Resource guide for adapting SISTA for Latinas

Produced by the American Psychological Association Office on AIDS for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
RESOURCE GUIDE
FOR ADAPTING SISTA FOR LATINAS

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Editors:

John Anderson, PhD
American Psychological Association

Miriam Phields, PhD
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Barbara Collins, MS
Ideas for Excellence

JoAna Stallworth, PhD, MPH
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Contributors: Marizada Sanchez-Cesareo, PhD; Marilyn Ricker Kases, MPH; Claudia Moreno, PhD & Selia Servin-Lopez, PhD
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- Designing, conducting, analyzing, and interpreting community needs assessments for the purposes of HIV prevention intervention planning and design;

- Utilizing behavioral and social theory for intervention development;

- Adapting evidence-based interventions for new settings and populations; and,

- Developing and implementing effective evaluation strategies.

In June 2005, the BSSV Program, in collaboration with CDC, organized a two-and-one-half-day meeting in New Orleans for twenty-two (22) doctoral-level BSSVs with extensive experience in HIV prevention for Latinas. These 22 scientists first received detailed training about the original version of SISTA and then participated in a series of brainstorming sessions organized around specific questions relevant to the adaptation of SISTA for various Latina communities. All sessions were recorded and transcribed and then used to inform the development of this Guide.

Those participating in the two-and-one-half day meeting in New Orleans included:

Marné Castillo, PhD
Philadelphia, PA

Noemi Enchautegui de Jesús, PhD
Syracuse, NY

Selina Catala, MPH
San Antonio, TX

Paula Espinoza, PhD
Denver, CO

Rhonda Conerly-Holliday, PhD
East Point, GA

Cherry Houston, PhD
Alta Loma, CA

Diana Derige, MPH
Chicago, IL

Guilda Medina, PhD
Pasadena, TX

Mimi Doll, PhD
Chicago, IL

Claudia Moreno, PhD
North Bergen, NJ
Following the June 2005 meeting in New Orleans, Claudia Moreno, PhD; Marizaida Sanchez-Cesareo, PhD; Marilyn Ricker Kases, MPH; and Selia Servin-Lopez, PhD, took the lead in drafting the Guide with editorial support and guidance from John Anderson, PhD; Miriam Phields, PhD; Barbara Collins, MS; and JoAna Stallworth, PhD, MPH. Drafts of the Guide were circulated for review and comment to the original group of 22 scientists as well as the Latino Commission on AIDS, several CBO providers serving Latina communities, and CDC staff. Feedback obtained from those sources was synthesized and incorporated into successive drafts.

This version of the Guide is considered to be in DRAFT FORM and thus feedback and suggestions for improvement are strongly encouraged. Please direct your comments to Miriam Phields, PhD at sista4latinas@cdc.gov.

Copies of this guide can be downloaded from: http://www.apa.org/pi/aids/bssv.html

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INTRODUCTION

I. Overview of this Guide

Goals and Purpose

There is an urgent need to accelerate the development and widespread use of effective behavioral interventions for populations that are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS. One way to accomplish this goal is to adapt proven interventions for new target populations (i.e., groups of individuals that are different than those for whom the original proven intervention was designed). This guide was created to provide practical technical assistance (TA) and resources to staffs of community-based organizations (CBOs) who want to use the Sisters Informing Sisters about Topics on AIDS (SISTA) intervention with Latina populations. It is intended for CBO staff members who have a thorough knowledge of the SISTA intervention and implementation materials obtained through CDC-sponsored SISTA training of facilitators (see www.effectiveinterventions.org for registration information). It is designed to encourage critical thinking about cultural and contextual factors that affect the use of SISTA with Latina populations.

SISTA was originally designed to reduce HIV risk behaviors among African American women. However, the HIV risk behaviors (i.e., unsafe sex) and behavioral risk determinants (e.g., condom use skills and self-efficacy, condom negotiation, assertive sexual communication skills) that SISTA is designed to affect have been shown to be central to HIV prevention for Latinas as well as African American women. Given the effectiveness of SISTA with African American women, many HIV prevention providers have expressed interest in adapting SISTA for Latina populations. Because the adaptation of SISTA for Latinas requires considerable expertise, time and resources that community-based organizations (CBOs) often do not have, this guide was developed to make the process of adaptation easier.

 Adaptation of SISTA

The SISTA intervention is one of several evidence-based interventions in CDC’s Diffusion of Effective Behavioral Interventions (DEBI) Project. Each DEBI intervention includes defined core elements which should be implemented locally to ensure that the prevention effects from the original research can be replicated locally. These core elements are based primarily on established behavior change theory and on the original research design that led to the interventions’ desirable behavioral outcomes. They are thought to be responsible for the intervention’s effectiveness.

All DEBI interventions require some degree of adaptation to meet local conditions. At the extreme end of the adaptation continuum, an intervention is considered to have been re-invented. Reinvention is a form of adaptation in which core elements of the original research design have been modified (generally by dropping, adding, or modifying core elements). When an intervention has been re-invented, CDC recommends that the intervention be re-named and that the local health department or CBO evaluate prevention outcomes.

CDC recognizes that both adapted and re-invented interventions are necessary to meet the prevention needs of a diverse nation and an evolving HIV epidemic. Therefore, CDC provides federal funds for both adapted and re-invented prevention interventions.
Culturally appropriate adaptations of evidence-based interventions ensure that we maintain our evidence-based approach to HIV prevention efforts. Nevertheless, reinvention is sometimes necessary to meet the specific prevention needs of various populations at risk.

CBOs may wish to adapt SISTA to populations other than African American women (such as Hispanic women). When the target population for SISTA changes, the intervention would, in essence, be reinvented. Reinvention is not a bad thing if done carefully with the needs of the target population of women clearly in mind as the reinvention process takes place. This new intervention would be based upon the theoretical framework of the original SISTA intervention and appropriate for the new population of women. When the intervention is used with other populations of women, CBOs should take into account the cultural issues of the new population and keep records of any newly developed materials. The process of adapting is more than replacing African American-inspired poems with other race-specific poems. It may involve offering new activities and discussions that are not included in SISTA so as to make the intervention culturally relevant to the new population of women. This guide is designed to provide assistance to CBOs that wish to reinvent SISTA for Latinas and Hispanic women.

**Assumptions about the Resource Guide and its Intended Use**

This guide does not assume that SISTA is an effective intervention for all Latinas. CBOs are encouraged first to make sure that SISTA would be a good fit for the specific group of Latinas that they are targeting (see Section IV). The guide is not designed to be an adapted version of SISTA. Instead, it is a resource to assist CBOs to adapt SISTA in ways that are appropriate for the particular Latina subpopulations that they are attempting to reach.

Although Latinas as a group share some common characteristics, this guide does not assume that “Latinas” are a homogeneous group. Neither does it assume that one adaptation of SISTA can meet the needs of all Latinas. In recognition of the diversity within the broad category “Latinas” and the individual differences within any subgroup, this guide encourages CBOs to think systematically about how to adapt SISTA in ways that will meet the specific needs of the Latinas they serve in their communities.

Throughout this document the term Latina(s) is used. It is understood that in some regions where this document may be used, a different term may be preferred by the target group including use of Hispanic (s) or another term more descriptive of nationality rather than ethnic group. It is important, when using this guide, to be familiar with the preferred term or terms used by the local community.

This guide is not intended to replace the SISTA facilitator training sponsored by CDC. Those planning to implement SISTA with Latina populations should first attend the SISTA training of facilitators to learn the intervention in its original form before they attempt
to use this guide to adapt SISTA for Latinas. The guide is intended to be read and used in conjunction with the materials distributed to participants of the CDC-sponsored SISTA facilitator training.

The Challenge of Adaptation

Prevention interventions that do not incorporate local needs will fail to successfully engage the community of consumers for which they are intended. On the other hand, an intervention can be culturally appealing to local participants and yet fail to be effective if it is not grounded in scientific theory and practice.

Although SISTA is well grounded in scientific theory and practice, it was originally designed to be culture-specific for heterosexual, African American women between the ages of 18 and 29. However, the theoretical framework, activities, and internal logic of the intervention are relevant to other racial/ethnic groups of women with similar behaviors and contextual factors that put them at risk for HIV infection. Many issues that impact HIV risk reduction for women as well as the theoretical foundation of SISTA (e.g., empowerment, modeling, skill building, gender-specific issues) transcend culture. The central challenge of adapting SISTA is to maintain fidelity to the essential or core elements of the original intervention while adapting non-essential aspects of the intervention to accommodate the needs of local participants (in the current case, local Latina participants).

The users of this guide must have a thorough understanding of the needs of the Latinas they intend to serve and they must have a solid working knowledge of systematic processes for adapting evidence-based interventions for new settings and new populations (see Section IV for details). It is critical for users of this guide to collect relevant information about the specific group of Latinas targeted for the intervention before they begin the process of adapting SISTA because such information should guide the adaptation process. By systematically collecting information about the new population through focus groups or key informant interviews, organizations can identify cultural, contextual and HIV-associated risks of their target populations. Relevant information also can be obtained through advisory boards and through consideration of local HIV and STD surveillance data. If organizations systematically adapt SISTA on the basis of the specific factors that influence HIV-related risk in the particular group of Latinas targeted for intervention, then the adapted intervention is likely to have much greater relevance, sustainability, acceptability to the community for which it is intended. However, it is critical to keep in mind that all adaptations must preserve the core elements and internal logic of the original SISTA intervention.

Organization of this Guide

Part 1, Section II of the guide, below, provides a brief overview of SISTA emphasizing why and how SISTA is relevant and adaptable for many groups of Latinas. Section III provides a brief summary of the research literature on HIV prevention for Latinas as well as a discussion of critical cultural concepts that are likely to guide successful adaptations of SISTA for diverse groups of Latinas. Section IV discusses key steps of the adaptation process as well as pre-implementation issues that should be considered prior to offering an adapted version of SISTA for Latinas.

Part 2 of the guide highlights key characteristics and activities of SISTA that may require
adaptation for Latina populations. Suggestions for adapting each of the five sessions of the SISTA intervention for Latina populations are provided along with songs, poems, and alternative activities that can be used in adapted versions of SISTA for Latinas. Part 3 provides general resources and references to support adaptation and implementation of SISTA for Latina populations.

II. SISTA and Its Relevance for Latinas

Brief Description

SISTA (Sisters Informing Sisters about Topics on AIDS) is a peer-led social skills training intervention originally targeted to heterosexual, African American women between the ages of 18 and 29 years. It is designed for implementation in a community-based setting and aimed at reducing HIV sexual risk behaviors by increasing safer behaviors, developing positive attitudes toward safer sex, enhancing communication skills and increasing control over sexual situations. The intervention consists of five 2-hour sessions and two booster sessions delivered by a peer facilitator. Gender-specific and culturally-relevant, the sessions include behavioral skill building, group discussions, lectures, role-playing, viewing a prevention video, and take-home exercises. The goals and activities of the five sessions focus on ethnic/gender pride, HIV/AIDS education, self-assertiveness skills training, behavioral skills management, and coping.

The Research on Which SISTA is Based

The SISTA intervention was tested in 1993 in San Francisco with 128 African-American women recruited from a predominantly African American neighborhood which was economically disadvantaged (DiClemente and Wingood, 1995). To be eligible for this project, women had to be sexually active, African-American, and between the ages of 18 and 29 years of age. Women were excluded from the project if they had a history of injecting drugs or using crack in the last three months. The African American women served as recruiters, interviewers, and facilitators for the African American women who participated in the study. In other words, peer leadership and participation were believed to be important factors in the study.

This SISTA study found that the women who participated in the SISTA intervention demonstrated increased consistent condom use, sexual behavior self-control, sexual communication, and sexual assertiveness skills. The partners of the women who participated in SISTA were more likely to adopt and support consistent condom use.


For more information about CDC’s diffusion of SISTA to CBOs and health departments including supplemental materials and training, see: http://www.effectiveinterventions.org/go/interventions/sista.
Theoretical Foundations of SISTA

The SISTA intervention is based on two theoretical perspectives: Social Cognitive Theory and the Theory of Gender and Power. These theories represent the internal logic of the intervention, the strategy for how the intervention will encourage behavior change (i.e., increase use of condoms and other risk reduction behaviors). It is important for those involved in adapting SISTA to understand these theories, because the theories guided the development of the intervention’s internal logic (i.e., how the intervention motivates women to change their HIV risk behavior) and the content of the sessions (e.g., activities, exercises, information).

Social Cognitive Theory and its Relevance to Latinas

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) was used by the SISTA intervention because it suggests that women can reduce their risks for HIV infection when they:

- Learn information about HIV risk, their personal risks, and strategies to reduce their risk for HIV infection;
- Learn social and behavioral skills to apply risk-reduction strategies;
- Believe that they can successfully perform the risk reduction behaviors (self-efficacy);
- Believe that practicing the new behavior is beneficial to them (outcome expectations);
- Get support from their peers for the new behaviors.

SCT has been used to guide the design, implementation, and evaluation of successful HIV interventions targeting Latinas (Peragallo, 2005). Self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) is a key component of SCT. Self-efficacy is a person’s beliefs that: 1) she possesses the necessary skills to perform a new behavior (e.g., to communicate with her partner about safer sex practices such as using a condom) and 2) using the new behavior will result in the desired outcome (e.g., partner’s consent to practicing safer sex). When a person possesses self-efficacy regarding a behavior, she is more likely to perform the behavior. Self-efficacy has been found to be important in HIV risk reduction and has been validated as a measure for Hispanics and HIV risk behavior (Smith et al., 1996). SISTA provides a venue to increase self-efficacy by combining skills-building with peer and facilitator support and encouragement for effective practice in performing the new risk reduction behaviors (e.g., negotiating safer sex, using condoms).

SCT suggests that a group learning situation can be instrumental in teaching and practicing new skills, and reflecting on and discussing how attitudes, norms and beliefs impact desired behaviors. Group-level interventions have been found to successfully reduce HIV risk among Latinas (Peragallo, DeForge, O’Campo, Lee et al., 2005, Villarruell, 2006).

Social Cognitive Theory has been used to guide the design, implementation, and evaluation of successful HIV interventions targeting Latinas.

A group-level HIV prevention intervention such as SISTA is applicable to Latinas because it provides the opportunity for getting together with other Latinas to “platicar” (talk), give and receive modeling, learn, and practice new intervention skills with others.
Traditionally and historically, women have learned about life through relationships with other women. This social context of connections, interactions, and friendships with other women can be important sources of inspiration, modeling, and peer support. A group-level intervention like SISTA is ideal for building on this cultural norm for information sharing, skill building, and support among women.

**Theory of Gender and Power and its Relevance to Latinas**

The Theory of Gender and Power is a social structural theory that accounts for gender-based power differences in male-female relationships. It examines by gender, the division of labor, the distribution of power and authority within relationships, and gender-based definitions of sexually appropriate behavior. In the context of HIV prevention, the theory considers the effect of a woman’s willingness to adopt and maintain sexual risk-reduction strategies within heterosexual relationships as it pertains to her lack of power, her commitment to the relationship, and her role in the relationship.

According to the Theory of Gender and Power, women can reduce HIV when:

- They become aware of gender imbalances and how this influences their sexual risk;
- They learn about their perception of power (or lack of power);
- They are aware of their role in the relationship;
- They become aware of cultural and gender biases that oppress women, silencing them and increasing their vulnerability to HIV;
- They become aware of how emotional influences and traditional gender norms enhance their vulnerability to HIV; and,
- They become aware that limited access to information and economic resources enhances their vulnerability to HIV.

The Theory of Gender and Power applies to women from cultures in which there are inequalities in the relationships between men and women based on gender and power imbalances. In many Latino cultures, there are gender-based power differences in relationships between men and women (Moreno, 2007). This theoretical approach would be culturally congruent with many Latino cultures because it takes into consideration the cultural norms and power differentials that affect Latinas’ ability to make choices, to maintain sexual risk-reduction strategies, and to navigate through social and sexual environments (Villarruel, Jemmott, and Jemmott, 2006).

**Core Elements of SISTA**

Core elements are those parts of an intervention that must be done and cannot be changed. They come from the behavioral theory upon which the intervention or strategy is
based; they are thought to be responsible for the intervention’s effectiveness. Core elements are essential and cannot be ignored, added to, or changed.

1. Convene small-group sessions to discuss the session objectives, model skills development, role-play women’s skills acquisition, and address the challenges and joys of being an African American woman.

2. Use skilled African American female facilitators to implement SISTA group sessions.

3. Use culture- and gender-appropriate materials to acknowledge pride, enhance self-worth in being an African American woman (e.g., use of poetry by African American women).

4. Teach women to communicate both verbally and nonverbally to show that she cares for her partner and needs to protect herself (i.e., negotiation skills, assertive communication skills).

5. Instruct women on how to effectively and consistently use condoms (i.e., condom use skills).

6. Discuss culture- and gender-related barriers and facilitators to using condoms (e.g., provide information on African American women’s risk of HIV infection).

7. Emphasize the importance of partner’s involvement in safer sex (i.e., enhance partner norms supportive of condom use).

It is important to note that two of the core elements of the original SISTA intervention refer to African American women. This makes sense because the intervention was originally designed to be culturally specific and relevant for African American women. As explained above, SISTA is adaptable and relevant to Latinas. In order to adapt SISTA for Latina populations, the core elements will need to be modified to say “Latinas” instead of African American women. Although the adaptation of SISTA for Latinas will require this modification to the core elements, the core elements should not be modified in any other way. Of course, many features of the original SISTA intervention will need to be adapted in order to be culturally specific and relevant to Latinas.

When the core elements are added or deleted, this type of adaptation is called reinvention. Reinvention is not a bad thing if done carefully with the needs of the new target population of women clearly in mind as the adaptation process takes place. CBOs that reinvent SISTA for their specific target population can rename the intervention. This intervention would be based upon SISTA.

### Key Characteristics

Key characteristics are those parts of an intervention (activities and delivery methods) that can be adapted to meet the needs of the CBO or target population without affecting or changing the core elements of the intervention. Key characteristics may be modified to fit the risk behaviors and influencing factors of the target population as well as the unique circumstances or needs of the organization delivering the intervention. Modification of the key characteristics should not compete with or contradict the intent, theory, internal logic, and core elements of the intervention. In the
case of SISTA, an example of a key characteristic that can be modified is the poetry and activities included in the intervention; however, they should be relevant to African American women and the African American experience. SISTA has the following key characteristics:

1. SISTA can be adapted for different populations of African American women.

2. SISTA must be implemented with passion.

3. SISTA should be publicized as a program that was developed by African American women and for African American women.

4. SISTA should include HIV prevention discussions that address relationships, dating, and sexual health within the context of the African American women’s experiences.

### III. Cultural Concepts

Although some factors that influence HIV risk are common to many women (e.g., gender roles and resulting power imbalances, levels of assertiveness, etc.), others are more common among women of color (e.g., lack of empowerment, poverty, etc.) and still others are more relevant to particular cultural groups. Cultural factors that appear to influence HIV risk among diverse groups of Latinas are discussed in this section. However, these perspectives are not shared by all Latinas, so careful attention should be given to discovering the perspectives of your unique participants.

It is important to keep in mind that many of the cultural concepts discussed below have not been the subject of extensive research. As a result, these concepts continue to be controversial. Some argue that the concepts presented below are critical ones that enable front-line providers to better understand HIV risk behavior in Latina communities. Others argue that the concepts are simply widely held cultural stereotypes that are not based on empirical studies. Those who express concerns about these concepts stress the importance of moderating variables (such as level of education, socio-economic status, immigration status) as well as the many notable exceptions to the rule. For them, organizations that base their adaptation of SISTA on these concepts run the risk of making inaccurate assumptions about their target population and they are likely to miss the nuances and particularities of the Latina populations they are trying to reach.

For current purposes, the cultural concepts outlined below are offered as possible considerations to be taken into account when adapting SISTA for Latina populations. No concept or characteristic will apply to all Latinas. In every case, one must assess the extent to which a particular characteristic applies to the specific group of Latinas being targeted for intervention.

**Acculturation**

Acculturation has traditionally been defined as the process by which individuals understand and incorporate values, beliefs, and behaviors
of the host culture in the context of the values, beliefs, and behaviors of the culture of origin (Berry, 1980). Research into the effect of acculturation on HIV prevention has revealed that acculturation is an important factor in HIV risk behavior (Shedlin, Decena & Oliver-Velez, 2005). Acculturation and its effects on HIV risk and prevention has been documented among various Latino subgroups (Rojas-Guyler et al., 2005; Shedlin, 2005; Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2005). For instance, low-acculturated Hispanics are more likely to have erroneous beliefs about HIV transmission and risk (Marin & Marin, 1990). This finding has implications for the amount of basic HIV/AIDS information covered in the SISTA intervention. Cultural values from country of origin may positively and negatively affect HIV risk. Another study has shown that the more highly acculturated a person is, the more likely he or she is to engage in sexual risk behaviors (Marks, Canter, & Simoni, 1998). This acculturation finding has implications for the type of risk reduction messages and sexual communication skill building that will be needed in an adapted version of SISTA.

It is important to keep in mind that groups and individuals differ in their level of risk regardless of their acculturation, and a person’s degree of acculturation may change over time. Some specific issues with acculturation that affect categorization, include:

- Interchangeable identification with both American and Latino national concepts regarding gender, sexual roles, role models, etc.,
- Unresolved or unclear attitudes or beliefs towards specific cultural concepts, values and behavioral attributes relevant to the discussions during the sessions,
- Incomplete or inaccurate background information on basic social concepts and reference points.

The level of acculturation of a Latina woman and her male partners will influence her power in a heterosexual relationship, her ability to negotiate and practice risk reduction behaviors, and the value she places on having a male partner and children. Assessment of the target population’s acculturation level will provide important information for the adaptation process.

**Fatalismo**

Fatalismo refers to the belief that conditions such as HIV are inevitable and the belief that the individual has no control over specific situations (Larkey et al., 2001; Moreno & Guido, 2005). Fatalism has its roots in culture and religion. Research indicates that many Latinas have fatalistic views about changing their situation. Fatalism is often imbedded in the identities of specific risk groups (e.g., sex-workers who may view themselves as dirty and evil and therefore anticipate being punished for their sins). The same sentiment also can apply to Latinas who have sex with different men. Under a fatalistic tradition, these women may expect to be punished by God because of their behavior (Moreno, 2007).

Assessing the prevalence of fatalism in the target population will be useful to prepare
facilitators to respond and reframe fatalistic beliefs about HIV/AIDS. For example, during session 1 the discussion focuses on how people are infected with the HIV. Participants may express fatalistic responses such as “some people deserve to get HIV” or “HIV cannot be avoided”. The facilitator may try to redirect these responses by saying, “no one deserves to get HIV” and “HIV can be avoided if you take precautions”. Depending on the degree to which fatalism is practiced, facilitators may consider revisiting this issue more than once during the five sessions. Fatalism also may influence a woman’s interest in and motivation to practice HIV risk reduction.

**Machismo**

*Machismo* is a cultural script that is imbedded in the role of many Latinos (Sternberg, 2000). There are different levels of *machismo* and not all men subscribe to this role (Moreno, 2007). *Machismo* stresses masculinity, power, independence, sexual prowess (Ortiz-Torres et al., 2000). It represents the authoritarian image, the breadwinner image, the virility image, and the chivalry image. In relationships, machismo may be present in many areas. For instance, some men exaggerate their sexual encounters. For women, machismo may not permit control in sexual encounters and may not permit women to decide when, how, and where the relationship will take place.

**Marianismo**

*Marianismo* has been characterized as the complement of *machismo*. It is important to acknowledge that not all Latinas ascribe to this role. *Marianismo* defines the role of Latinas as obedient, faithful, abnegated, sacred, self-sacrificing, polite, modeled after the virgin Mary (Gil, Iona-Vásquez, 1996; Ortiz-Torres et al., 2000). *Marianismo* is intrinsically supportive of group identity and support between women and is therefore important to underscore in group discussions with participants who may have more traditional values regarding this point as a facilitator for greater engagement in the group sessions.

Under this tradition, there are some clear messages that start during childhood and intensify as girls become women. These messages include expected sexual behaviors. For instance, sexual relationships must only occur after marriage and the husband will teach the wife about all sexual matters. Although not all women wait until marriage, when women engage in sexual encounters with men, *marianismo* may surface in many other ways. For instance, *marianismo* dictates that women should not know about sex, much less about

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contraceptives (birth control), prophylactics (condoms) or other related sexual devices and sexual subjects (Moreno, 2007). Because of marianismo, some women are afraid of asking their partners about their sexual histories or to use condoms. By asking such questions, women may be perceived as sexually experienced or ‘easy’ (Ortiz-Torres et al, 2000). Marianismo often defines how Latinas think of themselves, and thus it can impede access to information about sexual matters and reduce the likelihood that women will be assertive in sexual relations.

Marianismo may be expressed in many areas of the SISTA intervention. For example, in Session 1, the discussion of gender pride might result in marianismo being referred to as a source of pride. This will be an opportunity for the facilitator to assess the levels of marianismo and identify potential implications for HIV risk. The facilitator may also assess participants’ conflict between marianismo and less traditional Latina gender norms—See the resource section for the Maria paradox book as a resource book.

Marianismo may also be expressed in Sessions 3, 4, and 5 around sexual communication, skill building and risk reduction negotiation. Examples of assertive, passive, and aggressive communication styles may be different from one cultural group to another. Facilitators should keep in mind that assertiveness is not always viewed as positive under a marianista tradition. Being assertive can be interpreted as being aggressive or viewed as negative within the culture.

Facilitators will need a comprehensive understanding of the cultural and gender appropriate communication norms of the target population. Facilitators should encourage women to express their ideas of what being assertive and marianismo are and then assist them in discussing the implications for HIV risk and self protection. Initiating a discussion about safer sex might be difficult for some women to accomplish because of marianismo. Facilitators may encourage such women to practice discussions about sex with other women first and later with male partners. Facilitators may need to provide additional encouragement during role plays about how to talk to men about sex and safer practices. Facilitators may need to build in additional skill practice time into the sessions.

In session 4, the concept of marianismo may be exhibited during the condom exercise. Some women might be uncomfortable with the condom demonstration and the eroticizing of the condom. It will be important for the facilitator to explore attitudes about condoms which may be seen as something dirty and not ‘normal’. In addition, men have the power to use condoms or not and some women might have little control and find it difficult to ask men to use condoms.

Other Cultural Concepts

The cultural concepts mentioned below are discussed in the literature somewhat less often than those discussed above. However, they are frequently mentioned in connection with research with Latinas (e.g., Marin & Marin, 1991; Moreno, 2006) and therefore they may be of value in adapting SISTA for Latinas.

Personalismo values interpersonal relationships and interest in another’s personal situation.
Personalismo can be used to engage participants in the group modality approach on which SISTA is based.

Amistad values being friendly and close relationships with others. There is a strong emphasis in being in a relationship with someone. When held by both partners in a relationship, it may support fidelity. On the other hand, it may place women at risk because they may participate in risk behaviors just to have someone in their lives. During the SISTA intervention, this is a value that might need to be explored.

Simpatía or the “good face” implies valuing smooth relationships, avoiding confrontation and anger, and masking true feelings when they are negative. In delivering the SISTA intervention it is important to watch out for the ways in which simpatía can interfere with Latina women’s ability to express what they are feeling or to insist on safe sexual behaviors because of the desire to avoid confrontation. In keeping with simpatía, facilitators and other participants may need to help women find ways to achieve desired outcomes without direct confrontation.

Dignidad refers to “dignity” and it is related to bringing honor to the family and the group. During the SISTA intervention, dignidad may lead women to avoid sharing some private matters because of the desire to avoid dishonoring the family. Setting a safe climate for confidential conversation from the first session will be important.

Familialism is associated with identification with the nuclear and extended family. The family represents a central place in Latina identity. During the SISTA intervention, the concept of familialism may serve as a motivating factor to help women take action in an effort to protect their family.

Respeto or respect is shown to those in positions of power and to those who are older. During the SISTA intervention, it is important to pay attention to differences in age and how they play a role in the intervention. For instance, if the facilitator is younger than some of the women in the group, the older women may not want to discuss sexual issues with a younger person.

Collectivismo emphasizes the needs and importance of the group over those of the individual. During the SISTA intervention, collectivism may enhance participation in the SISTA sessions, peer support for and modeling of risk reduction behaviors, and the fostering of gender and ethnic pride.

IV. Adapting and Implementing SISTA for Latinas

Overview of Adaptation

SISTA activities were originally designed for African American women. However, it is possible for CBOs to adapt SISTA for Latinas. If your agency is interested in adapting SISTA for a specific Latina population, it is critical that the women you intend to reach:

• live in communities where men are given more power than women and these power imbalances negatively impact women’s ability to negotiate condom use during intercourse;
• have the same HIV risk behaviors (lack of or inconsistent condom use) that SISTA is effective in reducing; and

• have the same behavioral determinants of risk (i.e., lack of condom use and negotiation skills, lack of assertive sexual communication skills, lack of knowledge about HIV risk, etc.) that SISTA is effective in changing.

If all of these characteristics of the women you intend to serve are true, then adapting SISTA may be appropriate for your agency if your agency has the capacity to conduct a systematic adaptation process and then implement the adapted intervention. The process of adaptation is more than replacing African-inspired poems with Latina-specific poems. It may involve offering new activities and discussions that are not included in SISTA to make the intervention culturally relevant to the population of women your agency intends to serve.

In order to successfully adapt SISTA for a specific population of Latinas in your community, your agency will need to perform the following 10 activities:

1. Interview key stakeholders to determine whether an adapted version of SISTA would be appropriate for the intended participants and if so obtain input about the ways SISTA will have to be changed in order to make SISTA culturally relevant for the specific population of Latinas targeted for the intervention.

2. Conduct a focus group with members of the target population in order to obtain input about the ways SISTA will have to be changed in order to make SISTA culturally relevant for the specific population of Latinas targeted for the intervention (e.g., some groups of Hispanic women may be involved with machismo men who permit them very little autonomy while other groups of women may be involved with less traditional men). Consider adapting the focus group questions provided in the CDC SISTA intervention package.

3. Determine the specific changes that will need to be made to SISTA based on the input obtained from Steps 1 & 2 above.

4. Work with a behavioral and social scientist to develop new logic models (i.e., implementation and behavior change) for the adapted SISTA intervention. For sample logic models, see the SISTA web pages at http://www.effectiveinterventions.org/go/interventions/sista.

5. Make necessary changes to the intervention based on Steps 1-4 above and create and or assemble materials required for implementing the adapted SISTA intervention.

6. Recruit and train staff to implement the adapted SISTA intervention, including fluent Spanish speakers, if indicated for your population.

7. Pre-test materials with community advisory board and with members of the target audience, get feedback, and revise as necessary until adapted materials work.

8. Develop organizational policies, assign staff roles and responsibilities, and establish a plan and timeline required for successful implementation of the adapted SISTA intervention.

9. Pilot-test the adapted SISTA intervention to determine whether the adaptations are
workable and whether the adapted intervention is likely to achieve the desired outcomes. Either the entire adapted intervention can be conducted on a small scale with a few participants or components of the adapted intervention can be conducted in situations where conducting the entire intervention is not feasible.

10. If the pilot-test uncovers problems, determine what is not working, make modifications, and repeat the pre- and pilot-test activities.

**Cultural Assessment of the Target Audience**

Culture is defined as learned and shared behaviors, beliefs and values that provide meaning to an individual’s life and serve as a lens and guiding framework through which individuals, families, and communities understand and respond to their experiences (Hahn, 1995). Agencies that carefully consider the cultural influences of their target audience in their planning will more likely be successful in the implementation of their program because they will be perceived as understanding the challenges that Latinas in their community face. Additionally, a cultural assessment will assist program staff in having a better understanding of what informs participants’ ideas about healthy lifestyles, illness, and relationships. Targeted areas for cultural assessment include:

- Acculturation
- Fatalism
- Machismo/Marianismo
- Language and communication process
- Ethnic identity
- Migration experience and level of acculturation
- Views about cultural customs, traditions, beliefs and practices related to gender roles and health practices
- Concerns about discrimination and institutional racism
- Importance and impact of physical characteristics including skin color
- Use of informal and formal support and health networks
- Influence of religion/ spirituality/ curanderos/ espiritistas on the belief system and behavior patterns
- Current socioeconomic status
- Educational level
- Employment experiences
- Alcohol and Other Drug Use

**Staffing Requirements and Facilitation Issues**

In addition to having a project coordinator, it is recommended that 2 persons co-facilitate any version of SISTA that is adapted for Latinas. However, CBO capacity to hire 2 facilitators should be taken into consideration; and, if necessary, 1 facilitator can be used. Skilled facilitators are the key to ensuring this intervention is effective. Facilitators should:

- be thoroughly familiar with the adapted intervention and understand the logic and processes that led to the adaptations;
• be Latinas or Hispanic women who are knowledgeable about the target population and can demonstrate cultural competence with the target population;
• speak the same language and dialect as the target population;
• be able to create a culturally sensitive environment;
• be knowledgeable about HIV transmission and prevention;
• have group facilitation skills;
• have experience working with the target population;
• have a nonjudgmental attitude toward persons living with HIV/AIDS

Facilitators should be aware of participants’ cultural norms related to verbal and nonverbal communication. The use of eye contact, hand and facial gestures, touch, voice intonation, silence, humor, metaphors, and sayings (*dichos*) can all be factors that can increase or hinder the communication between the facilitator and participant. Sometimes participants have a preference to receive information from someone in authority, rather than a peer (Herbst et al., 2006). When using a peer facilitator the person should be well known within the community and experienced as a person that can be trusted to maintain confidentiality and clear boundaries.

Some women may experience guilt and shame simply from the fact that they are attending the group. The facilitator will need to remember that the gender roles and traditions will be in the midst of the group. Healthy sensitivity to, and respectful curiosity of, those traditions, expectations and beliefs will serve to engage participants in a more open dialogue. Some women will fear their participation in the group will lead to abandonment, violence, and/or reprimand. It is therefore important to address these issues early on and offer possible solutions for resolution. For example, a woman may be concerned that speaking about her needs, as opposed to her partner’s needs, is not being sensitive, kind, or “dedicated to her man and family”. Allowing the woman to share what she can instead of probing may help her feel safer in the group because she is allowed time to reflect and share at a pace that is comfortable to her.

Confidentiality is a critical component of the relationship with participants. It understandably carries a special meaning for individuals who have faced discrimination and isolation because of their immigration status, cultural traditions, economic capacity, employment, ethnicity, religious beliefs, and minority status. Therefore, when a woman is coming in to discuss her sexuality, or possible details about her relationships, and her understandings about HIV/AIDS, it will be extremely important for confidentiality to be addressed and maintained.

**Language and Literacy Levels**

When adapting and implementing SISTA for Latinas it is extremely important to consider
the language and literacy levels of the participants. Adapted versions of SISTA for Latinas should be implemented either in Spanish or in English according to the needs of the target audience, but not both. Mixing both Spanish and English in a session is likely to produce confusion and frustration for the participants. However, mixing in certain key words and/or phrases in Spanish in what is otherwise an English presentation is acceptable because many expressions do not have adequate translations for conveying the intended meaning.

Frequently, low literacy levels of participants pose significant challenges for those involved with implementing SISTA for Latinas. During the recruitment phase, it is recommended that an informal assessment of literacy levels be made with potential participants in order for the program staff to make modifications to the intervention materials.

When working with low literacy participants it is imperative to make accommodations in order to avoid embarrassing these participants, discouraging their participation, and causing discomfort. The following suggestions will help facilitators accommodate the needs of low literacy participant:

- If time allows, set up one-on-one meetings for participants to fill out the pre-test prior to the first session.
- Ask for volunteers to read parts of the poems and handouts instead of singling out one individual.
- Read the directions of the activities instead of having each participant read them to themselves.
- Provide pictures demonstrating how to put on condoms.
- During Session Three, showing the Inquillinos video will help illustrate the concepts of assertive, aggressive, and non-assertive communication.
- Read the session evaluations aloud and ask participants to circle appropriate responses.

A quick guide to health literacy provides similar recommendations on improving usability of health information: http://www.health.gov/communication/literacy/quickguide/healthinfo.htm.

**Recruitment**

The population recruited for the adapted version of SISTA for Latinas should include women at very high risk for HIV through sexual behaviors. To encourage participation,

**The population recruited for the adapted version of SISTA for Latinas should include women at very high risk for HIV through sexual behaviors.**

the intervention should be publicized as a program for Latinas, a program facilitated and conducted by Latinas, and a program that discusses dating, relationships, healthy sex practices, and works at improving women’s ability to effectively communicate with sex partners. Women may be recruited from within your organization, other community based organizations and social service programs, STD clinics, family planning clinics, shelters, bars, focus groups, or sexually transmitted disease clinics.

It is critical to determine whether members of the communities from which Latina participants will be recruited know the
program staff and embrace the agency offering the intervention as a part of the community. If not, the agency must develop a systematic plan to connect with the target population and the communities in which they reside. For example, the following steps have proven to be effective in engaging and establishing ownership in some Latino communities:

- **Face to face contact.** Walking into the community, knocking on doors and providing a general introduction of the agency, services provided, and an invitation to visit the facility with a friend or family member. *The initial interactions with Latinas should begin with introductions and all further interactions should convey that there are no judgments being made.* If possible, plan a simple “café y platica” or a “refrescos y platica” session to help break the ice.

- **A “café y platica” session** is simply a gathering for coffee and a light-hearted conversation amongst friends. Refrescos (refreshments) may be more appropriate for people that do not drink coffee.

- **Remember the names of the women visited and ask them to provide a name of someone they think might want to come over for “un cafecito or un refresco”. You will be surprised.**

- **Provide the coffee and or refreshments**, have a baby-sitter available or space for children to play and simply spend time getting to know the visitors. Be *respectfully curious* about the visitors. Do not probe; remember they are sizing you up too. Listen attentively to what is important to the women. It is likely that they will slowly reveal potential barriers to participation and they will likely suggest desired solutions to those barriers.

- **Meet the community leaders.** Make contact with parish priests, ministers, school principals, community pharmacists, grocers and community center directors. These individuals usually have a good pulse of the people in their community and can be a resource in your planning. These individuals can also provide information about influencing factors affecting women in their community and some of the risk behaviors witnessed in the community.

- **If possible, follow-up the initial session with a second session.** In this session you can begin to disclose a little more about your plans through curiosities, for example ask them if there was going to be a meeting for women, where would it make sense to have a meeting. Ask what days, times and what would they recommend needs to be available for people to come. This line of questioning allows people to share what they know about their community members.

Location, scheduling, and duration of a prevention program greatly affects the ability of some individuals to participate. When, where, and for low long an HIV prevention is held should take into account women’s work schedule, transportation, childcare and household responsibilities. Income level also
presents a logistical issue because women in lower-wage jobs are often unable to negotiate time off and may not be able to afford the transportation cost of attending an intervention. The location of the HIV prevention program may also be a barrier to those who fear being recognized or identified as entering and exiting a public HIV/AIDS facility. (Rutledge et al., 2002).

Mismatch between an HIV prevention program’s services and an individual’s readiness for participation may be a significant barrier to enrollment and completion the program. According to the transtheoretical model of state of change, behavioral change happens gradually in stages. (Rutledge et al., 2002 citing Prochaska et al., 1994; Prochaska and DiClemente, 1984). Prevention programs may be more successful if they consider a prospective participant’s stage of readiness for change when constructing recruitment and/or retention messages. For example, individuals in the early stages of change may require more awareness building messages while those in later stages may want to start developing concrete steps to changing their behavior. In addition, the format of the intervention may be a mismatch to individual needs. Deciding between individual or group counseling, for example, depends in large part on whether targeted individuals benefit more from support and networking or more intensive one-on-one therapy. (Rutledge et al., 2002).

**Linkage to Services and Referrals**

All health education and risk reduction programs must link clients whose HIV status is unknown to counseling, testing, and referral services and persons living with HIV to care and prevention services. CBO staffs must develop a thorough understanding of the service delivery systems that typically serve Latinas in their community. They must develop personal connections with staff of Latina-serving agencies and continually assess whether, and how frequently, referrals made by their staff members were completed.

CBOs should also be prepared to refer clients as needed. For clients who require additional assistance in decreasing risk behavior, providers must know about Hispanic-oriented referral sources for prevention interventions and counseling. At times, personal issues among clients may arise whereby they may need immediate referral attention. If there is only 1 facilitator, that facilitator may need to call a “time out” to individually address the client’s issue.
References


SUGGESTIONS FOR ADAPTATION WITH LATINAS

As you begin to think of adapting SISTA for Latina populations, a first step is to look at the content and format of the original SISTA program and review the session goals and objectives to determine their relevance or need for adaptation for the Latinas served by your organization.

The second step will be to determine what specific culturally relevant adaptations will be needed for your group. We have suggested many in the following pages, but be creative. The original SISTA intervention was developed in collaboration with several young African American women from the community where it was being implemented. It is highly recommended that you collaborate with young Latinas from the target community to make adaptations. As you adapt, check to make sure the core goals of the session are achieved.

The third step will be to test some of your adaptations with your first group and, after each session, reflect on the usefulness of those changes and take notes on what you’ll try next time.

The following five chapters correspond to the five SISTA sessions and provide Suggestions for Adaptation with Latinas. For your convenience, each chapter follows the format of the original SISTA Facilitator’s Manual:

- Rationale
- Materials Needed
- Goals
- Objectives
- Session Outline (with Adaptations and Alternatives for each activity)

In each chapter, we have included a segment entitled General Considerations for Latinas, which discusses issues relevant to the implementation of that session with Latinas.

We have also included an Appendix for each session, with resource information, sample activities, poems and songs for adapting the program for Latinas. Some poems and songs contain sexually suggestive portions, and some require a fairly high level of literacy to comprehend. For these reasons, we suggest you review the options with a few women from the population you wish to serve, and have them identify the ones they feel are most relevant and comfortable. Alternative songs, poems and short readings may be added, as long as they can be related to the content and objectives of the SISTA sessions in which you use them. Consider using the original SISTA readings if they are appealing to your group members.
Rationale

Session 1 focuses on ethnic and gender pride. Ethnic and gender pride are intended to be used as tools to inspire women participating in the group to take care of themselves by engaging in healthy sexual behaviors and avoiding risky situations. The particular focus is on protecting oneself and one another from becoming infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Goals

This session includes five goals. We have underlined suggested wording changes.

a) To discuss the positive qualities of Latinas and how they can be used as a source of strength and pride

Objectives

This session includes two objectives. We have underlined suggested wording changes.

1) Recognize the pride that exists within Latinas

2) Identify and discuss sources of pride for Latinas

General Considerations for Latinas

In order to create an environment in which Latinas feel comfortable expressing their feelings and opinions it will be important for you as the facilitator to attend to the following issues in Session 1 and throughout the program:

Climate

An important objective of this session is to begin establishing a bond among the women in the group so they will feel comfortable interacting with one another and with you as facilitator. In order to successfully accomplish this, you should get to know your group members as individuals – their personalities and temperaments – and help them get to know one another. Some group members may be outspoken, while others may be shy. Some may be comfortable expressing their opinions, while others might not. Some might be highly acculturated and comfortable sharing personal information (a more American cultural characteristic), while others might feel uncomfortable doing so. Encourage each woman to participate in the ways she is comfortable, and look for and praise new behaviors that clearly stretch a participant’s comfort level.

Cultural Variety

The term Latinas is used to group women that come from over 20 different countries in North, Central and South America, and the Caribbean. Although there are great commonalities among the countries in this region in terms of culture and religion, there are also great distinctions. Latinas in your group might have preconceived ideas about, and prejudices toward, one another. These prejudices could be based on opinions they have about others’ countries of origin, or might be based on historical conflicts between certain Latino groups in your city. Therefore, when working with groups of Latinas from different countries of origin, it is important to select activities that recognize and respect differences while emphasizing similarities.
**Safety**

SISTA homework assignments include talking with partners about topics covered in the sessions. As in any group of women, one or more group members may be living with physical or emotional abuse, or have a history of domestic violence. You may wish to have a conversation with each woman privately prior to beginning the program to assess any relationship issues she maybe facing. It’s a good idea to have resource information available for domestic violence counseling or support groups in your area.

In addition, make sure you give group members an opportunity to bring up any concerns they have about completing such assignments, and always give an alternative. For example, tell them they can discuss what they have learned with another group member or a close friend.

**Ethnic and Gender Pride**

The main challenge for you as facilitator of the SISTA program with Latinas will be to identify ways to trigger ethnic and gender pride among your group participants. Although there are many commonalities between African American women and Latinas in the experience of being female and people of color, there are also many differences between and within cultural groups that impact ethnic and gender pride. Some of the issues you might have to contend with are:

b) the meaning of ‘pride’ for Latinas of different backgrounds

c) the impact that migration history, age and acculturation might have on how your group participants view ethnic and gender pride

d) differences in what triggers a sense of pride related to ethnicity and gender for different women

For some Latinas, ‘pride’ might be an unfamiliar concept. Some will feel comfortable discussing the concept of pride as outlined in the original SISTA program, while for others the word might have negative connotations. Whatever the case, the most important thing is that you as group facilitator determine the most successful way to approach the concepts of ethnic and gender pride with your group. A good place to start would be to explore the meaning of the word ‘pride’ with Latinas, either your participants or a similar group (see Suggested Activity, next page). This will provide you with some information about their point of view.
Materials Needed

The SISTA participant materials include opening and closing poems that speak to African American women. We have included suggestions of alternative poems and songs as well as activities with similar themes for Latinas in Appendix 1 at the end of this chapter.

Select an opening poem or song and one for closing, and make copies to hand out.

Select alternative activities for each segment and prepare any additional materials described.
I. Opening Poem

The purpose of the Opening Poem is to set the tone for the session. Consider using poems, short stories, legends or popular sayings (dichos) that are culturally appropriate for Latinas and relevant to the theme and content of the session. Make sure your selection is both meaningful and linguistically appropriate for your participants. Songs may be an accessible medium to participants that have literacy issues, particularly if you use songs they are familiar with. You could distribute the lyrics and perhaps give them a SISTA compact disc with all songs and lyrics as a gift.

The important thing to keep in mind when selecting an opening reading is to preserve the intent of the poems in the original SISTA program. For this session, the themes are Ethnic and Gender Pride.

Suggested Poems
Y Dios Me Hizo Mujer, Gioconda Belli (Appendix 1–1)
Quien Soy, Selia Servin-Lopez (Appendix 1–2)
Majestad Negra, Luis Pales Matos (Appendix 1–3)

Suggested Songs
Soy Mujer, India (Appendix 1–4)
Mujer Latina, Thalía (Appendix 1–5)

II. Introductions

Select a ‘getting to know you’ activity that won’t intimidate or inhibit your participants. Session 1 is designed to move from very low risk activities (ones that require little sharing of personal information) toward activities that require a somewhat deeper level of sharing. Pay attention to participants’ responses to each activity and pace yourself according to their comfort.

Suggested Activities

Ask each participant to share her favorite dish, recipe or song, and to explain why they like it.

Ask each woman to think about her history and/or her family’s history of migration to the United States. Give the women five minutes to gather their thoughts and then have them share in pairs or threes. Each small group can report back to the larger group about the similarities they found. Summarize the similarities that were mentioned by participants.

La Ceiba, El Arbol de Nuestros Ancestros (Appendix 1–6)
The Ceiba, Our Ancestral Tree
The objectives of this activity are:
- to introduce and network with one another before the training begins
- to create an environment that is conducive to interactive learning
- to reveal what participants expect to learn in the training

Una Voz Unida/Dichos Latinos (Appendix 1–7)
A United Voice/Latino Proverbs
This is designed to:
- help participants get acquainted with each other
- create an environment that facilitates learning and sharing of experiences
- begin thinking of HIV as it relates to the community.
III. Development of Ground Rules and Expectations

Both the process to establish the rules and the list of suggested rules in the SISTA Manual seem appropriate for Latinas.

You might consider including a rule regarding tolerance for differences in use of language, particularly for those who are Spanish-speaking. There is a great deal of regionalism in the Spanish language and different meanings are given to the same words across countries and regions. Since your group may include women from different countries of origin it will be important for the group to be tolerant of each others’ use of language. When using slang terms, particularly to refer to genitals, sex and sex-related behaviors, it will be useful to discuss terms used in different regions and countries.

IV. Gender and Ethnic Pride

a) Write the following questions on the flip chart: [We have underlined suggested wording changes to the questions.]

1) “What does it mean to be a strong Latina?”

2) “Who is a Latina in your life whom you respect and admire?”

If the women in your group had a negative reaction to the concept of pride (orgullo), choose an alternative exercise for this section.
V. Personal Values

When giving instructions for completing the Personal Values Sheet, model by sharing examples of your own values to ensure all participants understand what is expected. For monolingual (Spanish only) women use the Valores Personales handout (Appendix 1–10).

VI. Homework

The SISTA intervention encourages participants to involve their boyfriends or partners in the completion of the homework assignment. Talking with one’s partner about the topics in this program may be uncomfortable or embarrassing. However, women should be encouraged to do so. Make sure you give group members an opportunity to bring up any concerns they have about completing such assignments.

As in any group of women, one or more group members may be living with physical or emotional abuse, or have a history of domestic violence. Always give an alternative for the assignment. For example, tell them they can discuss what they have learned with another group member or a close friend.

VII. Evaluation

Consider literacy levels when selecting a feedback process. If you think some participants may not read English well, use an alternative method with the whole group.

Suggested Activity

Create a pictorial response sheet that has faces corresponding to a rating scale for each statement on the evaluation sheet. For example:

- 😞 = Very poor/Not at all
- 😞 = Poor
- 😞 = Not bad
- 😊 = Good
- 😊 = Very good/Excellent

Tell the group you will read them several statements. After each one, you’ll ask them to circle the rating they feel today’s session should get for that statement.

Read the ratings to the group one at a time. After each one, pause for participants to mark their responses on the corresponding scale.

VIII. Closing Poem

Suggested Poems

- Y Dios Me Hizo Mujer, Gioconda Belli (Appendix 1–1)
- Quien Soy, Selia Servin-Lopez (Appendix 1–2)
- Majestad Negra, Luis Pales Matos (Appendix 1–3)

Suggested Songs

- Soy Mujer, India (Appendix 1–4)
- Mujer Latina, Thalia (Appendix 1–5)
Appendix I-I

Y DIOS ME HIZO MUJER

Gioconda Belli

Y Dios me hizo mujer,
de pelo largo,
ojos,
nariz y boca de mujer.
Con curvas y pliegues
y suaves hondonadas y me cavo por dentro,
me hizo un taller de seres humanos.
Tejió delicadamente mis nervios
y balanceo con cuidado
el numero de mis hormonas.
Compuso mi sangre
y me inyectó con ella
para que irrigara
todo mi cuerpo;
nacieron así las ideas,
las sueños,
el instinto.
Todo lo que creo suavemente
a martillazos de soplidos
y taladrazos de amor,
las mil y una cosas que me hacen mujer todos los días
por las que me levanto orgullosa
todas las mañanas
y bendigo mi sexo.
Appendix I-2

¿QUIÉN SOY?

Selia Servin-Lopez

¿Quién Soy?
Mi piel es caramelo, mis ojos parecen almendras castaños y anchos, y pelo negro
Mi piel es como leche mis ojos azules, con pelo rubio
Soy alta, chapara, sonriente, y seria
Soy hija, hermana, soltera, novia, esposa, madre, tía, abuela, y viuda
Tengo esperanza, fe, y confianza
Oro, lloro, canto, grito, y platico
Miro, escucho, lacho, triunfo
¿Quien Soy?
Diferente, de mi gente, de tu gente, aparente
Amada, despreciada, enviada, apoyada, apreciada
Sueno, trabajo, juego, y sueño de Nuevo
¿Quien Soy?
Rica, pobre, huérfana, de mi abuela
Cocino, compro, deseo, tengo
Buena, curiosa, chistosa, graciosa
Dolorosa y poderosa
¿Quien Soy?

Simplemente Soy
MAJESTAD NEGRA

Luis Pales Matos

[NOTE: This poem requires a fairly high literacy level]

Por la encendida calle antillana
va Tembandumba de la Quimbamba
-rumba, macumba, candombe, bámbula-
Entre dos filas de negras caras.
Ante ella un congo-gongo y maraca-
Ritma una conga bomba y bamba.

Culipandeando la Reina avanza,
y de su inmensa grupa resbalan
meneos cachondos que el gong cuaja
en ríos de azúcar y de melaza.
Prieto trapiche de sensual zafra,
el caderamen, masa con masa,
exprime ritmos, suda que sangra,
y la molienda culmina en danza.

Por la encendida calle antillana
Va Tembandumba de la Quimbamba.
Flor de Tórtola, rosa de Uganda,
Por ti crepitan bombas y bámabulas;
Por ti en calendas desenfrenadas
Quema la Antilla su sangre ñañiga.
Haití te ofrece sus calabazas;
Fogosos rones te da Jamaica;
Cuba te dice: ¡dale, mulata!
Y Puerto Rico: ¡melao, melamba!

¡Sus, mis cocolos de negras caras!
Tronad, tambores; vibrad, maracas.
Por la encendida calle antillana
-rumba, macumba, candombe, bámbula-
va Tembandumba de la Quimbamba.
SOY MUJER (canción)

La India

Se comenta que soy rebelde
Lo aprendí para sostenerme
Se que amar no es servir de adorno
Lo que siento jamás lo escondo
De frente doy una sola cara y en vez de llorar doy carcajadas
Yo soy fiel a quien lo merece
Pero de mi no hacen lo que le apetece

Soy mujer y he sabido amar
Dura, frágil, e insegura por los amores
Soy mujer
Sin pudor me han dañado el alma
Por eso tomo las armas, me cuido del amor
Vasta saber que por dentro y por fuera
Soy de espinas, de rosas,
Alma blanca y de roca y
Le doy miel solo a quien se me antoja
Porque soy mujer

Aprendí a no creer en sombras
Al corazón finjo de ser sorda
Porque a el también lo engañaron
Pero yo lo he resucitado
Como sufre quien no lo crea
Se atormenta con mil problemas
Soy mujer por cierto no pierdo
Soy dura y fuerte y no dejare de serlo

Porque soy mujer
Soy de espinas de rosas
Alma blanca y de roca
Digan lo que digan de mi soy feliz y a mi no me importa
Por que soy mujer
Mirame, estúdiame, critícame, envidia me si quieres
Como quieras pensar sola yo triunfare
Como mujer yo he sabido amar y no me dejo engañar
Le doy mi corazón a quien me sepa respetar

Tengo falda y saya, debajo pantalones
Dura frágil y sentimental por los amores
Y le doy de mi miel a quien se lo merece
Tengo dulzura y cariño para aquel que lo aprecie.

Soy mujer
MUJER LATINA (canción)

Thalía

Coro:
Vengo vengo vengo de caña
vengo vengo vengo del son
tenго tengo tengo en el alma
ritmo ritmo ritmo y sabor

Vengo de raza y de palmera
De campo y de labriego
De caña y de madera
Mi orgullo es ser latina
De mar y cordillera
Ardiente como el fuego

Soy sangre de mi tierra
Soy la hembra sandunguera caliente como un fogón
Dulce cuando me enamoro y entrego mi corazón
Soy la hermana de la rumba de la gaita y del tambor
Del fuego y la sabrosura que llevo en esta canción
Y te digo

Coro:
Canto al aire y a la noche, a la brisa y al amor
A la sangre de mi tierra le llevo mi inspiración
Tengo miel tengo pradera tengo raza y luz del sol
Corazón de aventurera de fuego tabaco y ron
Y te digo

Sandunguera - soy sandunguera
Sandunguera - soy parrandera
Sandunguera - pura candela
Sandunguera - si me tocas te quemas
Sandunguera - vengo de caña
Sandunguera - y de palmera
Sandunguera - soy sandunguera
Estoy rebuena
Vengo de raza y de palmera
De campo y de labriego
De can y de madera
Mi orgullo es ser latina
De mar y cordillera
Ardiente como el fuego
Soy sangre de mi tierra

No me gustan las palabras que faltan a la verdad
Llevo cantos en el alma amor a la libertad
Y si entrego mis pasiones no hay barreras para amar
Cuando son dos corazones que se quieren de verdad
Y te digo

Vengo de raza y de palmera
De campo y de labriego
De can y de madera
Mi orgullo es ser latina
De mar y cordillera
Ardiente como el fuego
Soy sangre de mi tierra
Appendix I-6

La Ceiba—El Arbol de Nuestros Ancestros
The Ceiba—Our Ancestral Tree

Objectives:
• To introduce and network with one another before the training begins.
• To create an environment that is conducive to interactive learning.
• To reveal what participants expect to learn in the training.

Materials Needed:
• Index cards
• Newsprint
• Markers

Instructions:
• Prepare a sheet of newsprint with the heading “LA CEIBA” and draw a tree. (Minimal artistic ability needed—just have fun!)

- Introduce La Ceiba as a tree that is found throughout Latin America and explain that some species can grow to 70 meters, with a straight, mostly branchless trunk. The roots of the tree are thick and on the top the branches create a spreading canopy.
- Ask participants if they have seen this tree in their country and if they know any other information about the Ceiba.
- Facilitate a discussion by providing the following additional data about the Ceiba tree and its importance in some Latin American communities:

The Ceiba tree is also known as the Mayan Sacred Tree, Mayan World Tree or the Mayan Tree of Life which for the ancient Maya of Central America represented the three levels of the universe. The tree stood in the middle of the earth and connected the spiritual and terrestrial world. It was believed that the branches of the Ceiba allowed the souls of those who passed to climb to the heavens. The tree symbolized life and the journey of those that came before us. In the eyes of our ancestors it was a tree that embodied fortitude and a human’s natural life cycle. In this age of rapid deforestation, this magnificent tree is often spared even when other trees are cut down and you can find them standing in solitude.

In some communities, including the ancestral Mayas and the modern-day Shuar and Achuar peoples of Ecuador, the Ceiba tree provided a space of shade and tranquility where one could peacefully consider the problems facing the community while searching for creative solutions. It has also served as a meeting place where chiefs would convene with their fellow community members to discuss important issues.
• Hand out the index cards
• Ask participants to write down on the card the following information:
  • Name
  • Country of Origin
  • Reason they came to the training
• One expectation they have or what knowledge they wish to gain as a result of attending this training
• Allow 5 minutes for filling out index cards
• Ask each participant to introduce themselves and share the information on the card
• As each participant gives their responses, collect her card and tape it to the “La Ceiba” Newsprint. Tape the cards around the base of the tree to symbolize the assembly of our participants at the Ceiba.

Closing:
Explain that we have come together as a community in this training, each with her own personal experiences, wisdom, and expectations. Our own gathering parallels the gatherings of our ancestors and will also serve as a means to share ideas and create solutions to modern-day issues. Welcome the participants as members of a community where we sit by the Ceiba and, as a participative, interactive community, share information and skills to find solutions to our problems.
Appendix 1-7

Una Voz Unida—Dichos Latinos
A United Voice—Latino Proverbs

Objectives:
• To help participants get acquainted with one another
• To create an environment that facilitates learning and sharing of experiences
• To begin thinking of HIV as it relates to the community

Instructions:
• Copy the Latino proverbs on the next two pages
• Cut each of the proverbs and mix them up in a basket
• Ask each participant to take one
• Allow a minute or two for participants to read their proverbs silently.
• One at a time ask participants to read their proverb to the group and answer the following questions:
  • Have you heard this proverb used in your community before?
  • What does the proverb means to you?
  • How does the proverb relate to HIV and your community?

Closing
• Explain that these are proverbs found throughout Latin America and in Latino communities in the United States. They are part of our shared cultural experience and although we may have different country origins and/or ancestry, we have many similarities as well. We have a “United Voice” when we share our experiences and talk about important issues in our communities such as HIV prevention.

Dichos Latinos

1. Mala hierba nunca muere. (A bad weed never dies)
2. Juntos pero no revueltos. (Together but not mixed.)
3. El que es buen gallo donde quiere canta. (A good rooster can crow anywhere)
4. Chiquito pero picoso. (Small but very hot.)
5. Del dicho al hecho hay mucho trecho. (There’s a long way from the saying to the doing. Saying something and doing it are two different things.)
6. Quien canta su mal espanta. (Sing everyday and chase the blues away.)
7. De tal palo tal astilla. (A chip off the old block.)
8. Para el gato viejo ratón tierno. (A tender mouse for the old cat.)
9. La ignorancia no es pretexto. (Ignorance is not an excuse.)
10. Mas vale salud que dinero. (Better to have health than money.)
11. El que te quiere te hace llorar. (You always hurt the one you love.)
12. No hay amor como el primero. (There is no love like the first love.)
13. Querer es poder. (Desire is power. Where there’s a will, there’s a way.)
14. Pobre pero honrado. (Poor but honest.)
15. Lo que bien se aprende nunca se olvida. (What you learn well you never forget.)
16. En boca cerrada no entran moscas. (Flies can’t enter a closed mouth.)

17. El pájaro que se levanta temprano, agarra primero el gusano. (The early bird gets the worm.)

18. La tierra es del que la trabaja. (The land belongs to those who work it.)

19. Hablando se entiende a la gente. (People learn by talking.)

20. No hay mal que por bien no venga. (There is no bad from which some good doesn’t come.)

21. El amor es ciego. (Love is blind.)

22. El diablo sabe más por viejo que por diablo. (The devil knows more due to being old than by being the devil.)

23. A quien madruga, Dios le ayuda. (God helps the one who arises early. God helps those who help themselves. Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.)

24. El que parte y comparte, se queda con la mejor parte. (Would encourage sharing during group sessions.)

25. El mejor caballo necesita espuelas. (Speaks to being prepared.)

26. La conversación es el pasto del alma. (To encourage conversations on topics usually considered too private to discuss in public.)

27. Costal vacío no separa. (Without knowledge it is more difficult to stand up for yourself.)

28. Más vale una vez colorado que ciento descolorido. (A little bit of embarrassment is worth it)

29. Cada quien puede hacer de sus calzones un papalote.

30. Mata más una esperanza que un desengaño. (False hope kills more readily than bitter truth.)
Appendix I. 8

A Code for Peace according to INTI RAIMI

Objectives:
• To create an environment that is conducive to interactive learning

• To establish a list of agreed-upon ground rules in order to facilitate open discussion

Materials Needed:
• Newsprint
• Markers

Instructions:
• Prior to facilitating the activity, write “A Code for Peace according to XXXXX” on a sheet of newsprint. Depending on your targeted audience fill in the appropriate deity or historical figure.

• South American participants—Inti Raimi
• For Puerto Rican participants—Indios Tainos – Anacaona
• For Dominican participants—Anacoana
• For Mexican and or Central American participants—Aztec Deities or Mayan Deities such as Alaghom Naom
• For Caribbean and Brazilian participants —Obatala

• Explain to participants that their particular deity was considered a god or goddess in different parts of Latin America. These deities were believed to play an important part in the creation of the universe as well as establishing rules and codes of conduct that members of a community needed to follow in order to have a peaceful existence.

Depending on the targeted population, use the following information to explain the appropriate deity or historical figure.

Inti Raimi—In the ancient Incan culture, the community respected and worshiped Inti Raimi the sun-god. He was considered the protector of the people, establishing rules for justice and peace in the empire that included regions in Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Chile and Argentina.

Anacaona—Anacaona was a Taino Queen, wife of Coanabo, one of the five caciques who possessed the island of Santo Domingo. After the death of her husband, Anacaona asserted her authority and ruled the cacique known as Xaragua. She was a great composer of ballads and areitos, narrative poems. As queen, she ruled over the last Taino kingdom on the island which finally succumbed to the Spanish in 1502.

Alaghom Naom—For the ancient Mayas Alaghom Naom was the goddess of wisdom, consciousness, education and intellect. Also known as Alaghom Naom Tzentel and the Mother of Mind.

Obatala—A god who created human life and consciousness out of the earth, Obatala is still considered by some the father of humankind as well as the orishas, other deities. This god represents clear thinking, wisdom and clarity. He is also known as the King of the White Cloth.

• In the spirit of learning about these deities/historical figures, ask participants to create and follow a Code for Peace for this training. The importance of this code’s rules is that they will help establish a caring and trusting environment, allowing participants to share their thoughts and experiences freely.
• As a brainstorming activity allow participants to generate the ground rules.

• Some examples might include:
  • Confidentiality—What is said in this room stays in this room
  • Turn cell phones off or set on vibrate only
  • Respect others opinions
  • Be on time
  • Limit sidebar conversations
  • Speak one at a time
  • HAVE FUN!!!

Closing:
Explain to the participants that these are rules that they have created together and agreed to uphold throughout the training. This list will aid in creating a peaceful community environment where everyone feels comfortable expressing their opinions, experiences, fears, and ideas. Remind participants that, as a facilitator, you will refer them back to this “Code for Peace” if anyone strays from the agreed upon ground rules.

Created by Marilyn Ricker Kases. MRK©
Appendix 1-9

Web Sites

Web Sites to find prominent Latinas:

www.lasmujeres.com
http://womenshistory.about.com/od/hispanicwomen

Web Sites on Latino cultures:

Colombia
http://colhrnet.igc.org/timeline.htm

Dominican Republic

Mexico
www.mexonline.com
www.mexican-embassy.dk/history.html

Puerto Rico
www.topuertorico.org

General
www.neta.com/~lstbooks/content.htm
Appendix 1-10

Valores Personales

• Ser saludable y activa físicamente
• Tener dinero
• Tener buenos amigos
• Practicar mi religión
• Ser famosa
• Divertirme
• Ayudar a mi comunidad
• Valorarme y darme a respetar
• Ser honesta con mi misma
• Ser considerada
• Drogarme
• Ser estudiante buena
• Tener un trabajo que me gusta
• Cuidar y proveer para mi hijo o hija
• Tener novio
• Tener un bebé
• Ser popular
• Ser responsable y honesta
• Tener la aprobación de mis padres
• Ser la mejor en lo que hago
• Ser inteligente
• Ser invitada a fiestas

Translated by Marilyn Ricker Kases MPH
**Rationale**

Session 2 provides participants with basic information on sex, drugs, HIV and AIDS. It emphasizes how HIV is transmitted, dispelling myths and misconceptions. This session helps bring the reality of AIDS closer to home. That means helping the women realize that AIDS can affect their lives.

**Goals**

This session includes eight goals. In implementing this session with Latinas, consider including two additional goals:

1) To teach women the basics of sexual anatomy

2) To help participants understand how their intimate relationships affect the decision making process

**Objectives**

[No suggested changes]

**General Considerations for Latinas**

A challenging task for you as facilitator will be the discussion about what women can do to protect themselves from becoming infected with HIV. This discussion will be impacted by the individual beliefs your participants have about relationships and sexual practices. Those beliefs have developed under the influence of individual temperament and family, community and religious views. In addition, you may hear variations among group members who come from different ethnic groups (e.g., Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Mexicans) and/or from different communities and experiences. It is important to listen non-judgmentally and be thoughtful and intentional in how you lead this session.

**Anatomy**

In preparation for the session, we suggest you assess group participants’ knowledge about sexual anatomy to ensure that all participants have a basic knowledge of their bodies. We recommend that you provide some basic review.

Consider participants’ literacy levels while designing this portion of the session. If literacy is an issue in your group, using visuals aids and anatomically correct models as teaching tools might be helpful. Use the group’s Ground Rules to ensure a non-judgmental environment and encourage all questions. Ask the group members to share the terms they are comfortable using and connect them to the scientific terms.

**Suggested Activity**

If some of your participants need further information on anatomy, you might consider having a special presentation between Sessions 1 and 2 to address the need, or lending them copies of a DVD or video program that teaches the basics.

**Culture and Relationships**

Many Latinas connect sexual intimacy with trust (in Spanish, confianza). A woman’s commitment to the idea of fidelity in her intimate relationships may hinder HIV
prevention initiatives because they imply there might be infidelity or lack of trust in her relationship. Using condoms for disease prevention implies she doesn’t trust her partner and that sex with her partner is not safe. In some cases, this will mean that she will have to be disrespectful to her man and not respond to his needs. The emotional cost of the prevention strategies suggested in this session might be simply too high for some women, and they might not want or be prepared to pay it. Considering these prevention strategies might require participants to make changes to the meaning they give to sex with their partners, making it harder to convince Latinas to use condoms as an HIV prevention strategy. As the group facilitator, it is important that you have these dynamics in mind when facilitating this session and help participants have an open discussion about these issues.

**Materials Needed**

The SISTA participant materials include opening and closing poems that speak to African American women. We have included suggestions of alternative poems and songs, as well as activities with similar themes for Latinas in Appendix 2 at the end of this chapter.

- Select an opening poem or song and one for closing, and make copies to hand out
- Select alternative activities for each segment and prepare any additional materials described

### I. Opening Poem

The purpose of the poem is to set the tone for the session. The most important thing to keep in mind when selecting a poem is to preserve the intent of the poems in the original SISTA program.

**Suggested Poems**

- *Palabra de Mujer*, Rosaria Sanchez (Appendix 2–1)
- *Yo Misima Mi Ruta*, Julia de Burgos (Appendix 2–2)

### II. Review Ground Rules/Expectations

Consider telling the group that this session will include some frank discussions about sexuality and other intimate behaviors, and ask if there are any Ground Rules that should be added to the list to help them feel more comfortable in this discussion.

### III. Review Session 1, Including homework

Here are suggestions for adaptation of this segment with Latinas:

a) When discussing the Key Concepts on Ethnic/Gender Pride, be aware that not everyone in your group may have the same level of literacy. Try reading the handout aloud, or ask for volunteers to do so.

b) When discussing Session 1 homework, keep in mind that some of the participants will not have had the opportunity to discuss the homework with a boyfriend or partner. They can learn from the experiences of those participants who did
c) Complete the assignment. Ask the women who could not do the homework to share the challenges that prevented them from doing so and encourage the group to brainstorm ways to overcome those challenges.

c) Categorize responses and tie the responses to what will happen in the session. Pay special attention to how women describe their sexual anatomy. This will give you an idea of their level of knowledge about their bodies.

d) Normalize language that Latinas use to refer to sex, sexual anatomy and their bodies for the purpose of creating comfort, honest communication and openness to change. Use humor to lighten up the topic and to make it fun.

d) If you have both Spanish and English speakers in the group, make the presentations as bilingual, if possible.

e) It is important that participants can personalize the material. Use true stories and examples to help them better grasp the information. For example, when talking about the effects of the disease you could say something like, “As the disease progresses, the person may lose sensation or feeling, and he might have difficulty with daily tasks like feeding himself or getting dressed.”

IV. Current Statistics on AIDS

For this discussion, gather statistics from your participants’ countries of origin as well as for Latinas in the United States and your community. Appendix 2-3 lists some Web sites for current data.

V. HIV/AIDS 101: What is HIV/AIDS?

Here are suggestions for adaptation of this segment with Latinas:

a) Consider inviting presenters from one or two local agencies to do this section. This will give your participants an opportunity to connect with other local resources.

b) Use visual aids, colorful photos or PowerPoint presentations.

c) Be creative in presenting the information—don’t just talk. Watch your participants to ensure they are engaged. Encourage their questions. Ask for feedback. Participants may nod their heads even if they don’t understand. In this situation politeness can be a barrier. As the facilitator, you need to assess whether the participants understand the concepts you are presenting, so be observant.

d) When discussing who gets AIDS, talk about how it can happen to anyone -- even Latinas who are only sexually intimate with their spouses, partners or boyfriends. This is an important point as studies indicate that Latinas believe that if they are intimate with only one man they are not at risk (Abel & Chamber, 2004). Dispel this myth but also discuss the implications this has on loss of confianza (trust) in the relationship. This is also an opportunity to talk about fidelity. See Appendix 2-4 for a list of articles that might give you further information.

g) When discussing how a person gets HIV, ask the group what they think first. Then discuss common rumors, myths and misunderstandings.
h) When discussing whether a mother can infect her unborn child with HIV, discuss the value of breastfeeding and what that means to the participants. Discuss alternative ways to establish the bond between mother and child, such as baby massages, holding, rocking, talking and singing.

i) Make sure to inform participants that the HIV antibody test can be done without having to give blood.

j) When discussing safer sex, address the predicament this presents to women who want to get pregnant. Offer some alternatives for such cases, such as having both parties tested.

k) Discuss religion and condoms. This is an important discussion for Latinas, many of whom may be Catholic. Acknowledge and respect their concerns. Discussing both sides of the argument allows for the participants to be open to protecting themselves.

l) Allow space for the women to discuss how they select relationships and how they get their needs met. Explore the self-talk that might lead a Latina to place the relationship above her own needs.

m) When discussing unsafe behaviors, be aware of the audience and of using language that can potentially shut down communication. For example, talking about anal sex might offend some participants. If this issue arises, explain that because different people may engage in different types of sexual activity, it’s important to mention them and discuss how to protect oneself in many situations.

VI. The Card Swap Game
[No suggested changes]

VII. Video

Video Alternatives
Mi Hermano, American Red Cross
(Appendix 2–5)

Visit the following website for a list of videos for the Latino population:

VIII. Homework
[No suggested changes]

IX. Evaluation

Suggested Activity

Form group of 3-4 participants to discuss and complete the evaluation sheet together; making sure there is at least one reader in each group.

Consider literacy levels when selecting a feedback process. If you think some participants may not read well, use an alternative method with the whole group.
X. Closure

Your group participants may want time to check in before the end of the session. You should check in and be prepared to address any concerns that may surface. Consider the following closing options:

Suggested Activities

Luz de Guía – Have the group sit in a circle. Give each participant a small candle. Light yours and pass the flame to each member of the circle. As the light is passed, each person can say one thing they liked or learned during the session.

Una Voz Unida - Use the United Voice activity provided in Appendix 1-7 and introduce a saying (dicho) from the list provided or from another source. Sample Dicho: Costal vacío no se para (Without knowledge it is more difficult to stand up for yourself.) Invite your participants to discuss what meaning that might have for them.

Select a poem or a song that is relevant to the content of this session. You may want to use some of the ones suggested for Session 1 and 2 or you might want to find different ones. Either strategy is acceptable as long as you preserve the original focus on ethnic and gender pride.

Consider inviting participants to bring and share poems or songs they feel are relevant to the SISTA program.
Appendix 2-I

PALABRA DE MUJER

Elba Rosario Sanchez

Todo eso que sabemos
que por anos y decendecia
llevamos clavado en nuestra memoria
del ayer manana
que incluye el hoy,
todo eso, lo quisieron machacar
como machacabamos
los frijoles de todos los dias.

Mudas nos quisieron desde ninas
encarcelandonos en un mundo de:
“No pienses. Asi mas Linda eres.”
Nunca nos dieron la palabra
diciendonos siempre:
“No hay que faltar al respeto.”

Nosotras escondimos todo lo prohibido
en los pliegues de nuestro silencio.
Como puas se hundio en nuestra garganta
y de las gotas de sangre broto la palabra
desafiando lo antes no aclarado.
Appendix 2-2

Yo Misma Fui Mi Ruta
Julia de Burgos

Yo quise ser como los hombres quisieron que yo fuese:
un intento de vida;
un juego al escondite con mi ser.
Pero yo estaba hecha de presentes,
y mis pies planos sobre la tierra promisora
no resistía caminar hacia atrás,
y seguían adelante, adelante,
burlando las cenizas para alcanzar el beso
de los senderos nuevos.

A cada paso adelantado en mi ruta hacia el frente
rasgaba mis espaldas el aleteo desesperado
de los troncos viejos.

Pero la rama estaba desprendida par siempre,
y a cada nevo azote la Mirada mía
se separaba más y más y más de los lejanos horizontes aprendidos;
y mi rostro iba tomando la expresión que le venía de adentro,
la expresión definida que asomaba un sentimiento
de liberación íntima;
un sentimiento que surgía
del equilibrio sostenido entre mi vida
y la verdad del beso de los senderos nuevos.

Ya definido mi rumbo en el presente,
me sentí brote de todos los suelos de la tierra,
de los suelos sin historia,
de los suelos sin porvenir;
del suelo siempre suelo sin orillas
de todos los hombres y de todas las épocas.

Yo fui toda en mí como fue en mi la vida

Yo quise ser como los hombres quisieron que yo fuese:
un intento de vida;
un juego al escondite con mi ser.
Pero yo estaba hecha de presentes;
Cuando ya los heraldos me anunciaban
En el regio desfile de los troncos viejos,
Se me torció el deseo de seguir a los hombres,
Y el homenaje se quedó esperándome.
Appendix 2-3

HIV/AIDS Data

For current national HIV/AIDS data for the United States, visit:

http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/index.htm
http://www.cdc.gov/spanish/enfermedades/vih-sida.htm
http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/spanish/default.htm
Appendix 2-4

Articles


Mi Hermano

This video presents a dramatization about a traditional Latino family dealing with a death due to AIDS. Victor, the oldest son, has died of AIDS, and his parents, siblings, and pregnant wife are struggling to accept that fact. Their reactions include denial, anger, and, with the help and support of a relative who is a medical doctor, acceptance.

The video stresses the need for communication within Latino families about sex and AIDS-related issues. It depicts the negative effects of lack of communication among family members, the need for family support and understanding when dealing with AIDS, the importance of dealing with taboo topics (such as AIDS, sex, and homosexual behavior), and the dangers of ignorance about AIDS and HIV. Information is provided about specific HIV transmission routes, and condoms are recommended.

The video depicts the problem of stigmatizing people with AIDS. Only minimal information is presented about casual contact, MSM (men having sex with men) relations is hinted at but not explicitly discussed. This video appeals to many traditional Latino family values to convey an AIDS prevention message, including the importance of family (familismo), the desire of the man to protect the family’s safety (machismo), and the mother’s role as pacifier and problem-solver (marianismo).

**Audience:** Latino teens and adults

**Year:** 1990

**Running Time:** 27 minutes

**Language(s):** English (subtitled) version; Spanish version

**Distributor:** American Red Cross

General Supply Division

7401 Lockport Place

Lorton, VA 22079

(800) 969-8890

Or, call local American Red Cross for information
**Rationale**

This session addresses the difficulty of resisting pressures from partners and refusing to engage in unsafe sex practices. Participants learn how to recognize partner pressure, make decisions about sex and deal with partners assertively.

**Goals**

[No suggested changes]

**Objectives**

[No suggested changes]

**General Considerations for Latinas**

**Assertiveness**

This session places great value on independence. It assumes that with an assertive communication style women will be better able to negotiate sexual practices with their partners. When working with Latinas, keep in mind that not all participants will embrace the concept of assertive communication as defined by SISTA. If a woman values collectivism, compliance with cultural norms and staying connected to her partner might be more important than asserting her own perspectives. If she values keeping the family unit intact at all cost, she may be willing to sacrifice her own independence. Some women may value dominating (i.e., winning) conversations and prefer to be aggressive. For others, the most important thing may be making sure their partner always appears to be in charge of the conversation. See page 15 for background on machismo and other cultural constructs.

It will be useful to supplement the discussion of the SISTA Assertiveness Model with some discussion about the effectiveness of assertive, non-assertive or aggressive communication styles in particular contexts or situations. Allow for differences of opinion. Help participants recognize their current communication patterns in challenging situations in order to determine how best to communicate in the future.

**Skill Mastery**

An important outcome of the SISTA program is for participants to develop mastery in negotiating sexual issues with their partners. Acknowledge that assertive communication is a learned skill rather than an innate ability. Let the participants know you understand that their values and upbringing could make assertive communication seem difficult. Becoming a more assertive communicator is a skill that requires practice and time.

Help participants experience some success with each newly acquired skill by offering praise for effort and small improvements. Encourage group members to be supportive toward one another and discourage put-downs and teasing. Suggest realistic opportunities for practice and ask them for further ideas. Encourage them to think about and use the skill outside the group, then bring their thoughts about it to the next session.

**Other Considerations**

By this session, you should have a lot of information about your participants that can help you prepare. Review the information you collected about participants in the pre-implementation process, the Personal Values Rating Sheets participants completed in Session 1. Think of your participants’ levels of acculturation and the experiences they have
shared during Sessions 1 and 2. This information will help you facilitate a rich discussion of assertiveness skills, taking into account the cultural and contextual factors that affect your participants’ decision-making. If you expand the discussion of the Assertiveness Model to include issues related to cultural values, this information may take more time to process.

**Materials Needed**

The SISTA participant materials include opening and closing poems that speak to African American women. We have included suggestions of alternative poems and songs, as well as activities with similar themes for Latinas in Appendix 2 at the end of this chapter.

Select an opening poem or song and one for closing, and make copies to hand out.

Select alternative activities for each segment and prepare any additional materials described (e.g., obtain the video, *Los Inquilinos*).
I. Opening Poem

The purpose of the poem is to set the tone for the session. The most important thing to keep in mind when selecting a poem is to preserve the intent of the poems in the original SISTA, which for this session is to help women identify their inner feelings and giving expression to them rather than silencing them.

Suggested Poems

Extracto, Audre Lordde
(Appendix 3–1)
Reglas del Juego Para Los Hombres Que Quieran Amar a Mujeres Mujeres, Gioconda Belli
(Appendix 3–2)

II. Session 3 Review

[No suggested changes]

III. What is the Difference Between Assertiveness and Aggression?

As an alternative to using the Being Assertive, Not Aggressive or Non-Assertive handout, it may be helpful to demonstrate the three styles or use a video that shows these styles of communicating. The video you choose should help illustrate the styles and provide positive models for participants to follow.

IV. Handling Sticky Situations

Review the Vignettes handout for this segment and determine how well the situations will work for your participants. Vignettes A and C (Breaking Up With A Nice Guy and He’s Just A Horn Dog) can be used in their original versions. For Vignette B (Braids), use the culturally adapted version (Permanent Hair Color!) in Appendix 3–5 or create new ones that are more relevant to your group. It might also be helpful to have the participants suggest situations they (or people they know) have faced.

V. Learning the SISTAS Assertiveness Model

The model may be relevant for Latinas whose values are not at odds with the concepts of independence and assertiveness as defined by SISTA. Appendix 3.6 includes a Spanish version of the SISTAS Assertiveness Model, which has some cultural adaptations.
For participants who might find it difficult to embrace independence and assertiveness, one approach is to focus on the effectiveness of the communication strategy and on preserving the values that are most important to them. Consider asking the group to suggest ways to avoid unprotected sex without using directly assertive communication. For example, using silent dissent to show displeasure or disagreement, or making an excuse to get out of the situation or buy time to consider options.

**VI. Homework**

a) There are two assignments for Session 3 homework.

   i. The *Here Comes Trouble* exercise could be effective with Latinas.

   **Suggested Activity**

   Use an example to explain how to complete the exercise.

   ii. The second assignment is to initiate a conversation about safer sex with a friend or partner.

   **Suggested Activity**

   If there is time, have participants role play assertive communication in pairs or small groups to prepare for this assignment.

   • Think about your personal values rating sheet from Session 1. Does [this step] support or contrast with your values? How?

   • Would you feel confident in taking [this step]?

   • What could be potential challenges in taking [this step]?

   • How have you handled those challenges?

   • Do you have any recommendations to accomplish [this step] that could be useful to the group?
VII. Evaluation

Consider literacy levels when selecting a feedback process. If you think some participants may not read English well, use an alternative method with the whole group.

Suggested Activity

Create a pictorial response sheet that has faces corresponding to a rating scale for each statement on the evaluation sheet. (Include both English and Spanish responses.) For example:

😊 = Very poor/Not at all
😊 = Poor
😊 = Not bad
😊 = Good
😊 = Very good/Excellent

Tell the group you will read them several statements. After each one, you’ll ask them to circle the rating they feel today’s session should get for that statement. Read the ratings to the group one at a time. After each one, pause for participants to mark their responses on the corresponding scale.

Closure

Suggested Poem

*Mujer Mujer,* Irene López Aparicio
(Appendix 3–7—in English and Spanish versions)

Luz de Guía—
Have the group sit in a circle. Give each participant a small candle. Light yours and pass the flame to each member of the circle. As the light is passed, each person can say one thing they liked or learned during the session.

Una Voz Unida—
Use the United Voice activity provided in Appendix 1.7 and introduce a saying (*dicho*) from the list provided or from another source.

Sample *Dicho:* *Costal vacío no se para*
(Without knowledge it is more difficult to stand up for yourself.)
Invite your participants to discuss what meaning that might have for them.

Consider inviting participants to bring and share poems or songs they feel are relevant to the SISTA program.
Appendix 3-1

EXTRACTO

Audre Lorde

Podemos aprender a laborar y hablar cuando tenemos miedo del mismo modo que hemos aprendido a laborar y hablar cuando estamos cansadas.

Hemos sido socializadas para respetar al miedo mas que a nuestra propia necesidad de tener lenguaje y significado y mientras esperamos silentes por ese lujo último de ser intrépidas el peso del silencio nos sofocará.

Translated and Adapted by Marizaida Sánchez-Cesáreo
Appendix 3-2

REGLAS DEL JUEGO PARA LOS HOMBRES QUE QUIERAN AMAR A MUJERES MUJERES

Gioconda Belli

I
El hombre que me ame
debía saber descerrar las cortinas de la piel,
encontrar la profundidad de mis ojos
y conocer lo que anida en mí,
la golondrina transparente de la ternura.

II
El hombre que me ame
no querría poseerme como una mercancía,
ni exhibirme como un trofeo de caza,
sabría estar a mi lado
con el mismo amor
con que yo estaré al lado suyo.

III
El amor del hombre que me ame
será fuerte como los árboles de ceibo,
protector y seguro como ellos,
limpio como una mañana de diciembre.

IV
El hombre que me ame
no dudará de mi sonrisa
ni temerá la abundancia de mi pelo,
respetará la tristeza, el silencio
y con caricias tocará mi vientre como guitarra
para que brote música y alegría
desde el fondo de mi cuerpo.

V
El hombre que me ame
podrá encontrar en mí
la hamaca donde descansar
el pesado fardo de sus preocupaciones,
la amiga con quien compartir sus íntimos secre-
tos,
el lago donde flotar
sin miedo de que el ancla del compromiso
le impida volar cuando se le ocurra ser pájaro.

VI
El hombre que me ame
hará poesía con su vida,
construyendo cada día
con la Mirada puesta en el futuro.

VII
Por sobre todas las cosas,
el hombre que me ame
debería amar al pueblo
no como una abstracta palabra
sacada de la manga,
sino como algo real, concreto,
ante quien rendir homenaje con acciones
y dar la vida si es necesario.

VIII
El hombre que me ame
reconocerá mi rostro en la trinchera
rodilla en tierra me amará
mientras los dos disparamos juntos
contra el enemigo.

IX
El amor de mi hombre
no conocerá el miedo a la entrega,
ni temerá descubrirse ante la magia del enam-
oramiento
en una plaza llena de multitudes.
Podrá gritar-te quiero-
o hacer rótulos en lo alto de los edificios
reclamando su derecho a sentir
el más hermoso y humano de los sentimientos.

X
El amor del mi hombre
no le huirá a las cocinas,
ni a los pañales del hijo,
será como un viento fresco
llevándose entre nubes de sueños y de pasado,
las debilidades que, por siglos, nos mantuvieron
separados
como seres de distinta estatura.

XI
El amor de mi hombre
no querrá rotularme y etiquetarme,
me dará aire, espacio,
alimento para crecer y ser mejor,
como un Revolución
que hace de cada día
el comienzo de una nueva Victoria.
**Appendix 3-3**

**Video: Los Inquilinos**

Arlington, VA-based Moller Communications has completed two Hispanic HIV/AIDS Awareness videos for the American Red Cross to be used in Hispanic outreach training in the U.S. and Puerto Rico—Los Inquilinos (The Renters) and the Hispanic Instructor HIV/AIDS Education and Prevention Course. Bilingual producer Barbara Moller, using her company’s knowledge of Hispanic culture and expertise in cross-cultural communications to effectively reach the broadest Hispanic demographic, served as producer, director and scriptwriter for these instructional programs. Dr. Jose Munoz, PhD, Curriculum and Instructional Design, on the staff of Moller Communications, provided script consultation. The Instructors video demonstrates how to facilitate community groups and lead discussions on difficult topics such as HIV/AIDS. Los Inquilinos was shot in three DC locations and post-production work for both videos was completed at the American Red Cross Production Facility. A sample of Los Inquilinos can be viewed on Moller’s website at www.mollercommunications.com.

This video takes place in an apartment complex where different living situations and different households demonstrate the aggressive, assertive, and non-assertive communication styles. Los Inquilinos is especially valuable since it includes a scene showing a young lady using assertive communication to tell an attractive man that she is not interested in having sex.

**Suggested Activity:**

Preview the video before using it in the session. For women who are recent immigrants, women who have not fully acculturated and/or women who do not understand the concepts of communication styles, this video will help reinforce the importance of assertive communication specifically for sexual negotiation. You can use the video in its entirety or choose particular segments.

Discussion may be held after each segment or after the whole video has been watched. Some questions can guide your video discussion are:

- What did you think of the video?
- What examples did you see of Aggressive communication? Non-Assertive communication? Assertive communication? (Allow time for responses after each question.)
- What are some benefits of using assertive communication?
- What did you think of the segment where the young lady used assertive communication to insist that she was not interested in having sex?
- Do you think you could be assertive in the same situation? In other situations?
- What are some challenges to assertive communication?

Finish the discussion by reviewing the key concepts of the communication styles and by emphasizing how assertive communication is a skill that needs to be practiced and may take time to master.
Vignette B: Permanent Hair Color!

After wanting to change your hair color for quite some time, you finally mustered the courage to make an appointment with the best hair stylist in your community. Once the cut and color are done, however, the reflection in the mirror looks like a clown. Not only did the stylist give you bright orange highlights, she also cut your hair too short! You hate your new hairdo and feel outraged when she charges you $70.00 for her “beautiful job.”

What would you say in this situation?
Appendix 3-5

VIÑETAS

Viñeta A: ¿Le Rompes el Corazón?
Estas pasando mucho tiempo con un nuevo amigo. Te estas comenzando a preocupar por tu amistad por que el te ve con interés romántico pero a ti no te interesa tener una relación romántica con el. Realmente te agrada esta persona y no quisieras lastimarla pero no quieres que tenga una idea equivocada de lo que existe podría existir entre ustedes.
¿Qué dirías en esta situación?

Viñeta B: ¡Tinte Permanente!
Luego de pensararlo mucho decides teñirte el pelo y haces una cita con una estilista que es conocida como la mejor estilista de tu comunidad. Después de que ella termina su trabajo, te miras en el espejo y encuentras que no solo el color es un rojo fuerte pero también que te corto el pelo mucho. No te gusta tu nuevo estilo porque sientes que parece un payaso y para colmo, la estilista te dice que le debes $70.00 por su “trabajo.”
¿Qué dirías en esta situación?

Viñeta C: ¡El Mujeriego!
Siempre te ha gustado Antonio. Pero sabes que él se acuesta con cada muchacha del vecindario. Cuando el te invita a salir tu aceptas. Después de la cita tu estas bastante segura que no estas preparada para tener relaciones sexuales con el PERO...tienes miedo de que si le dices que NO van a tener sexo él no te vuelva a llamar para salir otra vez.
¿Qué dirías en esta situación?

Translated and Adapted by Marilyn Ricker Kases.
Appendix 3.6

Modelo de la Asertividad SISTAS

S  Tengo que pensar en mi. Porque SOY única e importante. Pienso en mis valores personales, mi cultura, mis principios, y mi orgullo de ser una mujer Latina. [Orgullo de Ser Latina]

I  Yo utilizó la INFORMACIÓN que tengo sobre el VIH/SIDA, las drogas, las relaciones sexuales y mis factores de riesgo. Esta INFORMACIÓN me ayuda a ejercer decisiones que me ayudarán a mantenerme saludable. [Educación sobre el VIH/SIDA]

S  Necesito pensar en la SITUACIÓN en la que estoy. Tengo que analizar la SITUACIÓN para poder enfrentar problemas con certeza y de forma positiva. En esta manera podré evitar situaciones que me pongan en riesgo. [Educación sobre el VIH/SIDA]

T  Tengo confianza en sí misma para poder tener una comunicación abierta con mi pareja. Necesito hablar sobre el TEMA del PROBLEMA, opciones disponibles, y las consecuencias. [Comunicación Sexual]

A  Necesito poder comunicarme con mi pareja en una manera ASERTIVA sobre mis decisiones y lo que yo quiero hacer. Tengo que mantener mis decisiones con certeza de que enfrenté la situación en una manera positiva y que respeta mis valores personales. [Negociar temas Sexuales]

S  Yo puedo SUGERIR alternativas a mi pareja. Tener relaciones sexuales seguras me mantiene saludable y el rechazar una situación o actividad no significa que estoy rechazando a mi pareja. [Negociar temas Sexuales]
Appendix 3-7

Mujer Mujer (English with Spanish)

Irene Lopez Aparicio

Mujer,
Branch of an ancient tree,
Cactus Flower,
Tender
Niña
Reaping sugar cane wisdom
Abuelita’s gifts
Consejos
Cuentos
Remedies
Bendiciones
Strength for tomorrow, Mujer,
Warrior woman
Purity
Enriching civilization’s tapestry
With threads
Time cannot break
Brilliant blend of fiber
Weaving lasting designs, Mujer,
Ready smile
Deepening dimples on your face
Your children thrived
In spite of harshness
Seeing themselves illuminated
In your eyes, Mujer,
Revolutionary woman
Prayed in cathedrals
At death beds
With love, respect
Learned to spew out curses
Y Huelga! Huelga!
Walking-marching-singing
Determined to eliminate
Fifteen-hour day
Short-handled hoe
Father, brother’s foe
Unfair wages, nowhere to go
Hermanas surviving
Workplace
By degrees
Bachelor’s, master’s, PhD’s
Persistent Woman,
Learning politics
Step By Step
Patience of pyramid builders
In her veins
Centuries of working, toiling
Struggle, pain. Mujeres will stand and conquer,
For purity of childhood
To prevail
Not adults in little bodies
Tending babies, washing clothes
Picking grapes
Hoeing cotton rows
No choice for little league or summer camp
Until mujer’s focused energy
Her penetrating look
Piercing as the sun
Demanded justice
Now
Her children laugh and play, Mujer, rose of varied
hues,
Blossoming
Beyond old barriers
Your genie’s pride
Visionary woman
Obstacle victor
Mujer, Mujer
Receive your pueblo’s
Embrace.
Mujer Mujer (Spanish)

Irene Lopez Aparicio

Mujer,
Rama de árbol anciano
Flor de nopal
Tierna
Niña
Cosechando sabiduría dulce como caña de azúcar
Regalitos de abuelita
Consejos
Cuentos
Remedios
Bendiciones
Fuerza para mañana. Mujer,
Guerrera
Pura
Enriqueciendo civilizaciones tejidas con hilos que el tiempo no quiebra
Brillante mezcla de fibra
tejiendo diseños duraderos. Mujer,
Sonrisa lista
alegrando tu cara
Tus hijos sanos
a pesar de desaires
viéndose iluminados en tus ojos. Mujer,
Mujer revolucionaria
orando en catedrales
camas de muerte
con amor y respeto
Aprendió a maldecir,
Huelga! Huelga!
Caminando-marchando-cantando
determinada a eliminar
el horario de 15 horas
de trabajo
Azadón corto
enemigo de padres y hermanos
Sueldos injustos, sin salida hermanas sobrellevando el empleo a grados preparatoria, colegio y universidad.
Mujer persistente aprendiendo la política paso a paso

Paciencia de constructor de pirámides. En sus venas siglos de trabajo, sacrificio y dolor.
Mujeres luchando por ganar. Por la pureza de la niñez estableciendo gozo para los niños
Atendiendo bebes. Lavando ropa
Trabajando en la labor. Sin oportunidad de jugar en las pequeñas ligas ni disfrutar la alegría del verano
Hasta que la mujer concentró su energía Su vista penetrante como el sol
demando justicia
Hoy sus niños llenos de risa juegan
Mujer, rosa de varios colores
floreciendo mas allá de barreras
Viejas el orgullo de tu gente
Mujer visionaria tumbando obstáculos
Mujer, mujer recibe agradecimiento y un abrazo de tu pueblo.
Rationale

This session focuses on condom use to reduce risk of HIV infection. It includes how to obtain and use condoms, and practice of assertive communication in negotiating safer sex.

Goals

[No suggested changes]

Objectives

[No suggested changes]

General Considerations for Latinas

When adapting this session for Latinas, expect to encounter a variety of attitudes and behaviors surrounding sex, condom use and gender roles. Explicit conversations about sexual organs and sexual acts may cause embarrassment or extreme discomfort for some participants. Cultural and religious beliefs may interfere with participants’ engagement in the activities. For example, participants who are observant Catholics may say that condoms are a form of birth control and as such are prohibited.

Facilitators must be comfortable discussing sexual practices and answering questions about sex. The facilitator also must be comfortable touching condoms, lubricant, and penile and vaginal models. It is important to set an example with a positive attitude and confident demonstrations. This may be the first time some of your participants are talking explicitly about sex or touching condoms and anatomical models.

This session might be the first time that the women can openly ask questions about sexual health, so be prepared to field inquiries regarding other women’s health issues. Questions might include:

- What are some symptoms of yeast infections (or other sexually transmitted infections)?
- What are some of the female anatomical parts?
- Why do women menstruate? Is it safe to have sex during this time?

Depending on what is asked, extra time may be needed to answer questions so participants feel comfortable enough to continue with the session and participate enthusiastically. Also, be aware of and acknowledge the limits of your knowledge when offering health related advice outside of HIV prevention to avoid giving incorrect information or advice.

Materials Needed

The SISTA participant materials include opening and closing poems that speak to African American women. We have included suggestions of alternative poems and songs, as well as activities with similar themes for Latinas in Appendix 4 at the end of this chapter.

- Select an opening poem or song and one for closing, and make copies to hand out
- Select alternative activities for each segment and prepare any additional materials described
- Bring paper towels for participants to wipe lubricant off their hands after activity

IV. Condom Exploration
I. Opening Poem

The purpose of the poem is to set the tone for the session. The most important thing to keep in mind when selecting a poem is to preserve the intent of the poems in the original SISTA program, which for this session is to help women feel pride and confidence in their sexuality.

Suggested Poems

- Recorriéndote, Gioconda Belli (Appendix 4–1)
- Peceras de Amor, Gioconda Belli (Appendix 4–2)

II. Session 4 Review

[No suggested changes]

III. Discussion: Why People Don’t Use Condoms

Overall, this section is relevant for Latinas as written. It may be helpful, however, to include more examples that are culturally relevant. For example:

**Obstacle:** Latinas do not talk about condom usage with their partners.

**Obstacle:** Latinos are responsible for sexual issues such as condom usage.

IV. Condom Exploration

Introduce this activity as an opportunity for the women to touch and have fun with condoms. This might be the first time some participants are actually opening a condom for themselves. Since they are SISTAS (amigas, comadres, carnalas, compañeras), this should be an opportunity to explore in a safe environment and without judgment. Encourage the women to play with the condoms – stretch them, blow them up, etc.

V. Condom Card Line-Up

This section is relevant for Latinas as written and no adaptations are needed. The notes below add some detail for discussion of each step in the Condom Line-Up.

**Additional notes for Condom Line-Up:**

- **Step 1 – Talk to your partner**
  Remind participants that they discussed the importance of assertive communication with partners in the last SISTA session. Using a condom should be discussed well in advance of having sex, and not in the heat of the moment. Participants should not assume their partners know what they are thinking.

- **Step 2 – Buy Condoms**
  Acknowledge that it may be difficult to go to a store, pharmacy or local bodega to buy condoms. Latinas might find this especially daunting because they may assume that the people are judging them. Provide sources in their local community where they can get condoms free of charge, such as health departments and community-based organizations. Also, remind participants to check the expiration date on the package.

- **Step 4 – Open package carefully**
  Visually inspect the condom package to make sure that there are no holes or tears. Carefully open the package. Avoid using your mouth or long fingernails that could damage the condom.
• **Step 5 - Add lubricant to condom**
Reinforce that only water-based lubricants should be used. Oil-based lubricants such as baby oil or lotions degrade latex condoms. A way to help them remember is to blow up a condom, tie it off and rub some Vaseline on it. It will pop after about 15 minutes.

• **Step 14 – Throw the used condom away**
Tell them condoms should be thrown away in the trash and not in the toilet.

**VI. Condom Demonstration**

It is very important for the facilitator to set the tone for this activity. Remind the women of the Ground Rules that they set up together. Acknowledge that they may feel a little embarrassed or uncomfortable. Let the women know that it is important to learn how to put on a condom so they can be in control of their bodies and to help them effectively negotiate safer sex.

NOTE: This section talks about the use of spermicide. Although spermicide is effective in killing sperm and preventing pregnancy, it can cause irritation and inflammation to some women, which could provide an entry way for HIV and other STIs. Centers for Disease Control discourages the use of non-oxyynol-9 spermicide.

**VII. “Safe Veggies” (or, Practicing with Cucumbers)**

Let the women know that they are in a safe environment and that it is okay to make mistakes. If true, tell the women that the first time you tried this it was difficult or embarrassing for you. Encourage the women to ask questions. Assure them that by practicing together, each of them will learn how to put on a condom correctly by the end of the session.

**VIII. Negotiating Safer Sex: Role Play**

This section seems appropriate for Latinas, though you may want to change the names of the characters in the scenarios. For example, in scenario A, you can use Martha and Juan.

**IX. Peer Norms**

Initiate a discussion, emphasizing the following points:

• As Latinas, there are factors that may influence us not to use condoms, including religion. However, more and more Latinas are using condoms.

• Most men say that they would use a condom if asked to.

Summarize by saying that sexuality is a complex and multi-faceted part of the female experience. Sexually transmitted disease and unintended pregnancies complicate the issue even more. Being able to communicate with our partners about condoms and correctly use them is a protective health behavior that helps women stay strong and healthy.

**X. Homework**

Some Latinas might feel apprehensive about buying condoms. Let the women know that they can go outside of their neighborhood to
minimize embarrassment or discomfort. They can also obtain them from clinics and health departments where they are distributed free of charge.

For the second assignment, which is to ask their partner to use a condom when having sex, let the women know that it’s okay to not complete this assignment if their personal situation is unsafe.

**XI. Evaluation**

Consider literacy levels when selecting a feedback process. If you think some participants may not read well, use an alternative method with the whole group.

**Suggested Activity**

Form group of 3-4 participants to discuss and complete the evaluation sheet together, making sure there is at least one reader in each group.

**XII. Closure**

**Suggested Poems**

*Amor de Frutas*, Gioconda Belli  
(Appendix 4–3)  
*Eros es el Agua*, Gioconda Belli  
(Appendix 4–4)  
*Pequeñas Lecciones de Erotismo*, Gioconda Belli  
(Appendix 4–5)

**Suggested Activities**

**Una Voz Unida**—

Use the United Voice activity provided in Appendix 1.7 and introduce a saying (dicho) from the list provided or from another source.

Sample *Dicho: Costal vacío no se para*  
(Without knowledge it is more difficult to stand up for yourself.)  
Invite your participants to discuss what meaning that might have for them.

Consider inviting participants to bring and share poems or songs they feel are relevant to the SISTA program.
RECORRIÉNDOTE

Gioconda Belli

Quiero morder tu carne,
salada y fuerte,
empezar por tus brazos hermosos
como ramas de ceibo,
seguir por ese pecho con el que sueñan mis
sueños
ese pecho-cueva donde se esconde mi cabeza
hurgando la ternura,
ese pecho que suena a tambores y vida continu-
ada.
Quedarme allí un rato largo
enredando mis manos
en ese bosquecito de arbustos que te crece
suave y negro bajo mi piel desnuda
seguir después hacia tu ombligo
hacia ese centro donde te empieza el cosquilleo,
irte besando, mordiendo,
hasta llegar allí
a ese lugarcito
-apretado y secreto-
que se alegra ante mi presencia
que se adelanta a recibirme
y viene a mí
en toda su dureza de macho enardecido.
Bajar luego a tus piernas
firme como tus convicciones guerrilleras,
esas piernas donde tu estatura se asienta
con las que vienes a mí
con las que me sostienes,
las que enredas en la noche entre las mías
blendas y femeninas.
Besar tus pies, amor,
que tanto tienen aun que recorrer sin mí
y volver a escalarte
hasta apretar tu boca con la mía,
hasta llenarme toda de tu saliva y tu aliento
hasta que entres en mí
con la fuerza de la marea
y me invadas con tu ir y venir
de mar furioso
y quedemos los dos tendidos y sudados
en la arena de las sábanas.
PECERAS DE AMOR

Gioconda Belli

Nuestros cuerpos de peces
se deslizan uno al lado del otro.
Tu piel acuática nada en el sueño
junto a la mía
y brillan tus escamas en la luz lunar
filtrándose por las rendijas.
Seres translúcidos flotamos
confinados al agua de nuestros alientos confundidos.
Aletas de piernas y brazos se rozan en la madrugada
en el oxígeno y el calor
que sube de las blancas algas
con que nos protegemos del frío.
En algún momento de la corriente
nos encontramos
lúcidos peces se acercan a los ojos abiertos
peces sinuosos reconociéndose las branquias agitadas.
Muerdo el anzuelo de tu boca
y poco después despierto
pierdo la aleta dorsal
las extremidades de sirena.
AMOR DE FRUTAS

Gioconda Belli

Déjame que esparza
manzanas en tu sexo
néctares de mango
carne de fresas;
Tu cuerpo son todas las frutas.
Te abrazo y corren las mandarinas;
te beso y todas las uvas sueltan
el vino oculto de su corazón
sobre mi boca.
Mi lengua siente en tus brazos
el zumo dulce de las naranjas
y en tus piernas el promepranate
esconde sus semillas incitantes.
Déjame que coseche los frutos de agua
que sudan en tus poros:
Mi hombre de limones y duraznos,
dame a beber fuentes de melocotones y bananos
racimos de cerezas.
Tu cuerpo es el paraíso perdido
del que nunca jamás ningún Dios
podrá expulsarme.
Appendix 4-4

EROS ES EL AGUA

Gioconda Belli

Entre tus piernas
el mar me muestra extraños arrecifes
rocas erguidas corales altaneros
contra mi gruta de caracolas concha nácar
tu molusco de sal persigue la corriente
el agua corta me inventa aletas
mar de la noche con lunas sumergidas
tu oleaje brusco de pulpo enardecido
acelera mis branquias los latidos de esponja
los caballos minúsculos flotando entre gemidos
enredados en largos pistilos de medusa.
Amor entre delfines
dando saltos te lanzas sobre mi flanco leve
te recibo sin ruido te miro entre burbujas
tu risa cerco con mi boca espuma
ligereza del agua oxígeno de tu vegetación de
clorofila
la corona de luna abre espacio al océano
De océano los ojos plateados
fluye larga mirada final
y nos alzamos desde el cuerpo acuático
somos carne otra vez
una mujer y un hombre
entre las rocas.
**Appendix 4-5**

**PEQUEÑAS LECCIONES DE EROTISMO**

*Gioconda Belli*

I
Recorrer un cuerpo en su extensión de vela
es dar la vuelta al mundo
Atravesar sin brújula la rosa de los vientos
islas golfo penínsulas diques de aguas embravecidas
no es tarea fácil -si placentera-
No creas hacerlo en un día o noche
de sábanas explayadas.
Hay secretos en los poros para llenar muchas lunas

II
El cuerpo es carta astral en lenguaje cifrado.
Encuentras un astro y quizá deberás empezar
a corregir el rumbo cuando nube huracán
o aullido profundo
no pongan estremecimientos.
Cuenco de la mano que no sospechaste

III
Repasa muchas veces una extensión
Encuentra el lago de los nenúfares
Acaricia con tu ancla el centro del lirio
Sumérgete ahógate distiéndete
No te niegues el olor la sal el azúcar
Los vientos profundos
cúmulos nimbus de los pulmones
niebla en el cerebro
temblor de las piernas
maremoto adormecido de los besos

IV
Instálate en el humus sin miedo
al desgaste sin prisa
No quieras alcanzar la cima

Retrasa la puerta del paraíso
Acuna tu ángel caído
revuélvele la espesa cabellera
cor la espada de fuego usurpada
Muerde la manzana

V
Huele
Duele
Intercambia miradas saliva impregnante
Da vueltas imprime sollozos piel que se escurre
Pie hallazgo al final de la pierna
Persíguelo busca secreto del paso forma del talón
Arco del andar bahías formando arqueado caminar
Gústalos

VI
Escucha caracola del oído
como gime la humedad
Lóbulo que se acerca al labio sonido de la respiración
Poros que se alzan formando diminutas montañas
Sensación estremecida de piel insurrecta al tacto
Suave puente nuca descieide al mar pecho
Marea del corazón susúrrale
Encuentra la gruta del agua

VII
Traspasa la tierra del fuego la buena esperanza
Navega loco en la juntura de los océanos
Cruza las algas ármate de corales ulula gime
Emerge con la rama de olivo
Llora socavando ternuras ocultas
Desnuda miradas de asombro
Despeña el sextante desde lo alto de la pestaña
Arquea las cejas abre ventanas de la nariz

VIII
Aspira suspira
Muérete un poco
Dulce lentamente muérete
Agoniza contra la pupila extiende el goce
Dobla el mástil hincha las velas
Navega dobla hacia Venus
estrella de la mañana
-el mar como un vasto cristal azogado-
Duérmete náufrago.
Rationale

In this session, the group learns ways of coping with safer sex while under the influence of alcohol and drugs, coping with rejection, and coping with negative responses from partners.

Goals

[No suggested changes]

Objectives

[No suggested changes]

General Considerations for Latinas

Emotional Distress

SISTA sessions may be the only outlet for these women to openly discuss their experiences, hardships and struggles. Latinas may be disinclined to seek the counsel of a psychiatrist or psychologist as this may be perceived as an indication of problems in their family unit and/or undermine their efforts to maintain outward appearances. Facilitators must be prepared to handle the emotional distress that may result as these women finally share their feelings and experiences.

The immigration status of participants may be important because fear of deportation may lead some women to tolerate living conditions that are detrimental to their emotional and physical well-being. Facilitators should mention to participants that there are confidential mental health, legal and other resources and services available to them, regardless of immigration status. Facilitators might include some of these resources in a list of referral sources for participants.

Alcohol and Drug Use

Alcohol consumption may be common in Latin cultures as part of celebrations, funerals and other gatherings. In many Latin American countries, there is no age at which drinking is illegal, so teenagers and young adults may consume alcohol without attracting special notice. Alcohol use may be more acceptable in men than in women.

Although typically, less acculturated Latinas have a low incidence of alcohol or drug use, some use may occur for two reasons: 1) to fit in with more acculturated peers and/or 2) to cope with feelings of loneliness or depression due to homesickness.

Materials Needed

The SISTA participant materials include opening and closing poems that speak to African American women. We have included suggestions of alternative poems and songs, as well as activities with similar themes for Latinas in Appendix 5 at the end of this chapter.

- Select an opening poem or song and one for closing, and make copies to hand out
- Select alternative activities for each segment and prepare any additional materials described
**I. Opening Poem**

The purpose of the poem is to set the tone for the session. The most important thing to keep in mind when selecting a poem is to preserve the intent of the poems in the original SISTA, which for this session is the importance of is to help women believe they can overcome challenges and adversity in their lives.

**Suggested Poem**

*Elena, Pat Mora*

(Appendix 5–1)

**II. Session 4 Review**

Make sure that the women do not feel penalized if they did not complete any part of the homework. If it seems that few women are ready to talk to their partners about protection, discuss the barriers and ways to handle them. Consider having participants role play with one another to give them further practice.

**III. Reviewing HIV Protection, Assertion and Behavioral Self-Management**

[No suggested changes]

**IV. What is Coping?**

Instead of the ‘huge scary monster’ example in part b, use the scenario of a masked man entering the room with a gun or a knife. This realistic threat may be more effective at drawing responses than an imaginary situation.

When reviewing The Alcohol Effects handout, discuss alcohol tolerance. Explain that body weight, an empty stomach and other factors affect the body's ability to process alcohol, and that the same number of drinks can affect people differently.

**V. Coping with Alcohol During Sex**

Since this is the last of the five sessions, we hope that some sisterhood and camaraderie has been established, allowing the women to discuss their personal alcohol and drug use. If you think participants may be self-conscious because of previous or current alcohol and drug use, consider changing the questions to third person:

1) Do you know someone who acts differently when they are drunk or high?

2) What do they do?

3) How does being drunk or high affect that person’s ability to make decisions?

The scenarios provided in this section are relevant to Latinas; however, we have included two additional scenarios in Appendix 5-2.

**VI. The Beginning and The End**

Since this is the last session, make sure to praise the women for their attendance and participation. Remind them they have learned new information and skills which will help them stay healthy.

Make sure to ask the women’s permission to mail their reminder letters to their homes. In some migrant populations, women might not
be at the same address when the letters are

to be sent, so make sure to get contact infor-
mation for someone who will know how to
reach those participants, and follow-up with a
phone call before mailing the letter.

**VII. Evaluation**

Consider literacy levels when selecting a feed-
back process. If you think some participants
may not read well, use an alternative method
with the whole group.

**Suggested Activity**

Use the questions on the evaluation
sheet to conduct a discussion of this
session with the whole group. Then ask
for feedback on the entire five sessions,
including:

- The most valuable things they learned
- Two things they will do differently as a
  result of what they learned
- Changes they would suggest to make
  the course better

Thank them for their feedback and
suggestions.

**VIII. Closure**

**Suggested Poems**

*Amar Tu Vida*, Gicaconda Belli
(Appendix 5–3

*We Would Like You to Know*, Ana Castilo
(Appendix 5–4)

*Una Voz Unida—*
Use the United Voice activity provided
in Appendix 1.7 and introduce a saying
(*dicho*) from the list provided or from
another source.

Sample *Dicho*: *Costal vacío no se para*
(Without knowledge it is more difficult
to stand up for yourself.)

Invite your participants to discuss what
meaning that might have for them.

Consider inviting participants to bring
and share poems or songs they feel are
relevant to the SISTA program.
ELENA

Pat Mora

My Spanish isn’t good enough.
I remember how I’d smile
listening to my little ones,
understanding every word they’d say,
their jokes, their songs, their plots,
Vamos a pedirle dulces a mamá. Vamos.

But that was in Mexico.
Now my children go to American high schools.
They speak English. At night they sit around
the kitchen table, laugh with one another.
I stand by the stove, feel dumb, alone.
I bought a book to learn English.
My husband frowned, drank beer.
My oldest said, “Mamá, he doesn’t want you
to be smarter than he is.” I’m forty, embarrassed
mispronouncing words,
embarrassed at the laughter of my children,
the grocer, the mailman. Sometimes I take
my English book and lock myself in the bath-
room,
say the thick words softly,
for if I stop trying, I will be deaf
when my children need my help.
Appendix 5-2

Scenarios

Magdalena’s Dilemma

Magdalena is a recent immigrant from Mexico who came to the United States to help her mother and siblings back in Cuernavaca by finding work and sending money. Lately, Magdalena has been feeling homesick and sad. In order to ease her loneliness she has begun frequenting clubs and bars. She meets Eduardo, a nice, handsome Latin man. Eduardo offers her an invitation to his home, which she happily accepts. At Eduardo’s they start kissing and touching. Eduardo wants to have sex but Magdalena refuses because she does not know him all that well. He gets a little angry but finally says that it’s okay. They go out two more times, eventually finding themselves back at Eduardo’s place, where Magdalena finally consents to have sex. She’s not sure where her relationship with Eduardo is going but she’s in desperate need of companionship. One week has passed and Eduardo has not called Magdalena.

Questions:

1. Do you think Magdalena is at risk of getting infected with HIV?
2. What are the possible consequences of this situation?
3. How could Magdalena cope with this situation?
4. Would you do the same in this situation? If not, what would you do differently?

Trying to fit in: Carmen

Carmen likes to spend time with her friends dancing and having a good time without alcohol or drug consumption. Pablo is a fine, tall and dark papi who goes out with many girls and Carmen is so excited when he finally asks her out. They go to a party and there’s alcohol and drugs everywhere. Carmen does not usually drink and she has never smoked a joint or tried anything else. Pablo offers Carmen a vodka and cranberry juice drink and she accepts. After several drinks Pablo also hands her a joint. She wants to fit in and wants Pablo to ask her out again so she accepts. Carmen starts feeling very dizzy and they go to another room. Pablo starts unbuttoning Carmen’s shirt and kissing her all over. Carmen does not stop him. They have sex and she passes out. The next morning she is a little confused about what exactly happened. Pablo has already left the party and she is left stranded, trying to get home.

Questions:

1. Do you think Carmen is at risk for HIV infection?
2. What are the possible consequences of this situation?
3. How could Carmen cope with this situation?
4. Would you do the same in this situation? If not, what would you do differently?
AMAR TU VIDA
Gioconda Belli

Amar tu vida.
Irla haciendo como rompe-cabezas.
Conjurar el futuro.
Construir la esperanza.
Aunque a veces te sintás marchita, cerrada, envuelta en noche
Amarga, punzante tu centro, sabés que siempre habrá sol para
Revivirte, zarandearte, para que levantés la cabeza y vulvas a
sonreír; a estar, con esa fuerza vital que te asemeja a malinche o
al cortés, cuando secos y mustios persisten, en la corteza vegetal
de que habrá de llegar el día en que despertarán florecidos, vibrantes,
llenando el campo con sus llamaradas naranjas, amarillas,
cuando pase el tiempo de las vaina de las ramas secas.
Appendix 5-4

WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO KNOW

Ana Castillo

We would like you to know we are not all docile nor revolutionaries but we are all survivors. We do not all carry zip guns, hot pistols, steal cars. We do know how to defend ourselves.

We do not all have slicked-back hair distasteful apparel unpolished shoes although the economy doesn’t allow everyone a Macy’s chargecard.

We do not all pick lettuce, run assembly lines, clean restaurant tables, even if someone has to do it.

We do not all sneak under barbed wire or wade the Rio Grande.

These are the facts.

We would like you to know we are not all brown. Genetic history has made some of us blue eyed as any German immigrant and as black as a descendant of an African slave.

We never claimed to be a homogeneous race.

We are not all victims, all loyal to one cause, all perfect; it is a psychological dilemma no one has resolved.

We would like to give a thousand excuses as to why we all find ourselves in a predicament residents of a controversial power how we were all caught with our pants down and how petroleum was going to change all that but you’ve heard it all before and with a wink and a snicker left us babbling amongst ourselves.

We would like you to know guilt or apologetic gestures won’t revive the dead redistribute the land or natural resources. We are left with one final resolution in our own predestined way, we are going forward. There is no going back.
GENERAL RESOURCES

Annotated Table of Contents

I. National Resources

A. CDC HIV/AIDS Information

1. English Information About HIV/AIDS Among Hispanics

http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/resources/factsheets/hispanic.htm

   a) this document provides epidemiological data on Hispanics from 2002 and risk factors, and barriers to prevention as well as a brief overview of the CDC’s Advancing HIV/AIDS Prevention initiative;

   b) this could be used in session two when epidemiological data are presented.

2. VIH/SIDA en español

http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/spanish/default.htm

B. Diffusion of Effective Behavioral Interventions

Provides a variety of information, resources and tools associated with SISTA.

http://www.effectiveinterventions.org/go/interventions/sista

II. International Resources

UNAIDS/WHO

Epidemiological Fact Sheets have been updated in 2008 and contain the latest statistics on HIV/AIDS. You can find factsheets for 170 countries.

