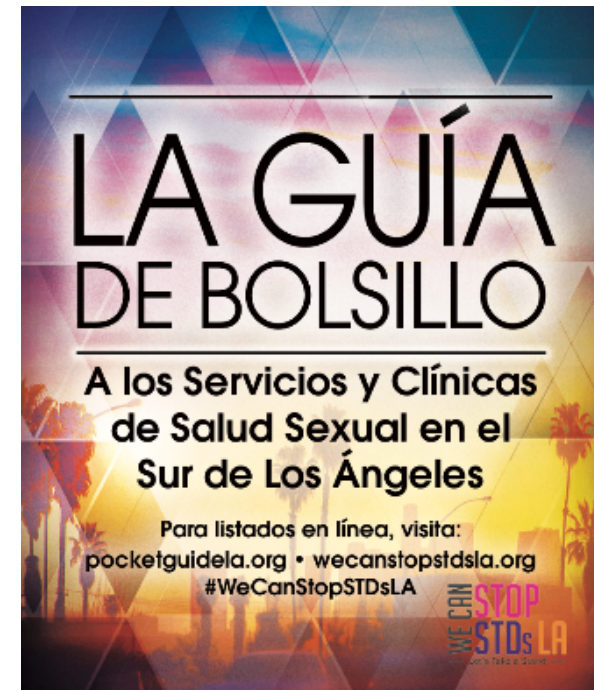
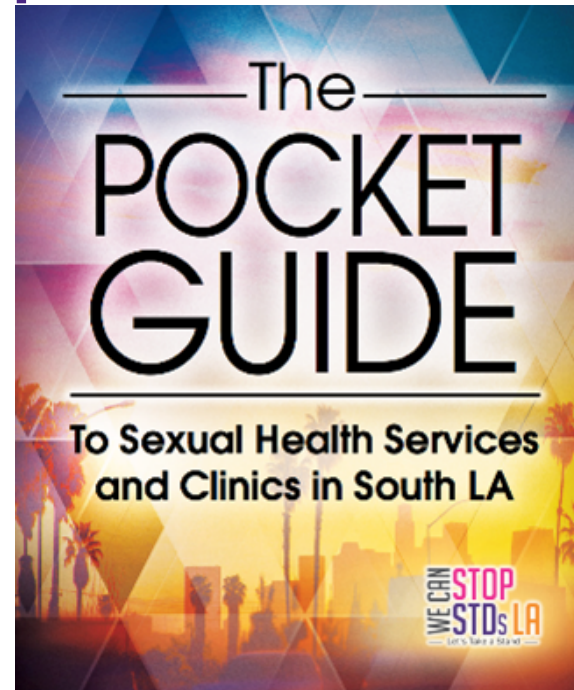
Sustaining a Coalition

Provide opportunities for members to

- Share what their group is doing
- Leverage resources
- Connect and expand networks
- Conduct workshops on best and promising practices

Sustaining a Coalition Continued

- Projects and products
- Capacity strengthening opportunities
- Strategic communications
- Evaluations



ENGAGING THE FAITH COMMUNITY

Talk with your neighbor

What strengths do faith communities have that would bolster a community health effort?



Youth and young adults in District 2 living healthy lifestyles in a thriving and supportive community

9/5/19

- **Strengths:**

- Connectivity and Support
- Guidance
- Affirmation
- Confidentiality

Potential Challenges:

- Stigma
- Creating safe non-judgmental spaces

Our Faith Engagement Efforts

- Formed a working group of Faith involved champions (2014/15)
- Two Circle of Faith convenings (2016 breakfast and 2019 dinner)
- Sexual violence and Intimate Partner Violence workshop (2018)
- Interfaith (IF) toolkit (initiated in 2018)

Champions

- Individuals who advocate, fight for and/or work on behalf of the audience you want to reach
- Further our message using the language and stories of young people and adult allies who work closely with them
- Our champions have included first ladies, a former nun, pastors, bishops, ministers, catholic priests, Muslim health workers, lay and other members of faith communities
- They bridge the gap between health and tenets of faith

Interfaith Working Group

- Makes action plans and carry out the work
- Collaborates with other working groups
- Creates connections to help spread awareness about STDs
- Helps change minds, narratives and reduce stigma

IF's 2018 IPV Workshop

- The Interfaith Working Group hosted a workshop conducted by Adrienne Spires, Project Coordinator of the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CALCASA).
- The purpose was to have participants
 - Examine the intersection between faith-rooted organizations and anti-gender-based violence organizations
 - Learn ways in which the two kinds of organizations could collaborate
 - Learn ways that faith-rooted organizations could be a resource for survivors.

Circle of Faith

- Drew people to attend events through engagement of elected officials and policy makers
- Created awareness and excitement in the interfaith community to help address the problem
- Brought faith leaders together for a conversation
- Gathered information through surveys and interactive conversations

Notable Successes and Outcomes

- Over 60 faith rooted people attended each COF event
 - Important keynote speakers
- What we wanted to learn:
 - Faith leaders' experiences promoting health in the community.
 - If sexual health education or assistance was needed
- Feedback from the COF events indicated interests in a sexual and reproductive health education tool
 - The Interfaith Toolkit was born!

Some Photo Highlights



Sample of Circle Of Faith Survey Questions

- What might be some barriers to addressing sexual and reproductive health in your place of worship?
- As a religious leader, what approaches do you take in order to protect the health of the community?
- What assistance do you need In addressing sexual and reproductive health in your place or worship?

Interfaith Toolkit

Designed to:

- Serve as a resource guide
- Provide guidance and support for faith leaders on how to incorporate STD prevention into their places of faith
- Demonstrate how to incorporate STD prevention and treatment and reproductive health messaging into faith lessons and activities.

Toolkit Continued

- Provide resources and referral links for faith leaders working with young people to bolster their knowledge and ability to guide youth and young adults ages 12 – 24 years old to:
 - Learn more about STDs
 - Seek testing and treatment services, and
 - Reduce risky sexual behaviors
- Strategy is to promote open communication about STDs which are on the rise
 - Not talking about these infections contributes to youth being affected

Next Steps

- Collaborate with multiple faiths and gather feedback
- Continue creating the Toolkit curriculum for faith leaders

REVIEW & DISCUSSION



Strategies for Recruitment and Retention Include:

- Set and act from the group's shared values
- Utilize relationships
 - Determine who is already doing the work and connect with them
- Think of non-traditional partners who can and will support the work

Strategies for Sustaining a Coalition Include:

- Opportunities to share – resources, information, expertise
- Opportunities to grow – capacity strengthening
- Projects and products that bring the group together

Strategies for Engaging Faith Communities Include:

- Approach with cultural humility
- Use language that resonates with the target audience
- Multifaith Advisory Board
- Key informants and thought leaders
- Circle of Faith Networks

References

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 - **CALCASA for its continued participation and support**
- The residents of District 2
- The office of LA County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas which has supported this effort since 2011
- The Division of HIV and STD Programs of the LA County Department of Public Health
- Coachman Moore & Associates (CMA) which provides backbone support for this effort
- You, our Audience today