Bodemé Workshop to be conducted in five cities

The Bodemé workshop, a HIV prevention intervention designed for young black gay men, ages 16 to 29, will be conducted in five southern cities: Atlanta, GA; St. Petersburg, FL; Jackson, MS; Houston, TX; and Washington, DC. The workshops will be coordinated by the Global Network of Black People working in HIV (GNBPH) and supported through grant funding from Gilead Sciences, Inc.

The Bodemé workshop is unique because it is based on traditional African teachings about gays and lesbians taught before the coming of the Europeans, Christianity or Islam. The workshop was created by Ron Simmons, Ph.D., who retired in 2016, after serving for 24 years as the head of Us Helping Us, People Into Living, Inc., the largest black community-based AIDS service organization in Washington, DC.

Dr. Simmons is a member of the DC CFAR CAB and the SGM SWG was instrumental in helping him to develop the prototype for the workshop, The New Narrative Project (2NP). 2NP was a two-day, 12-hour, intervention. The SGM SWG and Dr. Cecilia Maria Zea provided feedback in the development of the project. Rodrigo Aguayo Romero, GWU doctoral student, designed the intervention’s evaluation plan.

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“The goal of the Bodemé workshop is to develop self-empowerment and resilience in young black gay men to prevent HIV infection,” says Dr. Simmons, “Young black gay men have the highest incidence of HIV infection in the nation and the greatest number of new infections is in the south. That’s why we chose southern cities with a high HIV-prevalence among young black gay men.”

“The opportunity to conduct the Bodemé workshop fits the mission of the Global Network of Black People working in HIV,” says Marsha Martin, DSW, the founder and Coordinating Director of GNBPH. “We are committed to fighting the HIV epidemic, an epidemic that infects and affects millions of black people around the global, using the knowledge, skills and expertise of black people.”

“Partnering with Dr. Simmons to conduct the Bodemé workshop,” Dr. Martin continued, “will allow us to implement a new behavioral intervention developed specifically for young black gay men and expand the national HIV prevention tool kit. We greatly appreciate this opportunity and the grant from Gilead Sciences to expand the reach of the Bodemé intervention.”

A Bodemé workshop is scheduled for Washington, DC, in December.

*Gilead Sciences, Inc., had no input into the development or content of the workshop or its materials.

For further information contact Ron Simmons, Ph.D., at ronsimmonsphd@gmail.com or 202 498-7418.