



# Research Snapshot



cira

Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS  
at Yale University

## **Project THANKS: Examining HIV/AIDS-Related Barriers and Facilitators to Care in African American Women: A Community Perspective**

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### **What is the research about?**

Project THANKS, (Turning HIV/AIDS to knowledge for Sisters), is an evidence-based intervention that utilizes a community-based participatory and empowerment building approach for African American female substance users living with HIV and other chronic diseases. This study focused on how to improve Project THANKS by gaining insight from African American women living with HIV.

### **Why is this important for HIV prevention and treatment?**

In New Jersey, women account for about 1/3 of the adult/adolescent HIV/AIDS diagnoses in the state. Existing HIV interventions typically lack cultural competence and the involvement of multiple sectors that can address the variety of issues that place women of color at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS such as stigmatization, mental health symptoms, lack of trusting relationships with health

care providers, proper nutrition, and access to health education.

### **What did the researchers do?**

African American women living with substance abuse disorders, HIV, and other co-morbidities were recruited from 3 community-based health centers in NJ. Focus group sessions were used to understand the perceived factors influencing the participants' ability to self-manage their health conditions and challenges they're facing regarding their diagnosis.

### **What did the researchers find?**

Curricula that is tailored for African American women living with HIV/AIDS should include more culturally sensitive education components in addition to seeking to strengthen existing personal, social and environmental support networks. Additionally, utilizing an integrated health approach is crucial to improving the quality of life for African American

women living with comorbidities due to the complexity of managing multiple illnesses.

### **How can you use this research?**

This research supports providing a continuum of care to women living with HIV, as they are guided through the process of prioritizing their health and HIV medication adherence. Project THANKS aims to sustain and build upon existing community partnerships by creating new models of service through the provision of on-site trainings and workshops collaboratively with agency staff.

### **Original Research Article:**

Amutah-Onukagha N, Mahadevan M, Opara I, Rodriguez M, Trusdell M, and Kelly J. Project THANKS: Examining HIV/AIDS-Related Barriers and Facilitators to Care in African American Women: A Community Perspective. *AIDS Patient Care and STDs*, 2018; 32(4) 119-128. [PubMed](#)