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?
• **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

Youth and young adults in District 2 living healthy lifestyles in a thriving and supportive community 9/5/19
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 of 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


Appreciation and Gratitude to:

- The Community Advisory Coalition and its partners and allies
  - **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