

Connect to Protect® (C2P) Philadelphia HIV prevention for YMSM via structural changes and community mobilization

Marné Castillo, MEd, PhD, & Alison J. Lin, MPH & Adolescent Medicine Division, The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA
Jonathan Ellen, MD & Nancy Willard, BA, Division of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD,
C2P Philadelphia Coalition and the Adolescent Medicine Trials Network for HIV/AIDS Interventions*



Project Goals

Connect to Protect® (C2P) coalition employs community mobilization to create structural-level changes intended to decrease HIV acquisition and transmission among youth. The mission of C2P is to reduce HIV/AIDS rates among YMSM and their networks through the collaborative efforts of local communities and health researchers.

Structural-level HIV prevention interventions strive to decrease social, environmental, policy, and organizational factors that are linked to HIV transmission.

Capacity Building for Partnerships

This collaborative process involving diverse community members and C2P staff. C2P Philadelphia staff members are employees of the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Adolescent Medicine Trials Unit. They facilitate the process of forming the coalition and implement all project activities; providing information and outreach to invite community partners to participate and create structural changes.

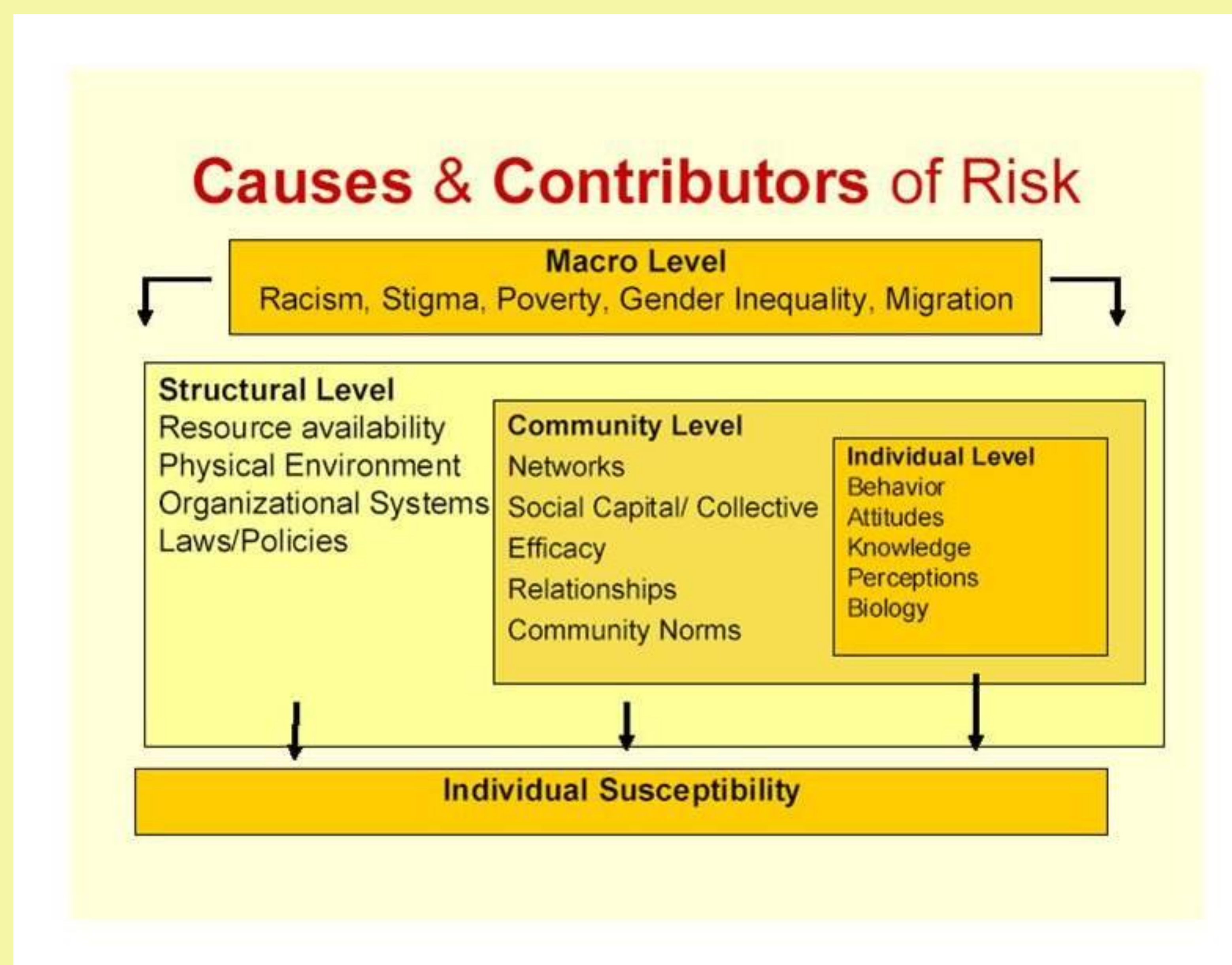
Core Coalition Activities

Strategic Planning: Using the VMOSA (Vision, Mission, Objectives, Strategies, Actions) model, feasibility and importance analysis create attainable and sustainable objectives.

Root cause analysis: Using the basic premise that HIV acquisition is often the result of some deeper causes, not necessarily the obvious cause on the surface, the coalition continually asks why a problem exists and probes deeper to reveal the root cause.

Thinking Now and Thinking Big: Once root causes are identified, structural change objectives are drafted. The coalition is encouraged to develop "small win" objectives that are easily attained quickly and to develop bigger, policy level changes that will yield the greatest impact city-wide.

Membership development: Members represent staff working in homeless youth shelters, AIDS service organizations and LGBT youth centers; researchers; and clinicians. Constant evaluation of membership ensures that the skills and individuals needed are at the table.



Key Components To Engagement

Community Co-Chairs:

Coalition members are elected/chosen to act as the co-leader of the committee, supported by the C2P staff.

Communication:

Meeting notes and newsletters highlight coalition members. Multiple forms of communication (email, phone, in-person meetings).

Action-Oriented:

Community members are taxed with work and personal burdens so meetings are short and relevant. Working lunches keep high attendance.

Committees

As root causes are identified, a subcommittee of the coalition is formed consisting of core C2P members and other members of the community recruited for their expertise in the area. The subcommittee is then the primary workforce that moves objectives to completion.

Condom Subcommittee

Root Cause: Availability and inconsistent condom use due to "condom fatigue" among youth.

Completed Objective: CHOICE hotline cards in HS STD testing bags.

Current Objective: Free condoms and instructions on how to properly use them are not readily available in all areas of Philadelphia, including the majority of public high schools.

Ballroom Subcommittee

Root Cause: Increasing protective factors for Ballroom youth who are at disproportionately high risk of acquiring HIV.

Completed Objective: HIV testing and outreach at Balls.

Current Objective: Improving access to identification cards for youth.

Housing Subcommittee

Root Cause: Connection between youth with insecure housing and HIV prevention. LGBT youth and youth involved with Child Welfare are subpopulations of youth that are disproportionately homeless.

Completed Objective: LGBT student organization partnering with Mazzoni Center and C2P to sponsor bi-annual hygiene kit drive to distribute to housing and youth serving agencies.

Current Objective: Increase LGBT friendly shelter and transitional living services as well as improve comprehensive discharge planning.

