



SexualBeing.org: Changing Sexual Health Messaging



TARGET POPULATION

Adults, with a focus on gay/bisexual/same-gender-loving men, African-American women, Latinx, and Transgender persons



LOCATION

Washington, DC metropolitan area



PROGRAM DESIGN

Multi-media and multi-platform comprehensive social marketing campaign



ESTIMATED COST

\$250,000 for development



FUNDING SOURCE

Local and federal funds

SUMMARY

DC Health launched a social marketing campaign (SexualBeing.org) in July 2018 to change sexual health messaging from disease-based to sex positive and identity affirming. The health department conducted formative research to launch this multi-faceted campaign with components including a website, social media, and traditional media outlets.

BACKGROUND

DC has made social marketing a core public health strategy. While DC has made progress to address HIV and STD rates, it intends to accelerate its strategies to achieve an end to the epidemic as contained in its [90/90/90/50](#) Plan. DC had an umbrella campaign called DC Takes on HIV with specific messages on testing, PrEP, testing, treatment and recently U=U. However, the health department recognized that intersectionality of identity and sexual health needed a more intentional framework to reduce stigma, barriers to health services, and interference with self-efficacy to live healthy and authentic sexual lives. DC embraces the sex positive construct that removes judgement and promotes an open, honest, and healthy conversation on sex and embraces that sex and one's sexual being are parts of the whole person. After conducting qualitative and formative research, DC incorporated these values in the design and launch of the new Sexual Being campaign.

CORE ACTIVITIES

The hub of the campaign is a web site, Sexualbeing.org, that incorporates specific campaigns and focus populations. It also provides direct resources including free condoms and maps for locating HIV/STD testing sites and PrEP providers as well as connections to resources and community groups geared towards the needs of gay and bi men, black women, Latinx, and transgender individuals. It is not disease-oriented, but instead focuses on sexual health and wellness. The campaign also has activities in social media platforms, internet, and traditional outlets. Launched in July 2018, Sexual Being will also scale up community mobilization and engagement activities, such as participation in and coordination of community events. While the campaign includes goals to increase testing, prevention options (PrEP, PEP, condoms), U=U messaging, and treatment, it is also intended to start a movement that makes sexual health a strength for people, to inform and activate persons to understand their rights, promote equity, and foster healthier attitudes and relationships.

DATA

DC has incorporated informal and formal evaluation components into the campaign. The informal are monitoring and compiling of individual engagements with the campaign, such as message postings, comments, and other qualitative engagement. The formal evaluation will include regular District-

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wide population surveys to measure awareness, exposure, and engagement with the campaign. It will also measure actions taken by individuals from the messages expressed and resources referred. The formal will also include structured focus groups to obtain qualitative assessments and recommendations for ongoing strategies and messages. A contractor will collect metrics on impressions and engagements of the campaign on all the media platforms. Resources sought by persons utilizing the campaign information sources will also be tracked.

FUNDING & COST

Initial costs were for the qualitative research and creative development. Ongoing expenses will range depending on media and activities.

STRENGTHS

Sexual Being is intended not to look like a traditional public health campaign and uses participants who are from the DC metro area. DC also relied on creative and nimble contractors to partner with them for this project.

LIMITATIONS

N/A

STAKEHOLDERS

Key partners include community-based organizations, particularly those with focus populations (women, Latinx, same gender loving men, and African Americans).

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