

MaBwana

Health, community and vulnerability to HIV among African, Caribbean and Black gay and bisexual men and



Winston Husbands and the MaBwana Research Team

Ethnoracial MSM Research Think Tank
Toronto. June 18, 2009

MaBwana Research Team

Winston Husbands^{1,2}

Clemon George³

Barry Adam⁴

Robert Remis^{2,5}

Sean Rourke^{5,6}

Joseph Beyene⁷

Lydia Makoroka (coordinator)¹

¹AIDS Committee of Toronto;

²ACCHO

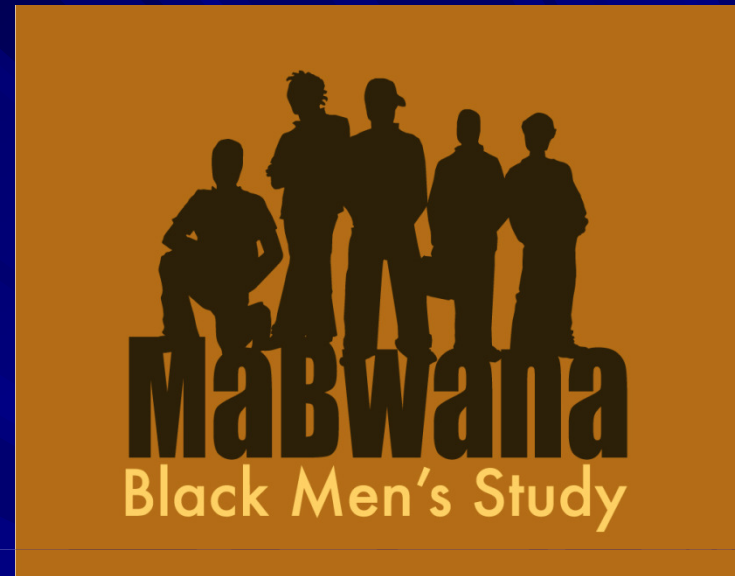
³University of Ontario Institute of Technology

⁴University of Windsor

⁵University of Toronto

⁶Ontario HIV Treatment Network

⁷Sick Kids Hospital



Community Advisory Committee

Carlos Idibouo

Nik Redman

David Lewis

Obim Okongwu

Douglas Stewart

Rinaldo Walcott

Henry Luyombya

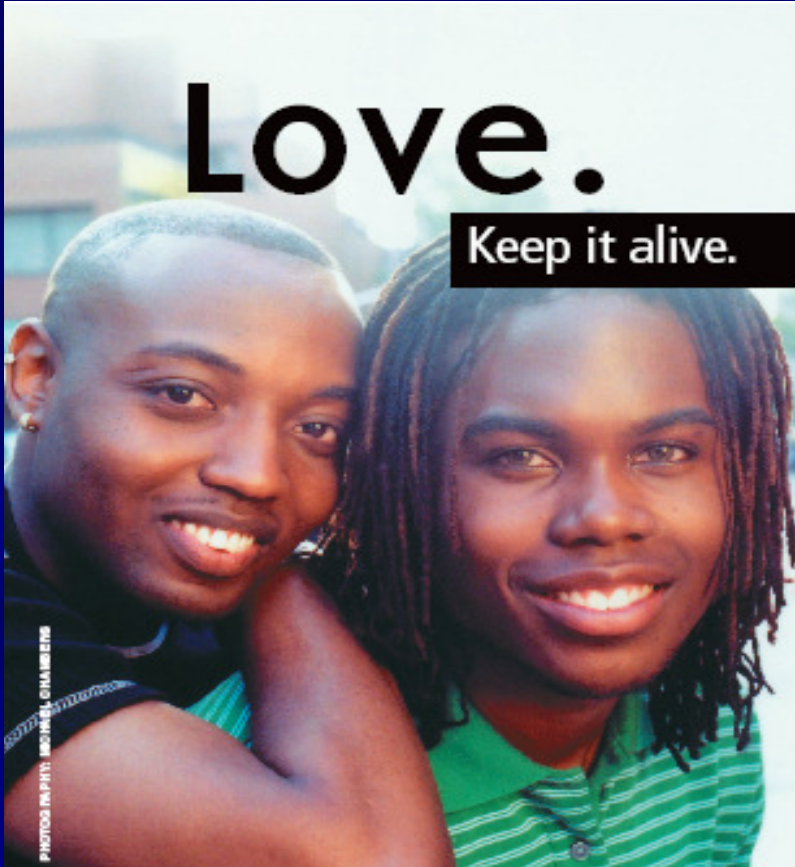
Trevor Gray

Origin of MaBwana

- ❑ Discussions among ACCHO members
- ❑ Lack of research to support HIV prevention efforts among African, Caribbean and Black (ACB) gay and bisexual men and MSM
- ❑ Implemented within the framework and objectives of the strategy on HIV/AIDS for African and Caribbean communities in Ontario

MaBwana objectives

- ❑ Understand sociodemographic characteristics of ACB gay and bisexual men
- ❑ Understand sexual relationships and behaviour
- ❑ Examine influences and decision-making related to sexual behaviour
- ❑ Understand how ACB gay and bisexual men interpret current HIV prevention campaigns




Love.

Keep it alive.

PHOTOS COURTESY: MICHAEL CHAMBERS

preventAIDS.ca Knowledge is power. Get tested.



Organization and data collection

- ❑ Implemented through ACT
- ❑ Three phases of data collection:
 - key informant interviews
 - MaBwana survey (168 participants)
 - indepth interviews (24 participants)
- ❑ Community Advisory Committee

Key informant interviews

□ Purpose

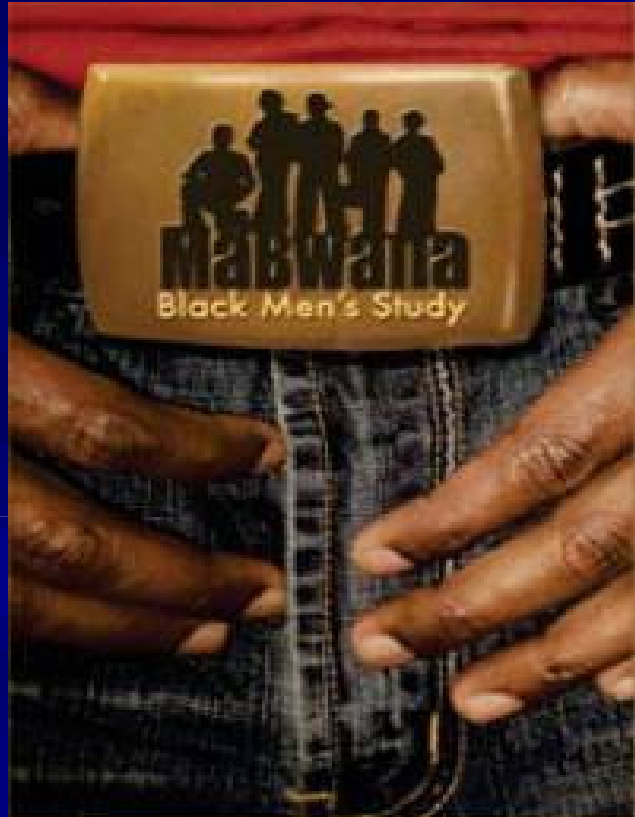
- to inform effective implementation of the study
- to enhance community interest in the study
- help recruitment to CAC

□ How

- 9 KI recruited
- knowledgeable about ACB gay communities
- interviewed by an investigator and coordinator

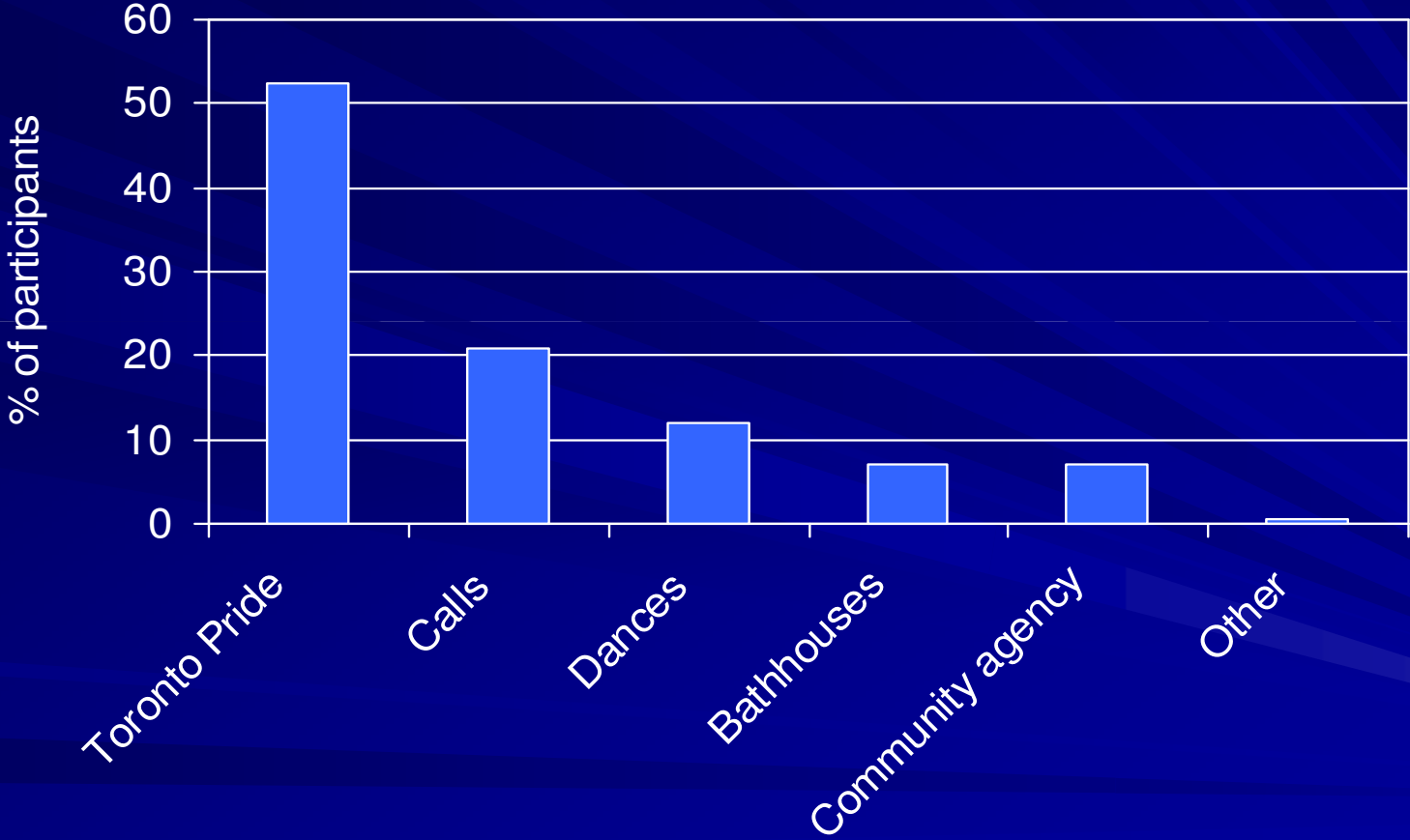
Results of KI interviews

- ❑ Sporadic and ad hoc support for Black gay men in their ethnoracial communities and CBOs
- ❑ Marginalization in mainstream gay communities
- ❑ Development of networks of support among Black LGBTQ communities
- ❑ Should examine sexual orientation, sexual behaviours and community affiliation/involvement
- ❑ Need to implement the study with discretion and through trusted community networks



A community research study
for Black/African/Caribbean guys
in Toronto who chill with
other guys.

Survey participants Recruitment



Survey participants

Sociodemographic background

❑ Region or country of birth

- 30.1% in Canada
- 24.5% in Africa
- 33.7% in the Caribbean
- 11.7% elsewhere

❑ Reported sexual orientation

- 58.4% gay
- 27.9% bisexual
- 8.4% straight
- 5.3% other

❑ Average age (years)

all participants:	32.7
Canadian born:	28.6
African born:	31.2
Caribbean:	37.2
Elsewhere:	33.4

❑ Years living in GTA

less than 5 years:	31.9%
5 years or more:	56.2%
don't live in GTA:	11.9%

Survey participants

Sociodemographic background

□ Highest education

16.7% at least some high school

8.3% graduated high school

29.8% some college/university

45.3% graduated college/university

□ Annual income

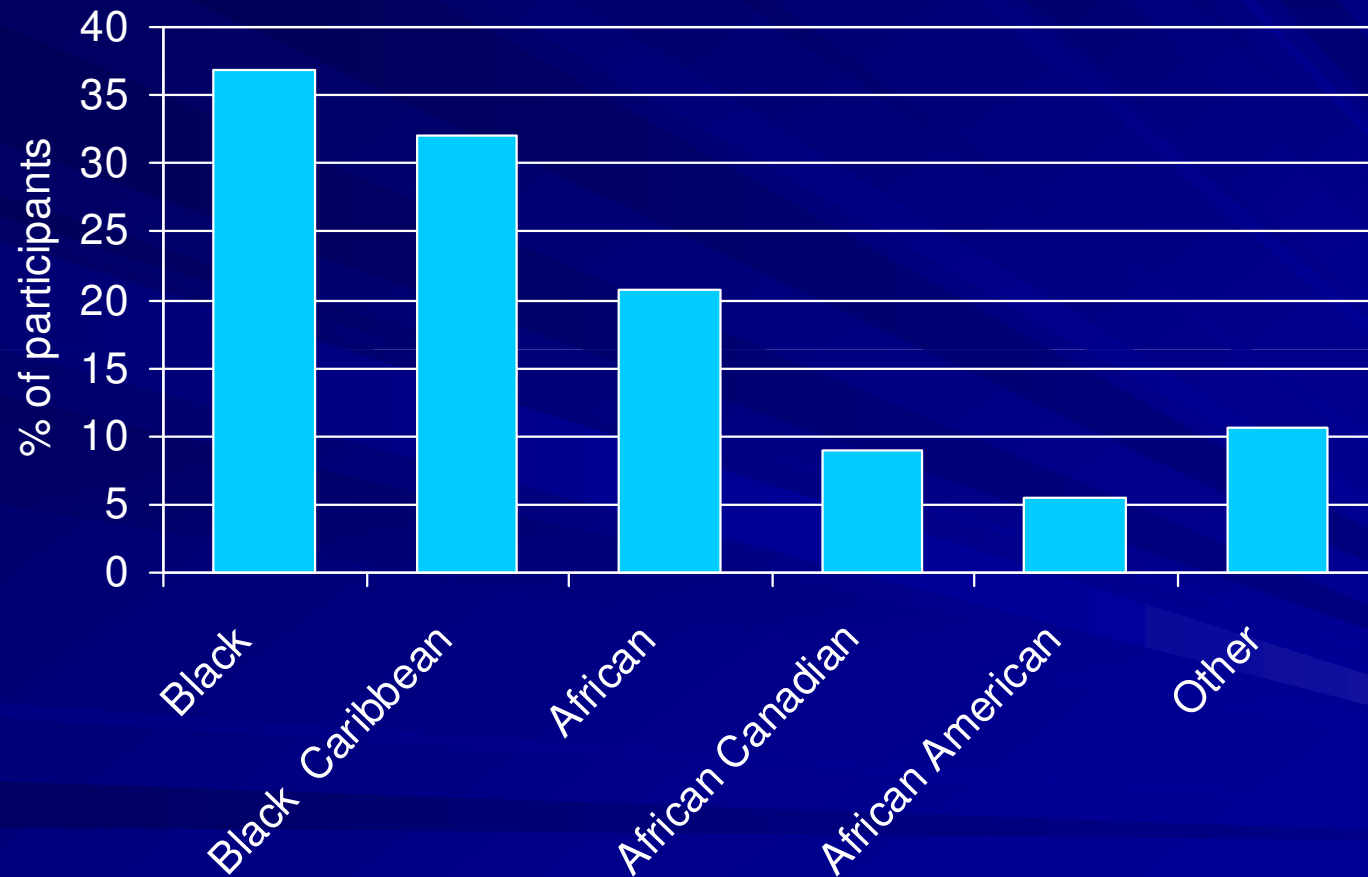
40.1% earned less than \$20,000

26.3% earned \$20,000 – 39,000

19.4% earned \$40,000 – 59,000

14.4% earned \$60,000 or more

Ethnoracial background of MaBwana participants



Results of the survey and indepth interviews

□ Identity

- complexity of ethnoracial and sexual identities
- affirm gay, bi, queer, trans identities
- acknowledge discrimination and social exclusion
- commitment to engage Black gay men
- interest in HIV/AIDS as personal and community issue

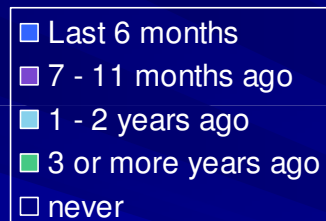
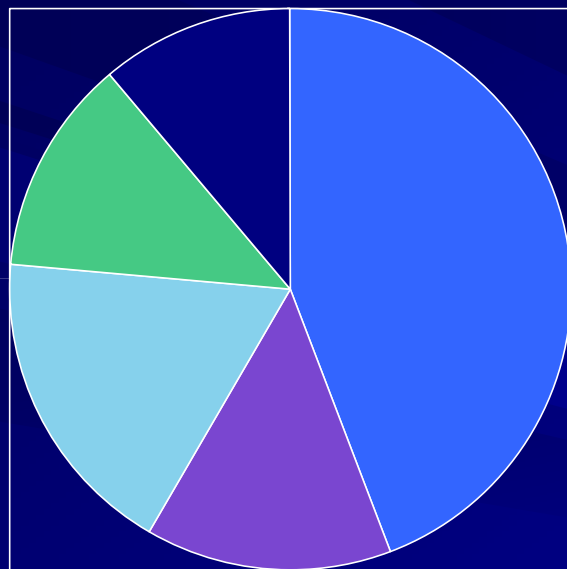
Identity (cont'd)

I see myself first and foremost in the broadest sense as a Black gay man of African descent. I guess the, the Caribbean is sort of like a subset. (IR07)

Yeah so I feel like I am first a gay man who happens to be Black and African second yes. (IR05)

[Being a Black person] brings across to me a sense of pride, a strong sense of hope you know, a sense of freedom, a sense to be mancipated at last. I don't, mi no know if you really understand the terms ... I use mancipated instead of emancipated because mancipated in terms of being a free gay man. You know, I'm finally mancipated from all the aspects of back home. (IR26)

Black gay and their health HIV testing



Never tested

22.9% of Canadian born

7.1% of foreign born

Black gay and their health HIV testing

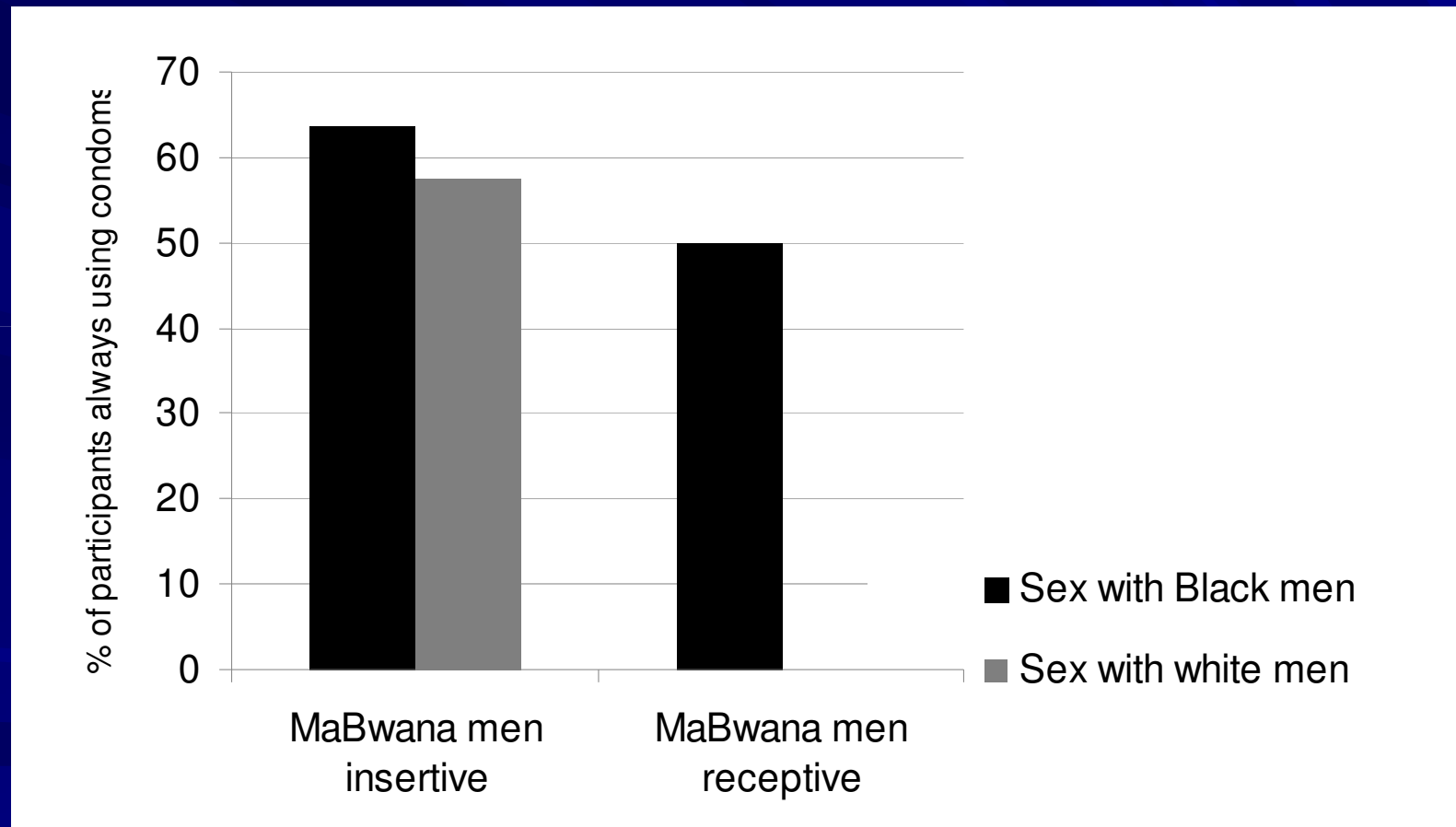
- Getting tested because you can never be too sure ...

“[I get tested] once every year but sometimes it’s more frequent [because protected sex may not completely exclude] the exchange of body fluids” (IR18)

- Benefiting from early diagnosis and treatment

In case I find out I’m HIV positive or I have other STDs, it’s always good to find out on time so you can get medication, especially if it’s something that requires, you know, medication right away ... and also if you find out you have a disease it’s good because next time when you have sex, you know that you have to have protection for whatever sex you have for other people so you don’t give it to them. (IR13)

Figure 10. **Condom use** in anal sex with Black and white sex partners: MaBwana participants who report as insertive most of the time or receptive most of the time



Insertive with Black men: N=33; Insertive with white men: N=23 ; receptive with Black men: N=26
Sex with white men not shown where N<20

Condoms and safer sex

No, no, no, no [to unprotected sex]. Because it's not about what they wanna do because I have to be I have to take control, yeah. So, whether or not they're positive or negative doesn't really matter because its condom all the time that's just my rule of thumb. Simply. (IR05)

Yes, because for one reason [for using condoms], you may sleep with someone and get infected but before that time when called window period you may contract HIV an pass it on me not knowing that your already infected so that's why I insist they should always use a condom. (IR11)

Interest in HIV prevention

I can't be Black, queer and not consider HIV an issue. If not for me, for people that I would share my life with. (IR14)

[I decided to participate in HIV/AIDS issues] because I'm interested in um kind of like I guess social services, gay men's health type stuff um and the LGBT community and I thought, and I think it's a way to um connect with people in the queer and trans community um in a positive way doing positive work. (IR20)

Interest in HIV prevention campaigns

When I see a campaign for um the black and Caribbean group for HIV prevention you know, I feel really good and you see somebody else and their just smiling, you know and they look you know, it shows the black community in such a good light. People are very respectful for themselves, because they always think, and I use to always hear, black people don't respect themselves, you know , they are lazy and all this, so when you see add campaigns that are like that it gives you different feeling about yourself kind of, you feel proud that you know this is going on and that we are that organized and well put together. (IR12)

Conclusion

- ❑ Black gay and bisexual men care about their health
- ❑ Black gay men are interested and involved in their communities
- ❑ Behaviours may not always reflect the high level of commitment they articulate
- ❑ Need for interventions that reinforce commitment in practical ways and impart skills about performing safer sex and HIV prevention

Acknowledgements

- ❑ Special thanks to our study participants, volunteers, supporters and organizations that helped to promote the study
- ❑ The study was funded by a grant from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, CBR program
- ❑ Additional start-up funding provided by the AIDS Bureau, Ministry of Health and Long-term Care