



# Denim/ Us Helping Us

Washington, D.C



## Snapshot

TARGET POPULATION

HIV-positive Black gay and bisexual men  
ages 18-29

SETTING

“The Center”, participants’ homes, skating  
rinks, bars, clubs, retreats, and Ball events

FOUNDED

2011

DESIGN/THEORY

Theory of Diffusion of Innovations

HIV CARE CONTINUUM

- Diagnosis
- Linkage to Care
- Retention in Care
- HAART Therapy
- Viral Suppression

SOCIAL MEDIA



## Innovation

Developing and Empowering New Images of Men (DENIM) is an adaptation of CDC’s Mpowerment intervention, a community-building program designed to reduce transmission of HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Mpowerment is based on a peer-driven educational model that engages individuals outside of the traditional clinical or case manager model of care.

The DENIM project takes place at Us Helping Us, a Washington D.C. based community health organization founded in 1985 that offers support and social services for Black men who have sex with men (MSM). In 2011, DENIM was launched to engage and empower young MSM of color through provocative group discussions designed to reduce HIV risk. Services include youth engagement programs, HIV/STI screening and linkage to care, social support services, and interventions for HIV-positive young MSM.

**SINCE 2011:**



Engaged over **7,100 young MSM**

Provided over **1,800 HIV screenings**  

Identified **63 HIV positive individuals** 



Linked **97% of HIV positive clients** to medical care

## STAKEHOLDERS

AIDS Health Care Foundation

DC and Prince George's County Health Department

Pharmaceutical companies (e.g. Janssen, Gilead, Merck)

Unity Health Care, Inc.

Whitman Walker Health

## Services

DENIM is run by a “core group” of ten individuals recruited from local black MSM patient communities. This group designs and implements many of the peer-led DENIM activities including:

- Common Bonds, a bi-weekly peer-led support group for HIV-positive MSM ages 18 through 29;
  - Get Fit, a monthly fitness and healthy living program;
  - IlluMENations/Pillow Talk, a peer-led group discussion on sexual activities and negotiating risk reduction;
  - MPower You, a monthly job readiness program that supports resume writing, interview skills and job search tips;
  - Skate Night, a large-scale monthly event for young MSM of color; and
  - Vogue Night, a monthly event that engages members of the ballroom community for a night of creativity and self-expression through dance.
- HIV prevention information and HIV/STI screenings are provided at all social events.



“There is certain closeness with other Black gay men, communication skills, and safe space you get at DENIM that you won't find anywhere else in the DMV.”

PROGRAM PARTICIPANT, DENIM



### Contact

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### Downloads

[none]



### Links

Us Helping Us Website