

AFRO-FRANCO OUTREACH PROJECT

The Afro-Franco Outreach Project is a SERC and Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) collaboration and has yielded excellent results in community reach and service for an African-Francophone people in Winnipeg. The main goal of this project is to facilitate opportunities for learning about sexuality and reproductive health, with a focus on enhancing awareness of sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing sites and procedures as a personal and public health resource.

OBJECTIVES

- To facilitate opportunities for learning about sexuality and reproductive health, including STI prevention, among community leaders, university youth, teens, adults and parent
- To distribute resource materials and referrals to community members in order to provide follow-up supports
- To enhance awareness of STI testing sites and procedures as a personal and public health resource
- To share our learning with service providers who work within Afro-Franco communities in order to strengthen their information, analysis and skills

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

Investing in programming for both high school and university-aged youth has proven to be worthwhile in raising awareness and connections for safer sex attitudes and intended behaviours among populations that are at risk for STIs.

Providing information and education for motivated adults reaches not only those individuals, but also their extended family and social circles, when they share information, as well as use it personally.

This past year, activities included:

- Youth series of 6 sessions at Université St. Boniface addressing healthy sexuality and harm reduction
- Senior High School Youth 16-18 years old; series of 6 sessions addressing teen healthy relationships
- Sexual and Reproductive Health sessions (3) to reach highly interested adult groups
- Community Awareness Displays to connect with community and to share information and referrals
- Community Leader's Forum
- Service provider learning session

With the objective of engaging individuals from Afro-Francophone newcomer groups in education activities on sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, outreach is a major ongoing activity. This engagement is key to the success of our activities. Other outreach activities are aimed at continuing to build relationships.

As part of this project, we offer displays of information at community events, in an effort to promote SERC and WRHA services and resources, and to answer questions.

Community leaders were engaged in consultations to discuss the findings of the research conducted previously and to assess ways of working together to address some of the issues raised in the research project and to strategize ways to meet educational needs in their communities. The work with community leaders has led to solid outreach and education opportunities at religious institutions and ethno-cultural community associations.

Community sessions on sexual and reproductive health were organized in collaboration with community leaders and Francophone service providers.

This Project also engaged service providers in a learning session, targeting educators who work with clients from the Afro-Franco community, to share research findings, to enhance their analysis of issues related to our understanding



of community needs and to offer tips and resources for use in their work. The main objective of the session was to open up the discussion on why and how to address sexuality-related matters with clients and students.