

**WOMEN'S CAUCUS  
LUNCH AND LEARN SERIES  
PART 2 – PEER SUPPORT FOR OPTIMAL  
HEALTH  
JUNE 17, 2024**



LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
**COMMISSION ON HIV**





# CREATIVE APPROACHES TO ENDING THE EPIDEMIC

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ROXANNE LEWIS



# INTRODUCTION

Roxanne is a Program Manager at JWCH Institute Inc./ Wesley Health Centers. Prior to making her professional start in the HIV workforce in 2001, she volunteered with Camp Laurel, a camp for children living with HIV/AIDS. Roxanne authored several abstracts and presented at the Harm Reduction Coalition annual conference, the National Association of Case Manager's Conference, and the HIV Prevention Leadership Summit. Roxanne also served on the 2012 SHE Conference organizer team, where she presented about HIV Prevention for women.

In September 2012, she became the chair of Universal Condom Workgroup. As a member of the National Female Condom Coalition, she led Los Angeles in a campaign to increase access to and training on female condoms. This work helped lead to the FDA reclassification of the female condom/ internal condom.

During the pandemic Roxanne connected with local restaurants to help feed teams at her clinic and boost morale during those dark days. Those relationships blossomed and lead to opportunities for partnerships beyond the pandemic.

In 2024 Roxanne was chosen as a model for the Los Angeles DPH PrEP campaign. The campaign features African Americans who work across the HIV field in city wide posters, bus shelters, trains, internet advertisements, and billboards. Roxanne is an artist, writer, proud auntie, and LGBTQ ally.



# H.A.R.R.P.

The Healthy Alternatives for Reducing the Risk of HIV Project is a health education risk reduction program funded by the Los Angeles Department of Public Health, Division of HIV STD Programs. This program has been funded since 1999 and is regarded as one of the longest running, home grown programs in L.A.

The program uses the Transtheoretical Model of Change as a base for a curriculum that provides resources, information and referrals to women at risk for HIV / STI infection.

We conduct outreach, provide groups and individual sessions with clients from Hollywood to Compton.



# EMPOWERHER

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In January 2024, the Los Angeles Department of Public Health, Division of HIV STD Programs and Heluna Health awarded JWCH a new grant under their Ending the HIV Epidemic umbrella.

EmpowerHER is a Seeking Safety based group for women living with HIV.

We provide a safe space for women who have experienced trauma to connect and heal. In addition, we offer referrals for behavioral health, medical care, SUD, and more.

A blurred background image of a plant with droplets, possibly a succulent, in shades of light blue and white. The text is centered over this background.

# ENDING THE EPIDEMIC



# THE FOUR PILLARS OF THE PLAN TO END HIV:

1. DIAGNOSE
2. TREAT
3. PREVENT
4. RESPOND

**SOURCE:**

[HTTPS://ADMIN.PUBLICHEALTH.LACOUNTY.GOV/DHSP/EHE/EHE\\_PLA  
N\\_FINAL\\_2021.PDF](https://admin.publichealth.lacounty.gov/dhsp/ehe/ehe_plan_final_2021.pdf)



## CREATIVE APPROACHES ARE NECESSARY:

1. MEDICAL PROVIDERS ALONE CAN NOT AFFECT CHANGE.
2. PEOPLE LEARN FROM DIFFERENT MODALITIES.
3. ART + SCIENCE
4. COMPREHENSIVE CARE YIELDS MORE LONG-TERM PATIENT SUCCESS.





# PSA

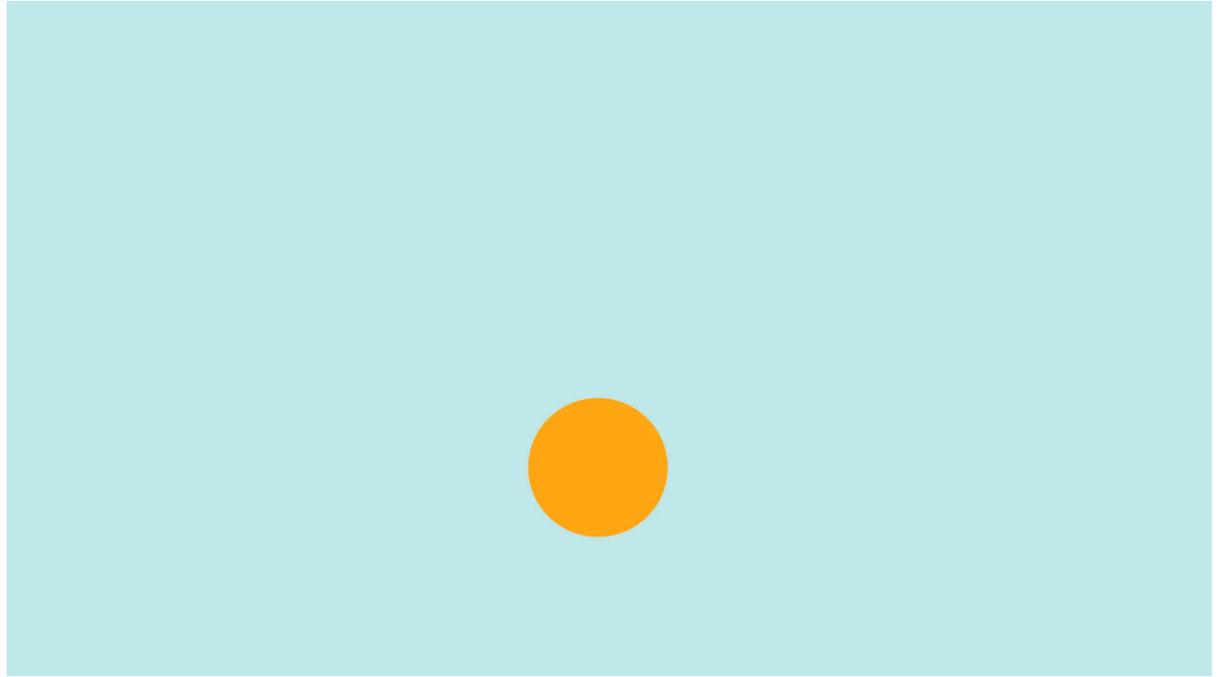
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These PSAs were created by Roxanne Lewis and Jintana Williams. They were created as a way to creatively highlight how our HIV focused programs correlate to a pillar of the EHE plan.

They have been shared on various social media channels as a way to engage a wider audience. Both were created using biteable.



# EHE PSA 1





# EHE PSA 2

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# PEER SUPPORT PROGRAMS

1. PEER SUPPORT PROGRAMS ENHANCE CLIENT PARTICIPATION
2. SPEAK CLIENT'S LANGUAGE
3. PROVIDE REAL REPRESENTATION
4. PEER KNOWLEDGE & EXPERIENCE SUPPLEMENTS PROVIDERS  
SUGGESTIONS AND PRESCRIPTIONS
5. PEERS CAN COME FROM ACROSS THE SPECTRUM OF EXPERIENCE



## PEER SUPPORT PROGRAMS

1. PEERS MAY HAVE HISTORY OF INCARCERATION, SUD, MENTAL ILLNESS OR COMORBIDITIES- THEY CAN SHOW CLIENTS HOW TO MANAGE THEIR ILLNESS, WHILE NAVIGATING OTHER CHALLENGES.
  2. PEER SUPPORT HELPS CLIENTS NAVIGATE CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR DIAGNOSIS
  3. PEER SUPPORT DISRUPTS THE SOCIAL ISOLATION THAT CAN AFFECT A PATIENTS PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH
  4. PEERS FIND NEW PURPOSE IN THEIR ROLES AND MAY DEVELOP A RENEWED SELF IDENTITY AS A RESULT OF HELPING OTHERS.
  5. PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV.
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From client, to peer, to Executive Director, Robin Barkins participated in HARRP and now runs TRUST a CBO that provides comprehensive education and support around sexual health.

## PEER SUPPORT WORKS



Bridgett Gordon educates community members and providers as a woman living with HIV.



Sandrine Lewis is a symbol of resilience. As a peer of the LoDi program she battled addiction, reuniting with her children then she worked to become employed on HARRP. Since her departure she has worked as a peer while navigating life's challenges.

# THANK YOU



ROXANNE LEWIS, PROGRAM MANAGER

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INSTAGRAM: @LOVESOURCELA

**UCLA** Health



**Main challenge:** In the United States, Black/African American and Hispanic women are disproportionately affected by HIV diagnoses.

Tailoring programs and services to engage these vulnerable populations in care is essential to reach the goal of ending the HIV epidemic.

# “Peer Linkage and Re-engagement of Women of Color with HIV”

Ending the HIV Epidemic in the US (EHE)

Presenter:

Francisco Valdés



Funding provided by the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) Ending the HIV Epidemic Grant and the County of Los Angeles, Department of Public Health, Division of HIV and STD Programs

## Description:

The Peer Linkage and Re-engagement intervention is designed to utilize peers—defined as people with HIV who have a shared experience and shared community membership as the populations they work with. Peers work to:



Link cisgender women of color (WoC)<sup>1</sup> who have recently been diagnosed with HIV



Re-engage WoC in HIV primary care



Support retention in HIV medical care

*"This intervention supports organizations and health care teams to integrate peers into the HIV care team."*

This is a short-term intervention in which peers work intensively with eligible women to achieve the following milestones within six months to one year:

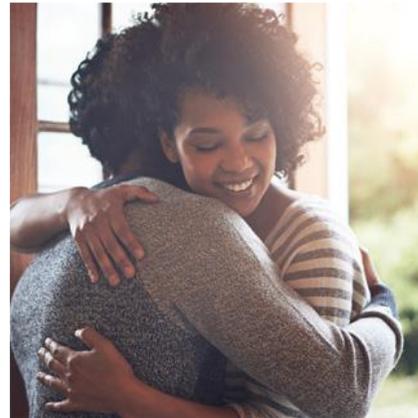
## Key Objectives

The main goal of the intervention is to link and re-engage WoC who are newly diagnosed or fallen out of care for at least six months into HIV primary medical care.



## Description:

- Attend two medical care visits with an HIV primary care provider;
- Complete two lab visits and
- Attend at least two visits with a Case Manager.



- Participants receive services from Friends Helping Friends in their own clinic.
- **Friends Helping Friends is not intended to switch clients from clinics or medical providers.**
- Peer Navigators conduct interventions in the field.

## Essential elements of peer tasks:

- Finding, outreaching to, and re-engaging WoC lost to care or newly diagnosed
- Accompaniment to medical services
- Assistance with transportation and childcare
- Education about medical and social services
- Coaching on life skills
- Supporting adherence to HIV care and treatment
- Referrals to community services.
- Support retention in HIV medical care for viral suppression
- Better health outcomes



## Incentives in form of gift cards \*

- \$25 for Initial Enrollment
- \$75 per medical visit (HIV related)
- \$25 per laboratory visit (HIV related)
- \$25 per case management visit
- \$75 for relatives/ friends for childcare

## Assistance with Transportation

- Taxi or
- \$30 gas card per HIV related visit

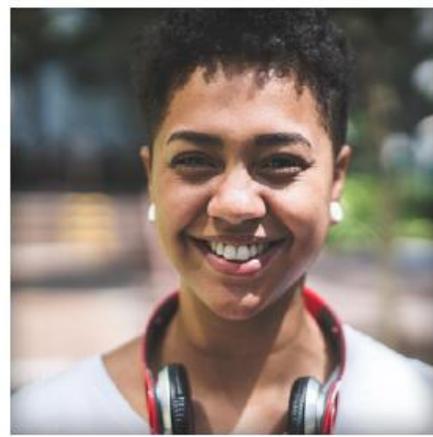
\*Vendors: Target, Ralphs, Kroger, Amazon, Mobil, Chevron.



## Who is eligible for Friends Helping Friends?

- **Cis Gender Women of Color with HIV who are 18 years or older**
- **Residing in Los Angeles County**
- **Newly diagnosed or**
- **Out of care for 6+ months or**
- **In care but not virally suppressed.**





**Peers have been shown to increase linkage to care for vulnerable, hard-to-reach populations**





**Peer interventions  
are conducted in  
English and Spanish**

**Clients can be  
enrolled in the Peer  
Program as long as  
they are not enrolled  
in another Peer  
Program.**

**Clients on MCC can  
access Friends  
Helping Friends  
services**

## Los Angeles County Friends helping Friends Program



This program will connect you with other HIV-positive women who will provide one-on-one support to help you become and stay undetectable.

- Black or Latina women living with HIV
- Live in Los Angeles County
- Earn up to \$350 in gift cards

### For more information contact:

- fvaldes@mednet.ucla.edu
- Francisco (626)823-8640
- Marilynn (424)325-9925

Funding provided by the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) Ending the HIV Epidemic Grant and the County of Los Angeles, Department of Public Health, Division of HIV and STD Programs

[www.lafan.org](http://www.lafan.org)



## Condado de Los Ángeles Comadres ayudando a comadres



Este programa la conectará con otras mujeres VIH positivas que le brindarán apoyo personalizado para ayudarla a volverse y permanecer indetectable.

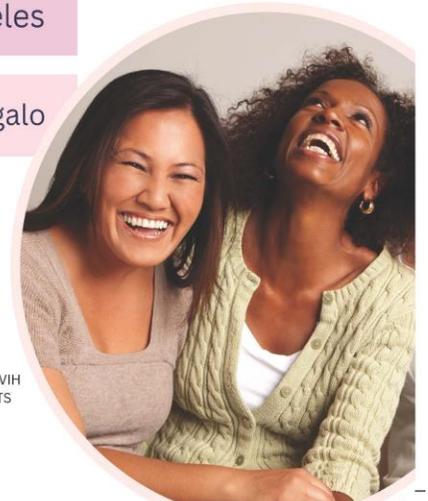
- Mujeres Latinas o Afroamericanas que viven con el VIH
- Viven en el Condado de Los Ángeles
- Recibe hasta \$350 en tarjetas de regalo

### Para más información contacte:

- fvaldes@mednet.ucla.edu
- Francisco (626)823-8640
- Marilynn (424)325-9925

Particionado por la Administración de Recursos y Servicios de Salud (HRSA), Poner Fin a la Epidemia del VIH y el Condado de Los Ángeles, Departamento de Salud Pública, División de Programas Contra el VIH y ETS

[www.lafan.org](http://www.lafan.org)



Questions

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Answers

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