

# Remarkable Woman: That's You!

A Community Health Worker Program to Prevent  
Obesity and Diabetes among  
African American Women



Remarkable Woman:  
That's You!



National  
Urban League | Empowering Communities,  
Changing Lives.  
Buffalo Urban League

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# Implementation Guide for Community Based Organizations and Agencies



## Acknowledgments

When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion. And so it is with chronic disease prevention—with united prevention efforts, we can prevent and control the development of obesity and related chronic diseases in the African American community. Remarkable Woman: That's You! is a project funded by the New York State Health Foundation. Remarkable Woman: That's You! will be implemented by the National Urban League and Buffalo Urban League. Evaluation will be conducted by Morehouse School of Medicine's Community Voices: Healthcare for the Underserved. Dr. Winifred King of the Program Development and Evaluation Branch, Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention (DNPAO), National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) led the conceptualization and development of this implementation manual. Dr. Kisha B. Holden and Dr. Henrie M. Treadwell (Community Voices: Healthcare for the Underserved) participated in its review and provided expert feedback on its development.

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## **INTRODUCTION & REMARKABLE WOMAN: THAT'S YOU! OVERVIEW**

The *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* Implementation Guide is designed to assist key project staff, which may include community health workers, of community based organizations and agencies interested in implementing the *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* program.

The purpose of the *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* intervention is to help African American women support one another in behavior change, in addition to providing specific information about obesity and diabetes and other types of chronic diseases.

As the number of uninsured in our country continues to rise, communities must cope with increasingly underserved individuals who are disenfranchised and ill-equipped to navigate the complex health care system. Many have chronic conditions but are not obtaining appropriate care, and many are eligible for existing health programs but do not know how to access them. Specially trained Community Health Workers (CHWs) are helping many communities reach these vulnerable individuals to enhance appropriate and efficient use of the health care system.

Community Health Workers are community members who work almost exclusively in community settings and serve as connectors between health care consumers and providers to promote health among groups that have traditionally lacked access to adequate care. For the *Remarkable Woman, That's You!* project, the Community Health Worker will also provide education and motivation on healthy lifestyle choices and behaviors that include a healthier diet and increased physical activity. Community health workers are unique in that they live in the communities in which they work, understand what resources are available in their communities, communicate in the language of the people and recognize and incorporate cultural buffers to help promote health outcomes. A growing body of evidence documents the effectiveness of community health workers in prevention and maintenance in chronic diseases such as diabetes as well as cardiovascular disease risk reduction among the communities they serve.

The mission, goals and objectives of the *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* include the following:

### *Mission*

- To design, implement, and test a community-based health education and advocacy model and health services delivery which would eventually serve as a replicable model and which would result in the formulation of national policies aimed at the systematic reduction of health disparities.

### Goals

- Promote healthy lifestyles among African American women and other women of color
- Improve African American women's access to healthcare and other community assets and supports
- Influence public policy in favor of community health worker models by developing and disseminating a replicable and sustainable outcomes-based program for reducing health disparities among African Americans in the area of diabetes

### Objectives

- To improve health indicators (ie, lower weight, blood pressure, glucose levels etc.)
- To increase participant's healthy eating habits
- To increase participant's frequency of engagement in exercise
- To implement the Remarkable Woman, That's You! curriculum to African American women
- To connect participant's with healthcare providers and other community supports

The core elements of the *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* intervention include:

- ❖ Recruiting and training peer community health workers (CHWs)
- ❖ Discussing health issues affecting African American women
- ❖ Using cultural and gender appropriate materials for African American women to acknowledge pride in being African American
- ❖ Convening small group sessions to discuss cultural and gender-related barriers and facilitators to achieving health and wellness
- ❖ Teaching healthy eating and active living as key strategies for reducing one's risk for obesity and diabetes
- ❖ Enhancing participant skills in managing stress
- ❖ Emphasizing the importance of health care provider's involvement in achieving a healthier lifestyle

These core components should be maintained and implemented to ensure program effectiveness and fidelity to the intervention.

The *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* intervention is based on the Social Cognitive Theory. According to Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), individuals need not only the appropriate education but also the social skills and norms in order to apply that education. In that respect, the *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* intervention educates women on pride in their ethnicity and gender, coping skills, and self-management skills. This information is then reinforced through group exercises, homework assignments, group discussions and lectures.

The *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* intervention curriculum was developed by staff at Community Voices: Healthcare for the Underserved. The contents of the intervention box include the:

- ❖ Implementation Guide (provides a step-by-step framework for implementation activities)
- ❖ Community Health Worker Training Curriculum
- ❖ Evaluation Manual

## **BENEFITS OF PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION**

African American women who participate in the program will benefit from intervention activities, outreach and community engagement strategies, and connecting with health care providers and other supportive agencies and resources.

### **The Community**

#### **Reach**

As a community-based intervention, *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* can reach high risk African American women in a shorter amount of time by using peer community health workers to recruit and engage women to participate in the intervention.

#### **Community Empowerment**

The community is seen as the answer, not the problem. The intervention gives African American women the opportunity to take an active role in the prevention and control of obesity and diabetes. *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* also can counter larger social issues that impact African American women, such as poverty and discrimination, by promoting personal self-worth and addressing racial, and gender biases that African American women may encounter.

### **Other issues**

Although *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* is primarily designed to empower African American to take control of their health and lives, it may address other important issues, such as self-esteem, lack of access to health care or the lack of social support systems. *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* may help create a supportive environment in which African American women can talk about these issues and, ultimately, reduce their risks for chronic diseases such as diabetes.

## **Community Based Organizations and Agencies**

### **Cost-Effectiveness**

*Remarkable Woman: That's You!* requires resources to reach large numbers of African American women who are potentially vulnerable to obesity and related chronic diseases such as diabetes.

### **Long Term Strategies**

Since community health workers recruit new community health workers, the intervention can continue over time with reduced effort from your staff members. Recruiting and training new waves of community health workers lead to yet more members of your target population being recruited for participation in the intervention.

### **Community Support**

*Remarkable Woman: That's You!* provides your agency with multiple opportunities to build positive relationships and support in your community. The intervention helps build your agency's image, increases awareness of your agency, and creates additional future outreach opportunities.

## ***Remarkable Woman: That's You! Community Health Workers***

### **Helping Others**

Community health workers have the opportunity to give back to the community and improve their friends' health and well-being. By participating in *Remarkable Woman: That's You!*, community health workers assume a more active role addressing obesity and chronic diseases in their community.

### **Personal Growth**

A person who serves as a community health worker may improve his or her self-esteem and create positive, personal behavior change. Community health workers can feel good about themselves because they are helping others and seeing their skills and influence acknowledged by the program.

### **Low Burden**

Ultimately, the community health workers get to choose the amount of time they use for conducting the intervention. They also get to hold conversations in normal social contexts with their friends and acquaintances.

## **The Remarkable Woman: That's You! Participants**

### **Increase Self-esteem**

African American women are empowered by discussing similar health experiences; through poetry readings written by African American women who focus on pride, honor and respect; and through creating an environment where women can share and feel good about themselves.

### **Increase Self-confidence**

African American women engage in interactive group exercises to demonstrate knowledge of diabetes and chronic diseases that can be used to assist family and friends.

### **Stress Management Skills Development**

Self survival skills, assertive behavior skills, good decision making skills, and negotiation of condom usage with partners are enhanced.

### **Enhanced Knowledge about Obesity and Diabetes**

Through the intervention sessions the participants gain knowledge of obesity prevention, diabetes and other chronic diseases.

## **SECTION 1: INTERVENTION SESSIONS**

The *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* Intervention is comprised of four two-hour peer led group sessions. Each intervention session address a specific topic and has a specific focus. This section gives you a brief overview of each section, the topic and the focus.

### **A. Session 1 – What is Diabetes?**

The goal of session 1 is educate women about diabetes and generate a discussion about the types of diabetes, diagnosis, symptoms and treatment. This session focuses on the prevention and treatment of diabetes, risk factors, diabetes related complications, particularly for African American women. The activities in this session include: introductions; poetry readings; development of ground rules and expectations; discussion about diabetes in the African American community; homework; and evaluation of the session.

### **B. Session 2 – Managing Diabetes, Diet and Exercise**

The goal of session 2 is to provide the women with factual information about managing diabetes through appropriate diet or healthy eating and exercise. This session focuses on how barriers and solutions to exercise, culturally appropriate body image among African American women, and the importance of good nutrition and healthy foods. The activities in this session include: poetry readings; review of ground rules and expectations; review of session 1 and homework; small group activities, homework and evaluation of session.

### **C. Session 3 – Managing Diabetes, Healthcare and Health Services**

Session 3 addresses the importance of managing one’s diabetes through monitoring glucose levels and other screening behaviors. This session aims at developing strong assertiveness skills in communicating with health care providers about diabetes prevention and treatment. The session focuses on the differences between assertive, aggressive, and non-assertive communication, and their respective consequences. The activities in this session include: poetry readings; review of session 2 and homework; discussion on knowing your diabetes ABCs, discussion on aggressive vs assertive communication with key medical staff, and handling challenging situations; homework, and evaluation of the session.

### **D. Session 4 – Diabetes and Emotional Health**

Session 4 is designed to further enhance the African American women’s skills in coping with diabetes stress and the diabetes “blues”. This session discusses identifying when one has the “blues” and implementing culturally appropriate coping strategies. The link between “the blues” and accessing mental health services” is further discussed. This session’s activities include: poetry readings; review of session 3 and homework; discussion of coping, diabetes stress, diabetes blues, and culturally appropriate coping strategies and resources, and evaluation.

## **SECTION 2: PRE-IMPLEMENTATION—GETTING STARTED**

The success of the Remarkable Woman: That’s You! intervention is somewhat dependent upon the pre-implementation stage. This section is designed to help prepare agencies in getting started to implement the *Remarkable Woman: That’s You!* intervention.

The section also contains information through questions and answers addressing topics such as:

- Assessing your agency
- Assessing your population
- Recruiting Community Health Workers
- Resource essentials
- Developing a work plan
- Training your CHWs in using the Remarkable Woman: That’s You! curriculum

### ***Is Remarkable Woman: That’s You! Right for Your Agency?***

Before deciding to adopt and implement *Remarkable Woman: That’s You!*, you should determine if *Remarkable Woman: That’s You!* is right for your agency and the African American women population served. This section will help you think through the structures, processes, and resources needed to successfully implement *Remarkable Woman: That’s You!* activities.

The table 1 below is a checklist of questions you need to consider before deciding if you should implement *Remarkable Woman: That's You!*. The purpose of this checklist is to guide your decisions by stimulating thinking and dialogue.

### **Agency Readiness Self-Assessment**

The following is a brief self-assessment intended to help agencies determine whether they possess the capacity, or can build the capacity, to adopt and implement the Remarkable Woman: That's You! intervention. Please read each item, and then place a checkmark (√) in only one response column.

<b>Capacities and Resources Needed for Remarkable Woman: That's You!</b>	<b>Yes, we have this capacity(1)</b>	<b>We do not presently have this capacity, but we can build the capacity (2)</b>	<b>No, we do not have this capacity (3)</b>
1. Community buy-in and support			
2. Capacity to recruit African American women, ages 18 and older, who are at risk for obesity and other chronic related diseases			
3. Capacity to recruit and train peer community health workers			
4. Capacity to collect, maintain, and process monitoring and outcome data			
5. Meeting space to conduct four 2-hour sessions			
6. Low-cost incentives for participants(e.g., transportation passes, snacks at group sessions, childcare at group sessions)			
7. A means to track program activities (i.e., recruitment of clients, sessions delivered)			
8. Resources to market program activities			

If all of your responses were in column 1 ("Yes, we have this capacity") or column 2 ("We do not presently have this capacity, but we can build the capacity"), your agency is likely ready for the *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* intervention

In addition to thinking through the above questions in detail, you can use the questions described below to determine if your agency has the capacity, or can build the capacity, to implement *Remarkable Woman: That's You!*. After answering all of these questions, you should be able to determine if *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* is the right intervention for your agency and community.

### Are there existing chronic disease prevention interventions for African American women in your area?

You should determine if *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* would fill an unmet need and not duplicate or compete with other chronic disease prevention interventions. If there are other diabetes or chronic disease prevention interventions for African American women, especially community-based interventions, are already available in your area, you may have difficulty recruiting enough participants. However, *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* can complement and support other prevention interventions.

### Do you have access to African American women?

*Remarkable Woman: That's You!* was designed to reach African American women at high risk for obesity and chronic related diseases such as diabetes. Your agency must have a good reputation with members of this population, and you must be able to recruit and work with them. You also must have access to venues where African American women gather and socialize. Examples of potential community venues include churches, hair and nail salons, shopping malls, clubs, bars, sororities, school events, gyms, and community centers.

### Is there support for *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* implementation?

#### **Community Support**

If there is a sizable African American population in your area, you will want its members to have a vested interest in the intervention's success. You will need to identify and enlist the support of stakeholders and leaders from your target population of African American women.

#### **Agency Support**

If you decide that you want to adopt *Remarkable Woman: That's You!*, it is crucial to secure agency buy-in to ensure the support of agency administration and to allow agency resources to be used for intervention implementation. Obtaining buy-in is most effectively accomplished by identifying at least one agency administrator or staff person to champion the intervention, that is, to advocate for its integration into the agency's existing services. A *champion* could

be one person or a group of people and should be selected by an agency administrator. A *champion* is someone within the agency who is a mid- to upper-level administrator who generally serves as a link between administration and staff members.

The *champion* needs to be adept at answering questions and mediating changes in agency structure; he or she can serve as a negotiator of any necessary trade-offs or compromises. The *champion* becomes the intervention's spokesperson, anticipating the reservations of staff members and answering questions about the intervention's needs and resources. Regardless of the number of *champions*, the main issue is convincing the stakeholders that implementing *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* will enhance the quality of your agency's services and that your agency will be capable of implementing *Remarkable Woman: That's You!*. Stakeholders include your funding source(s), your agency's board of directors or executive board, and all agency staff members who will have a role in the operation of the intervention. The latter include administrators who will obtain funding, supervisors who will monitor the intervention, and staff members who will interact with community health workers and participants.

### Getting Started

The time it will take to implement *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* will depend on your ability to obtain community buy-in and support, recruit and train community health workers, market the intervention to your target population, identify space to conduct the group sessions, and obtain the necessary resources to implement the group sessions.

Table 2 summarizes the major activities for each *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* phase. Use this as a guide to help you implement *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* within a specified time frame.

<b>Summary of Remarkable Woman: That's You! Major Activities</b>	
<b>Pre-Implementation</b>	<b>Time Estimate</b>
Begin developing relevant community relationships and obtain buy-in and support	1-2 months
Assess your target population	1-2 months
Assess the cultural appropriateness and feasibility of implementing <i>Remarkable Woman: That's You!</i> in your community	1-2 months
Determine the number of community health workers you need to train with your available resources	1 month
Train community health worker facilitators	1 month
Begin developing implementation and monitoring plans	1 month
Develop target population recruitment and retention plans and procedures	2 months
Finalize implementation and monitoring plans	2 months
Convene "Kick off" meeting	1 month

<b>Implementation</b>	
Conduct on-going marketing and recruitment for your program	<i>Conduct every month</i>
Convene peer-led group sessions on a weekly basis	<i>Conduct every week</i>
Provide referrals to participants	<i>Conduct every week</i>
<b>Maintenance and Program Monitoring</b>	
Develop a support and maintenance plan	<i>Conduct on a monthly basis</i>
Conduct on-going recruitment, retention and support activities for the community health workers	
Conduct on-going recruitment and retention activities for the participants	
Provide reunion or booster sessions	
Monitor intervention objectives	
Assess adherence to core components	
Assess changes in outcomes	<i>Conduct every 3 months</i>

### **Staff Recruitment and Retention**

Your agency's policies and procedures manual should include guidance on hiring staff. For the successful implementation of *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* you will need the following personnel:

- At least one program coordinator
- Six to ten community health workers
- At least one administrative assistant

Ideally, all staff members should have extensive experience working with African American women, and it is recommended that they should be members of this population. At the very least, your program coordinators should be an African American woman. This can help increase the acceptability of *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* among your target population and ensure that the intervention is delivered in a culturally appropriate manner. The program coordinator will be primarily responsible for overseeing and coordinating the implementation of *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* intervention and recruiting and training the community health workers. Your community health worker facilitators will be responsible for conducting the intervention sessions and identifying, recruiting and retaining participants for the intervention. The administrative assistant will provide project support and help coordinate intervention logistics, such as maintaining files, arranging catering, and placing advertisements. Depending on the size of your program and available resources, your program coordinator may need to take on some or all of the roles of a community health worker.

## Recruiting and Retaining Effective Community Health Workers

A variety of approaches and resources can be used to find community health workers. The first place to look is within your own agency to see if you have staff members who are qualified and available to work on *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* For finding community health workers outside of your agency, try the following:

- ▶ Ask your advisory board for recommendations.
- ▶ Talk with staff members of other local prevention programs.
- ▶ Get recommendations from gatekeepers, key informants, and other leaders in your African American community.
- ▶ Talk with health care providers.
- ▶ Check the public health, social work, and education programs at local colleges.
- ▶ Look at advertisements in local publications and on Web sites.

Once you have recruited your community health workers, you will need to take the following steps to retain them during your intervention:

- ▶ Maintain good and ongoing communication.
- ▶ Involve community health workers in intervention planning and evaluation.
- ▶ Develop professional goals for each community health workers beyond their participation in the *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* intervention and meet with him or her regularly.
- ▶ Provide training opportunities that address their professional goals.
- ▶ Communicate any intervention achievements and milestones.
- ▶ Have community health workers attend and present at various health promotion conferences.
- ▶ Make sure that they are not overworked and are comfortable with their given roles.

## Training Staff

All staff members, particularly program coordinators and community health workers, should receive training on *the Remarkable Woman: That's you! intervention*. Use the following steps when training staff members who will be involved in implementing the intervention:

- ▶ Identify the training needs, such as group facilitation, of program coordinators, facilitators, and others who will be involved in the intervention implementation.
- ▶ At a minimum, ensure that community health workers are trained on how to facilitate *the Remarkable Woman: That's You!* sessions
- ▶ Monitor and communicate with community health workers throughout the intervention's implementation phase to help identify any additional training or technical assistance needs.

Table 3 below presents a summary of key staff roles and requirements.

### Summary of Key Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Position Title	Roles and Responsibilities	Requirements
<b>Program Coordinator</b>	<p>Manage and coordinate implementation of <i>Remarkable Woman: That's You!</i></p> <p>Coordinate daily activities, such as assigning tasks, monitoring and ensuring progress of the project, and arranging staff meetings</p> <p>Ensure data collection and management, monitoring and analysis</p> <p>Recruit community health workers</p> <p>Supervise community health workers and arrange for facilitator training</p> <p>Identify and secure session space</p> <p>Identify the technical assistance needs of facilitators and project staff, and coordinate the provision of technical assistance</p> <p>Monitor expenditures and budget</p> <p>Plan and facilitate marketing activities</p> <p>Promote the intervention in the community</p> <p>Identify and work with community partners and gatekeepers</p>	<p>Cultural sensitivity (e.g., respectful of others and of differences between people based on ethnicity/culture; empathetic)</p> <p>Persuasiveness (e.g., able to convey the importance of the intervention to staff, participants, and the community; able to motivate people)</p> <p>Knowledge about diabetes and other chronic diseases (e.g., has accurate information; understands the impact diabetes among African Americans)</p> <p>Ability to inspire trust (respects confidentiality of group members; does not gossip; is honest)</p> <p>Ability to understand confidentiality issues and the importance of maintaining confidentiality</p> <p>Ability to supervise community health workers (e.g., understands all core elements and activities of the intervention; can monitor CHWs and deliver positive feedback to improve process; can monitor community)</p>

<p><b>Community Health Worker</b></p>	<p>Assist the program coordinator</p> <p>Promote the intervention in the Community</p> <p>Identify and work with community partners and gatekeepers</p> <p>Recruit participants for the intervention</p> <p>Provide incentives for retention of participants in the intervention</p> <p>Coordinate and conduct reunions or booster sessions</p> <p>Collect and compile monitoring data</p> <p>Assist with marketing activities</p>	<p>Knowledge about diabetes and other chronic diseases (e.g., has accurate information; understands the impact diabetes among African Americans)</p> <p>Ability to inspire trust (respects confidentiality of group members; does not gossip; is honest)</p> <p>Ability to understand confidentiality issues and the importance of maintaining confidentiality</p> <p>Knowledge of and experience with African American women (e.g., knows local issues and characteristics of AA women; understands AA women culture; is comfortable working with AA women)</p> <p>Skills in guiding a group process (e.g., able to convey information clearly and simply; able to diplomatically guide group discussions; able to respond to comments or questions; able to elicit participation from all group members)</p> <p>Skills in guiding problem-solving (e.g., able to help participants identify goals; able to generate alternative strategies; able to provide encouragement after failure)</p>
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<b>Administrative Assistant</b>	<p>Enter data from forms and record contact information</p> <p>Secure appropriate materials</p> <p>Buy and arrange incentives (e.g., catering, refreshments, gifts as decided)</p> <p>Assist with securing training and reunion venues</p> <p>Perform tasks related to publicity and retention (e.g., photocopying, arranging for printing)</p>	<p>Cultural sensitivity (e.g., respectful of others and of differences between people based on ethnicity/culture)</p> <p>Strong organization skills</p> <p>Strong communication skills</p> <p>Experience with computers and word processing</p>
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## FAQs

### Assessing Your Population

The Remarkable Women intervention was originally designed for adult African American women to reduce their risk of obesity and diabetes. The intervention can be tailored and adapted to meet the needs of another population; however, it is important that agencies assess the needs of the target population beforehand.

Here are some commonly asked questions that potential providers may ask about the target population:

#### **Q. How can I ensure that this intervention addresses my target population needs?**

A. Define the community and target population. A clear assessment of the population should be completed to get to know the community where the Remarkable Woman: That's You! intervention will be implemented. By speaking to individuals within the community, one can get a feel for possible community members that may be involved as well as give the community members an idea of the program. Staff should speak to community leaders and seek permission from all officials within the community (e.g. administrative authorities overseeing public housing, citizens' councils). Everyone should have a clear understanding of the objectives and goals of Remarkable Woman: That's You!.

After gaining the appropriate permission, learn as much as possible about the community. How do community members view chronic disease prevention and health-related issues? What perceptions do you foresee being most difficult in overcoming? How can the attitudes of community members be changed?

Determine where to find African American women who need to learn more about diabetes and other chronic diseases prevention. Ask community members which areas are safe as well as unsafe. By attending community meetings you can learn about the community and build relationships with the community members. **Focus groups** and **key informant interviews** are used to learn about the needs of African American women for health information. Focus groups should include individuals who are familiar with and a part of the community. The focus group should bring familiarity with community member's perceptions of chronic disease prevention and their community. By repeating focus groups with different members of the community, you may discover obstacles that may confront the implementation process. A focus group should consist of eight to ten people from the community, which may include: community leaders; patriarchal members of the community; adult females; adult males; and teenagers. Focus group members may be substituted depending on the community.

Key informant interviews are individual interviews intended for residents familiar with the community. The same issues should be addressed with the key informant interviews as with the focus groups. The key participants should be individuals affected by obesity, diabetes and other chronic related diseases. Key informants may be selected by referrals from project staff, other key informants, or from community meetings. There is no specific number of key informant interviews to complete however at least 10 should be completed. During the interviews, notes should be taken and if possible, tape recorded. The focus groups and key informant interviews can be simultaneously completed within six to eight weeks prior to implementation.

Evaluation of the focus groups and key participant interviews should include a community review panel. A community review panel is important in keeping the community members as active parts in planning the intervention.

**Q. Should the *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* intervention only be used with African American women?**

A. Although the *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* intervention was originally developed for African American women, ages 18 and over, it has and can be adapted for women of various racial/ethnic populations as well as older women. It is important to tailor/adapt the intervention for the target population.

**Q. Where do I find participants?**

A. To encourage participation, *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* should be publicized as a program for African American women developed by African American women. Participants for the intervention can be found in any place where African American women congregate, including (but not limited to) churches, beauty salons, universities, social groups, jails/prisons, AA meetings, treatment centers, STD clinics, and sororities.

**Q. I want to talk with a housing development to implement the Remarkable Women Intervention. Are there any steps I should take prior to this?**

A. Prior to implementing the Remarkable Women Intervention at the housing development, you should speak with management in order to get their approval before proceeding. Management personnel can be very helpful in recruiting participants for your sessions as well as possibly providing a space and refreshments for your meetings.

**Q. I want to implement Remarkable Women at the local community recreational center? How should I obtain approval?**

A. Implementing the Remarkable Woman: That's You! intervention at a recreational center or a YMCA is ideal because of space and community members familiarity with these centers. It is important for you to speak with the Director and perhaps their liaison with the City's Parks and Recreation office to discuss the intervention and ways in which you can partner with them.

**Recruiting Community Health Workers**

The Remarkable Woman: That's You! intervention is a peer-led intervention. This intervention should be facilitated by community health workers (CHWs)—specifically a peer who is of the same race/ethnicity.

Here are some commonly asked questions that providers may ask about recruitment:

**Q. What skills should I look for in recruiting Community Health Workers?**

A. The CHW should be well versed on the factors associated obesity and diabetes and strategies for preventing or controlling diabetes.

**Q. How can I collaborate with other agencies to recruit women for this intervention?**

A. Other local agencies or programs may be used to collaborate with in order to find participants and resources. Collaborations are strongly encouraged. The use of a Memorandum of an Agreement/Understanding must be employed. The memo is binding (like a contract) and the language used in the memo should make collaboration amicable across the parties involved. The contents of the memo should include, but is not limited to, identification of lead organizations, scope of work for each organization, points of contact and any monetary agreements.

**Q. What are the key characteristics for an effective community health worker?**

A. Appropriate candidates for the position are people from the community being served or who have a connection to the community (a community member or possessing shared experience with community members). This position will

require a high level of motivation, attention to detail and excellent human relation skills and an ability to work as part of a multi-disciplinary team. While promoting the objectives of health and wellness programs, this individual will assist in the identification of health, home, family or community conditions that need change or improvement leading to the development, recommendation or implementation of corrective measures for individuals and families that lead to greater health and wellness.

**Q. What are the roles and responsibilities for Community Health Workers?**

A. A community health worker is an individual who is trained to provide health and wellness education and enhance access to medical care for individuals and families of their community. Responsibilities include:

- Cultural mediation between communities and health and human service systems.
- Informal counseling and social support.
- Advocacy for individual and community needs.
- Providing culturally appropriate health education.
- Assuring people get the services they need.
- Building individual and community capacity.
- Assisting in the reduction of barriers to appropriate health care services.

As a *Remarkable Woman, That's You!* Community Health Worker, your role is to encourage all group members to participate in activities during each of the six sessions of the program and to work with participants to connect them with medical providers.

**Resource Essentials**

The *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* Project intervention box contains everything you need to implement the program.

Here are some commonly asked questions that potential providers may ask about resource materials:

**Q. What materials are needed to implement the Remarkable Woman: That's You! intervention?**

A. There are three manuals needed to implement the Remarkable Woman: That's You! intervention: The first manual is the Implementation Guide for agency providers to prepare, implement and evaluate in the intervention. The second manual is the Facilitator Curriculum Manual that contains information on conducting the Remarkable Woman: That's You! sessions. The third manual is the Evaluation Manual that contains an evaluation plan and instruments to assist agencies in their efforts in demonstrating that the intervention works in their community.

**Q. What other materials will I need which are not in the intervention box?**

A. Other materials that you will need to conduct the intervention will include: newsprint, markers, index cards, etc.

**Training Your CHWs in Implementing Remarkable Woman: That's You!**

Remarkable Woman: That's You! Community Health Workers are very important in planning and implementation. CHWs do not need to be a health expert to facilitate the group sessions. CHWs do need some basic knowledge of healthy eating and physical activity. Basic information on these topics is provided in the curriculum and training manuals.

Here are some commonly asked questions that potential providers may ask about training your CHWs implementing Remarkable Woman: That's You!:

**Q. What type of training should the CHW facilitator and staff have prior to implementing the intervention?**

A. The Remarkable Woman: That's You! staff should thoroughly review all program materials, plans and logistics. The staff should create a culturally sensitive atmosphere. Cultural sensitivity is the awareness of the nuances of one's own culture and other cultures. With a culturally sensitive staff, the facilitators will be able to understand norms, values and behaviors within the culture of a specific group of people. Staff-participant language and dialect matches should be considered. Staff should understand the participant's cultural heritage and institutional barriers. This will enable the staff to understand how the African American women relate to the world. Obesity and chronic disease prevention efforts targeting African American women have had many implications, due to the fact that African American women carry the triple burden of race, class, and gender. As a result, chronic disease prevention efforts for African American women must incorporate information on African American culture and history. The African American woman's contribution to the family and society should also be communicated.

CHW facilitators should serve as peer educators that can effectively communicate with the participants. The tools that are used in the intervention should be culturally sensitive as well. Music, visuals, and humor should all be culturally familiar to the women.

**SECTION 3: IMPLEMENTATION—PUTTING REMARKABLE WOMAN: THAT'S YOU! TO WORK**

Once you have assessed your population, recruited your community health workers team, developed a work plan and trained your CHWs in using the intervention curriculum, you are ready to begin implementing Remarkable Woman: That's You!. This section is designed to help you put Remarkable Woman: That's You! to work.

This section also contains information through questions and answers addressing topics such as:

- Marketing/Recruitment for the program
- Implementing the program
- Adaptation

Prior to implementing the *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* intervention, the agency should have addressed the following:

- ❖ **Recruitment and/or retention issues.** If recruitment and/or retention issues are not given proper consideration, the program may not be successful. Strategies should be put in place to address these issues.
- ❖ **Community Health Worker skills.** The successful implementation of the Remarkable Woman: That's You! intervention weighs heavily on the facilitation skills of the community health worker. Although Remarkable Women was developed by African-American women for African-American women, it can be adjusted to fit other audiences. However, it is important the community health worker is culturally sensitive.
- ❖ **Resources.** Inadequacy of organizational support and/or resources can hinder the effectiveness of the intervention. (Assess the amount of human and material resources available before you implement the program.)

## Session Planning

**Session space** – Secure space that is private and comfortable to accommodate a total of 12 participants.

**Materials** – Obtain all materials for sessions prior to the session. These may include handouts, educational materials, information related to local events.

**Session enhancements**- provide cultural enhancements for every session. These may include African art and décor, music, food, etc

## FAQs

### **Marketing/Recruitment/Retention for the *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* Program**

Recruiting participants for the program can be a very challenging task. Where to find participants, who to recruit and where to get support are a few of the questions addressed in this section.

Here are some commonly asked questions that potential providers may ask about marketing/recruitment for the program:

**Q. How do I recruit participants?**

A. To encourage participation, Remarkable Woman: That's You! should be publicized as a program for African-American women developed by African American women that discuss healthy eating, active living, stress reduction, and a program that works at improving women's ability to adopt a healthier lifestyle. Remarkable Woman: That's You! is a behavioral change intervention targeting women at high risk for diabetes and other chronic diseases. Women may be recruited from various venues, including medical settings, health fairs, churches, work sites, hair and nail salons, shopping malls, schools, bars, gyms, recreational facilities, or community organizations.

**Q. What incentives will keep participants coming back (to the sessions)?**

A. Incentives can be used to effectively enhance retention in the Remarkable Woman: That's You! program. For example, bus tokens may be used to provide women with transportation to and from the sessions, and childcare may be provided during the sessions. In addition, gift certificates, monetary incentive, and food are all used as positive reinforcements. Oftentimes, the chance to have open, honest dialogue with other women is enough incentive for the women to remain actively involved in coming to the sessions. The community health worker plays a key role retention.

**Q. How do you market to high risk women for obesity and related chronic diseases? And, how do you retain high risk women?**

A. The Remarkable Woman: That's You! intervention can be marketed to high risk populations through internal resources, referral networks and outreach. Internal resources would include providers of other services within the agency and by mass messaging strategies. Referral networks would include linkages with those services that African American women are most likely to access. Lastly, outreach would include going to venues where African American women frequently congregate. Retaining high risk populations for your intervention would include providing incentives to enhance retention in the Remarkable Woman: That's You! intervention.

**Q. How can I get the support of other agencies providing prevention services in my community?**

A. Initiating collaborative efforts is very important in the provision of the Remarkable Woman: That's You! intervention. Soliciting memorandums of agreement from other agencies is an excellent way to gain support. If your agency is not able to provide extensive health promotion and chronic disease prevention services, partnering with other organizations that can offer this expertise is imperative.

**Q. How can I collaborate with other agencies to recruit women for this intervention?**

A. Initiating collaborative efforts is very important in the provision of the Remarkable Woman: That's You! intervention. It is even more important in implementing the Remarkable Woman: That's You! intervention, due to the fact that the women may have needs that your agency can not meet. Having a referral network established enables you to provide more comprehensive services to your participants.

**Implementing the Remarkable Woman: That's You! Program**

Implementing the program is the most important step of the Remarkable Woman: That's You! Project. If the program is not implemented correctly, the intervention will not be effective. Any changes made can be beneficial to the participants, but it can also be detrimental. This section attempts to help you effectively implement the program, make modifications as necessary and still maintain the fidelity of the program.

Here are some commonly asked questions that potential providers may ask about implementing the program:

**Q. What incentives can I use to retain participants?**

A. Incentives should be used to effectively enhance retention in the Remarkable Woman: That's You! program. Bus tokens may be used to provide women with transportation to and from the sessions. Childcare may be provided during the sessions for women who have children. Personalized "Thank You" and/or holiday cards are important to show women that they are special.

**Success stories** can be mailed to the women to hear how other women are overcoming barriers. In addition, gift certificates, monetary incentives, and food are all used as positive reinforcement.

**Q. How can I keep the sessions fun and engaging?**

Ideas and activities for encouragement found in each session of the *Remarkable Woman, That's You!* curriculum, include:

- Helping women to review their goals, to record their food intake and activity level, and to set new goals in each session.
- Leading troubleshooting discussions.
- Helping women help themselves by asking motivating questions.
- Rewarding progress through the program.
- Offering a helping hand to those who are struggling to meet their goals.

**Q. What if I am unable to answer a question during a session?**

If you are not sure about how to answer group members' questions, identify a creative approach for problem solving. Tell them that you will find the answers and will report back during the next session. As the community health worker, you are in charge of making sure that the sessions start and end on time and that you have all the materials and items that you need to facilitate the group sessions.

**Q. How long will it take me to implement?**

A. The implementation stage of Remarkable Woman: That's You! varies based on the organizational capacity of the intervention. The organization should therefore assess their understanding of the Remarkable Woman: That's You! intervention, assess understanding of the objectives of the intervention, how the intervention should be implemented, and assess the target population's awareness of the Remarkable Woman: That's You! project. This process can take up to two months or more before you are able to implement the intervention.

**Q. What is a good group number for facilitating Remarkable Woman: That's You! group sessions?**

A. Remarkable Woman: That's You! should be implemented with a minimum of six participants. Less than six participants reduces the interaction required to truly understand the intervention. More than 15 participants can be quite challenging; therefore, two community health worker facilitators may be necessary.

**Q. Does everyone receive a copy of the poems (that are listed in each of the sessions)?**

A. All participants should receive copies of all hand out materials.

**Q. How do we find a timeframe conducive for the participants to fit the community health worker's timeframe?**

A. When implementing Remarkable Woman: That's You! the timeframe should be conducive for the participant's schedule. This is something that should be determined during the pre-implementation stage. Due to the fact that you are reaching African American women, it is important that you remember that you have to make yourself available to them.

**Q. How often should you facilitate Remarkable Woman: That's You! sessions (weekly or what)?**

A. Facilitation of Remarkable Woman: That's You! should be based on the availability of the participants. This should be covered during the pre-implementation stage. Some groups meet once a week and others meet twice a week. Still others may only meet once a month. This should be decided with the participants.

**Q. When you go through the sessions, how do you talk about “who you are?”**

A. This should be done very carefully. Self-disclosure can be very helpful; but at the same time, if it is done too often, it can be distracting for participants.

**Q. How should our organization address confidentiality?**

A. It is imperative that all community health workers and participants are aware of the fact that everything that happens in the sessions should remain confidential. Oftentimes, very personal matters are discussed in groups and if anything were to be disclosed it might be quite detrimental to all concerned. This could possibly also cause the other participants to close up and not want to discuss any pertinent issues.

**Q. How can I make modifications to the intervention while maintaining fidelity?**

A. Modifications can be made to the Remarkable Woman: That’s You! intervention as long as the core elements remain the same. If the core elements are changed, you have reinvented the intervention. You can change such things as the place where the intervention will be conducted and/or the times you meet. Adaptation questions should be answered before the intervention is implemented.

**Q. How can I shorten the intervention without affecting its effectiveness?**

A. The intervention originally was designed for four once a week two hour sessions. This can be changed based on the availability of participants which may require you to meet more than once a week. This does not mean, however, that you can change the materials within each session. All materials must be covered within your sessions.

**Q. How can I make sure that this intervention addresses my women’s needs?**

A. Evaluations should be completed after each session and this will tell you if the intervention is addressing their needs. You can also have a focus group to determine if the intervention is addressing their needs.

**Adaptation of the program**

Adapting the program to fit your particular population is a task that requires special attention. This section covers suggestions for specific adaptations for a few populations.

Here are some commonly asked questions that potential providers may ask about adaptation of the program:

**Q. Is *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* intervention just for African American women? Can Remarkable Women be used with other populations?**

A. Remarkable Woman: That's You! should be publicized as a program for African-American women developed by African American women that discusses healthy eating, active living, stress reduction, and works at improving women's ability to adopt a healthier lifestyle to reduce their risks for obesity and related chronic diseases like diabetes. It can be used with other populations; however you must take into consideration the cultural issues of the population that you are targeting.

**Q. Is the Remarkable Woman: That's You! intervention appropriate for women 60 years old and older?**

A. Yes, the Remarkable Woman: That's You! intervention can be used for women who are 60 years old and older. However, you must understand that some additional issues may have to be discussed relating to the needs of this population.

**Q. Is it okay to involve my women's spouses or male partners in this intervention?**

A. Involving the participants' spouses or partners in the Remarkable Woman: That's You! intervention is acceptable as it relates to the completion of homework. However, actually having the participant's spouse or partner come to the sessions is not acceptable. This could cause concern for the other members of the group.

**SECTION 4: EVALUATION- DEMONSTRATING THAT THE *REMARKABLE WOMAN: THAT'S YOU!* WORKS.**

**Evaluation of the program**

Evaluation of the program can help you answer the following questions: Is this intervention working? Have the participants exhibited the expected behavior changes? Please refer to the *Remarkable Woman: That's You!* Evaluation Manual to address these and other questions.

Here are some commonly asked questions that potential providers may ask about evaluation of the program:

**Q. When should I start the evaluation?**

A. An agency should assess their readiness to evaluate their intervention before beginning evaluation activities. If an organization attempts an evaluation before they are ready; limited funds, time, and other resources may be misused and program staff may become frustrated and discouraged from conducting evaluation. An effective evaluation is not necessarily a large-scale outcome evaluation; it could mean a smaller process evaluation. An assessment of your

organization's resources and staff evaluation expertise should be conducted before your agency develops plans to evaluate their implementation of Remarkable Woman: That's You!. Nevertheless, evaluation is an important an integral component of project success and should begin in the early stages of project development.

In addition to resources needs, other factors should be considered as plans to evaluate the Remarkable Woman: That's You! intervention are made.

These factors may include:

- The stage of implementation of Remarkable Woman: That's You! (for example, piloting the intervention for the first time or with a new target population versus having implemented the intervention a few times to get a feel of how it works best with the target population(s))
- Stage of development of the organization (new organization versus more experienced and established organizations)
- Evaluation experience and/or access to evaluation expertise

Evaluation planning begins with determining what kind of evaluation is appropriate for your organization and your stage of implementation of Remarkable Woman: That's You!.

**Q. When assessing behavioral outcomes, should we use the questionnaires in the Remarkable Woman: That's You! Evaluation Manual?**

A. The Remarkable Woman: That's You! evaluation manual includes a set of instruments designed for **outcome monitoring** to measure changes in knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and risk behaviors of participating women.

**Q. How do you monitor whether the Remarkable Woman: That's You! sessions were implemented with fidelity?**

A. The Remarkable Woman: That's You! evaluation manual has forms that can be used to record any changes made to session activities (substitutions, modifications, deletions), reasons for the changes, and participant reaction to the changes. Reviewing information collected on these forms will help you to determine whether you are implementing Remarkable Woman: That's You! with fidelity (or as intended by the original researchers).

**Q. How do I determine if Remarkable Woman: That's You! is an appropriate intervention for my target population?**

A. You can determine if Remarkable Woman: That's You! is an appropriate intervention for your target population by conducting formative evaluation. Formative evaluation is the process of testing program plans, messages, materials, strategies, or modifications for weaknesses and strengths *before* they are put into effect. It may also be used when an unanticipated problem occurs *after* beginning to implement the intervention.

**Q. How can I determine whether or not this intervention changed risk behaviors among my participants?**

A. You can determine whether your Remarkable Woman: That's You! is achieving a reduction in chronic disease risk behaviors by conducting outcome monitoring. Outcome monitoring is tracking changes in knowledge, skills, behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, and/or intentions of individuals participating in the intervention. A commonly used outcome monitoring data collection tool is pretest and posttest questionnaires. Test the questionnaire with a few volunteers who are similar in characteristics and educational level to your target population (field test/pilot) to ensure it is culturally appropriate. Administer the questionnaire to women participating in the intervention before the intervention and after completing all sessions. Plan appropriately for administering the questionnaire to women who cannot read. Comparing the participants' responses on the questionnaires before and after the intervention will allow you to determine whether or not this intervention changed your participants risk behavior.

**Q. What should I do if the desired behavioral outcomes (i.e., increase in physical activity) are not achieved for my participants?**

A. If Remarkable Woman: That's You! was implemented according to plan and the expected changes did not occur, the process data should provide some insights into some of the reasons. When reviewing the data, consider the following:

- Did the implementation include all of the core components?
- Was something left out or changed from the Remarkable Women intervention that may make the intervention less effective than originally demonstrated?
- What components were actually delivered and to whom?
- How well were the components implemented?
- Were the activities culturally appropriate for the target population?
- How well did participants respond to the activities?
- How well did participants respond to the community health workers(s)?

Based on your finding to these questions, you may have to make adjustments and modifications to the implementation of your Remarkable Women intervention.

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## ***Facilitator's Toolbox:***

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Every skillful community health worker facilitator needs a toolbox of creative tools to engage their groups into meaningful discussions surrounding their curriculum or lesson plans. This information is to provide a basic platform for those who facilitate small group sessions and serve audiences that are predominately from communities of color

## **SESSION PLANNING**

The key to successful group sessions is preparation (prep time) of the community healthy worker facilitators. It is imperative that facilitator's spend time preparing for their activities before conducting their sessions with the participants. Prep time allows the facilitators opportunities to creatively review the curriculum and lesson plan and set the tone for the best possible interactive group discussion. During Prep time, the facilitator can rearrange and decorate the room with various visual training materials to assist with the flow of the discussion. The Remarkable Woman: That's You! intervention group sessions are time limited and the facilitator will find that adequate prep time will maximize the time allowed for the session. This will allow the facilitators the time to focus on the concerns of the members of the group versus attempting to throw something together as they are arriving.

The Facilitator Checklist that follows can be utilized to ensure that you have all the materials necessary for each session. The Facilitator Evaluation Instrument found in your Remarkable Woman: That's You! Evaluation Manual also has activity grids for each session. This can be an opportunity for you to give feedback on each activity within each session.



## Group Facilitation Techniques

There are many important facilitation techniques to remember when working with African American women audiences. However, with practice, it becomes easier to incorporate them into the sessions, allowing you to communicate more effectively with participants. Thus, while the endpoint of increased adoption of health-promotion behavior is similar across cultural populations, the methods used to attain these behavioral modifications may differ substantially between cultural groups.

### Elements of Effective Facilitation

An effective, community health worker engages participants to share information and motivates them in learning about healthy eating, active living and chronic disease prevention. To accomplish this communication task, we must begin with genuine respect for participants. Additional elements of effective facilitation include these techniques:

- *Use open-ended questions that encourage participants to provide more than “yes” or “no” answers.*  
For example, questions that start with the words “how, why, what, who, when or where” can trigger a response to enhance a discussion.
- *Use statements that engage participants and encourage them to take part in discussion.*  
For example, you might say, “That sounds interesting, tell us more about it.”
- *Use positive and corrective feedback that provides a safe environment for individuals to participate freely in open discussion.*  
Positive feedback can come in forms of affirmative nods, smiles, or statements such as “thank you for sharing that experience with us.” Corrective feedback should be given as soon as an error is made and should identify the mistake while offering an alternative action.
- *Use instructional aids to reinforce the message.*  
When facilitating discussion, reinforce key messages by using visual aids throughout the discussion. Icebreakers can also help create a climate that encourages learning and participation.

- *Look forward to answering questions.*  
Questions indicate that information is being considered and processed, and that learning is occurring. Questions also give facilitators opportunities to check how well participants understand information and to see how participants plan to apply the information they have learned.
- *Figure out what is really being asked.*  
Listen for euphemisms and do not assume that you know their meaning; ask participants to clarify what they are saying.
- *Allow anonymity for participants' questions.*  
By allowing participants to write down and submit questions anonymously, you encourage them to get answers to questions that might be vital to their decisions about adopting healthy behaviors.
- *Answer all questions seriously and courteously.*  
The only foolish question is the one that is not asked. Avoid ridiculing people for questions they ask and scolding questioners for "not listening".
- *Be honest; do not bluff.*  
If you do not know an answer, commit to finding the answer and getting back to the participant who asked the question. If you have made a mistake, admit it.
- *Create a "safe" climate for group participation.*  
Be careful not to patronize, condemn, or trivialize the experiences and feelings of participants. Health educators do not preach, although a little personal testimony may help enhance learning. Creating a safe environment through your verbal and nonverbal communication will allow participants to open up and get the HIV prevention information they need.

## **Facilitation Skills**

Facilitation skills are a critical component when attempting to create behavior changes of the client. A skilled facilitator will be able to receive an entire picture of what is happening with the participant. There are several facilitation tips that can assist in retrieving the participants' information. However for the purposes of the Remarkable Woman: That's You! intervention, we will focus on the following skills:

### **Listening**

Listening is an active skill and is probably one of the most important facilitation skills. To help participants accept health information and apply it to their lives, facilitators must be skilled at hearing and understanding participants' comments and questions. Listening also involves paying attention to participants' nonverbal behavior. Facilitators who are listening –

- Clear their heads of their own thoughts.
- Give full attention to what another person is saying.
- Do not predict what someone means in the first few words or sentences.

### **Using Open-Ended Questions**

Open-ended questions are those questions that require more than just a yes or no answer.

- These usually begin with “what”, “who”, “when”, or “where”.
- Other questions encourage thinking and open a discussion of ideas. Usually, these begin with “how” or “why” and result in a variety of ways to look at an issue.

### **Managing Silence**

Effective facilitators learn to feel comfortable with silence and to see it as a natural part of facilitating discussions or exercises. Participants need time to think before answering a question or contributing to the discussion. Facilitators can manage silence by:

- Waiting 10 seconds after asking a question or asking the participants' input.
- Asking the question in another way if participants do not respond during that time.

## **Maintaining a Nonjudgmental Perspective**

Another important skill for community facilitators is that of maintaining a nonjudgmental perspective. In order to learn, people need to feel safe and willing to participate in the intervention activities as well as staff trainings. Participants feel safe when their values and beliefs are respected. By remaining nonjudgmental, effective facilitators balance many skills at once. They:

- Apply skills that they have learned, such as avoiding labels and instead using language that describes behavior.
- Are actively listening and asking open-ended questions to involve participants.
- Give affirming feedback to all participants, regardless of their own values about issues and situations.

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## ***Teaching Strategies:***

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### **A. Task Group**

A task group is a method of dividing participants into small teams in order to find possible solutions to a given problem. Task groups carry the session in a direction defined by the material but that is then discussed by the participants in a way that helps them make stronger connections between their lives and the objectives of the activity. The prevention ideas of other participants may have a greater effect than the same ideas as expressed by the instructor.

Your aim in facilitating task groups is to encourage exchange among participants so they can complete the task. Your role is not to insert yourself between participants but, rather to use your facilitation skills to guide the task groups and setting the climate can encourage sharing and trust among participants.

#### **Facilitation Skills for Task Groups**

- Asking open-ended questions
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Giving clear directions
- Keeping on topic
- Listening
- Maintaining a nonjudgmental perspective
- Managing silence
- Referring to the group
- Setting the climate

## **B. Brainstorming**

In brainstorming everyone can comment on the topic. During brainstorming, no one judges the value of any idea. This allows the group to collect ideas on a topic from many, if not all, participants. List all ideas offered on newsprint so that everyone can see them.

In brainstorming, there are no wrong answers. Brainstorming helps participants expand their thinking about a topic by hearing what others have to say. Groups engage in brainstorming without judging how useful any idea maybe. As a facilitator, you want to encourage ideas without making decisions about their worth to make the list as long as possible. Reinforce opportunities for all participants to contribute. Avoid any sign that you disapprove of an idea; criticism may affect the willingness of participants to contribute.

### **Facilitation Skills for Brainstorming**

- Asking open-ended questions
- Giving directions
- Listening
- Maintaining a nonjudgmental perspective
- Polling (inviting all participants to speak)
- Setting the climate

## C. Demonstration/Practice

As a small group leader you must sometimes demonstrate or model a skill by showing participants the correct steps. Your demonstration lets the participants know the correct way to do the skill but also that they can learn how to do it. Of all the teaching strategies, demonstration requires that you give more directions. Demonstrations are usually followed by practice of the skill that the participants were just shown. This is true for physical skills such as putting on and taking off a latex condom

As a group leader you need to be sure that you go over what you will do and practice until you feel that you can do it easily and confidently. Practice helps to build your confidence to meet this challenge.

Practice closes the gap between knowing and doing. During practice, participants act on what they have learned in a setting that is comfortable and not intimidating. Practice makes it more likely that participants will use the skill in real life because they know they can do it. Be sure to setting a climate that encourages full participation. Sometimes you may come across a participant who may not want to participate. In this case, it will be okay to pass the participant until they feel more comfortable.

During the practice, observe the participants and listen to what they say in order to give them appropriate feedback about what they do correctly, as well as to suggest how they could do something better.

### Facilitation Skills for Demonstration & Practice

- Giving directions
- Giving information
- Managing time
- Asking open-ended questions
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Giving directions
- Listening
- Maintaining a nonjudgmental perspective
- Setting the climate

## Summary

Using the teaching strategies that we suggest – task group, brainstorming, role-play, demonstration and practice – prepares you to effectively facilitate group sessions. The more you know about teaching strategies and facilitation skills, the more effective facilitator you will become.

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## **Communication Skills:**

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The ability to convey concern and caring is needed to communicate to others. This can be done in a number of ways:

- ☀ Verbal communication – saying the words
- ☀ Nonverbal communication – eye contact, body posture, hand and arm movements, facial expressions, and vocal quality

The purpose of learning effective communication skills, both verbal and nonverbal, is to enhance your ability to present yourself as an interested, caring, and competent facilitator. It is important to realize that merely acting as though you are interested is not enough. The purpose of learning these skills is to further develop your ability to translate your intention to be helpful into action.

### **Non-Verbal Communication**

The most important nonverbal behaviors are eye contact, hand and arm movements, body posture, head and facial movements, and vocal quality. Other nonverbal cues such as type of clothing and physical appearance may also influence how the facilitator is perceived.

Learning to control your nonverbal gestures takes practice. It is well worth the effort, both before presentations (in front of a mirror or some understanding friends or family members) and during presentations themselves.

#### **1. Eye Contact**

Effective -- Looking directly at a person when listening or talking. The eye contact is spontaneous, relaxed but serious. The presenter focuses exclusively on the individual.

Ineffective -- Not looking at the person, or breaking eye contact often. Staring blankly or overly intensely, looking down or away.

#### **2. Body Posture**

Effective – A slight forward lean of the body, body positioned facing the audience, relaxed, but attentive posture. If sitting, hands loosely clasped on lap, occasional fluid arm and hand movements to emphasize important points.

Ineffective – Leaning too far forward or slouching backward, body turned sideways from audience, a fixed, rigid, and tense body position, infrequent hand and arm movements, arms folded across chest.

### 3. Head and Facial Movements

Effective – occasional affirmative head nods, appropriate smiling, and expressions that match the mood of the participants.

Ineffective – constant head nodding, head down, continuous smiling, a cold, distant expression, rigid facial expressions, overly emotional facial reactions.

### 4. Vocal Quality

Effective – pleasant, interested, appropriate loudness of voice, moderate rate of speech, natural conversational style using simple, yet precise language, and fluid speech.

Ineffective – monotone, or overly enthusiastic tone of voice, too loud or too soft, rate of speech either too rapid or too slow, or choppy, excessive use of slang, overly formal speech using language not easily understood, excessive use of “you knows” or “um’s”.

### 5. Personal Habits

Effective – friendly clean, appropriate dress

Ineffective -- playing with your hair (moustache or beard), fiddling with pencil, tapping fingers or feet

## Communication Leads

To understand another person’s feelings and experiences be cautious and open-minded. To be sure you are getting the true meaning of the message they are trying to convey to you, it is often helpful to rephrase what they have said. The following phrases may be useful:

You feel...  
 From your point of view...  
 What I hear you saying is ...  
 You’re (angry, happy, sad, upset, etc.)...  
 You mean ...  
 So you’re saying ...

Phrases that are useful when you are having difficulty understanding may include the following:

Could it be that ...  
 I’m not sure if I’m with you, but...  
 Correct me if I’m wrong, but...  
 This is what I think I hear you saying ...  
 You appear to be feeling...  
 I get the impression that ...

## Closing

You might be feeling somewhat overwhelmed after reading through the multitude of facilitation techniques and numerous strategies you can utilize to ensure a productive and enjoyable group. To simplify, we offer you the notion of providing **C.A.R.E.** to the participants in your group. This acronym can be used to define your role as the facilitator.

- C**      **Create** a comfortable and loving environment
  
- A**      **Ask** questions that promote meaningful discussion
  
- R**      **Repeat** what you hear being said to show that you're a good listener
  
- E**      **Empathize** with group members to show them that you are a real person. Being a great facilitator is not **hard** work, but it is **heart** work.