



# Let's Chat

## A Brief Behavioral Skills Intervention to Prevent HIV Infection among Chronic Mentally Ill Adults

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### FOCUS

- Injection Drug Users & Their Non-injecting Partners
- Gay/Bisexual Men
- STD Clinic Clients
- Women
- Minority Specific
- Other

### ORIGINAL SITE

- Community-Based
- Clinic-Based

### APPROACH

- Behavioral Skills Development
- Community Outreach
- Condom Education/Access
- HIV/STD Education
- Needle Cleaning/Exchange
- Self Efficacy/Self-Esteem

### COMPONENTS

- Behavioral Skills Practice
- Group Discussion
- HIV Antibody Testing/Counseling
- Lectures
- Peer Counseling/Instruction

### SUMMARY

Developed for use with same-sex groups of adults with mental illness, *LET'S CHAT* is a small group behavioral skills intervention emphasizing risk education, sexual assertiveness, problem solving, condom use and behavioral management (as related to HIV/AIDS risk reduction). Researchers designed the intervention to address risk-reduction needs specific to persons with mental illness.

The developers first implemented *LET'S CHAT* in two community-based psychiatric outpatient programs. A total of 52 participants (27 men and 25 women) were randomly assigned to either the immediate intervention or the waitlist control group. Researchers analyzed the results of the pre-, post- and follow-up tests to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. They concluded that *LET'S CHAT* had a positive, short-term effect on sexual risk behaviors, including the increase of AIDS-risk knowledge, self-reported condom-use and intentions to change HIV-risk behavior among adults with chronic mental illness.

### SUITABLE FOR USE IN

This program is suitable for use in inpatient or outpatient mental health settings, including community-based programs, day treatment centers, case management services, medication management programs and substance abuse treatment centers.

### ORIGINAL INTERVENTION SAMPLE

**Age, Gender**  
23-55 years of age, 52% male

- Role Pay
- Safer Sex Communication/Negotiation
- Video
- Other

#### **Race/Ethnicity**

73% White, 19% African-American, 8%  
Other Race/Ethnicity

#### **PROGRAM LENGTH**

Each of the four program sessions is designed to last 90 minutes. The actual time needed to deliver the program in your treatment center, clinic, or community will vary according to the participation levels of the group members themselves.

#### **STAFFING REQUIREMENTS/TRAINING**

The original intervention called for two facilitators to deliver the program to small groups ranging in size from 4-12 participants. HAPPA staff suggest that organizations weigh the importance of the facilitators' experience and/or training working with mentally ill adults when identifying appropriate facilitators.

### **HAPPA PROGRAM PACKAGE**

**The HAPPA Program Package for this program includes:**

- ▶ *Let's Chat* User's Guide
- ▶ Facilitator's Manual
- ▶ *This Stuff Can Save Your Life* videotape
- ▶ *Time Out* videotape
- ▶ 2 Activity Masters packets
- ▶ 3 *Answering Your Questions about AIDS* books
- ▶ HAPPA Evaluation Assistance Kit (includes the Evaluation Questionnaire)
- ▶ Original Evaluation Instrument
- ▶ Process Evaluation Instrument
- ▶ HAPPA Adaptation Workbook
  
- ▶ Telephone technical support on implementation and evaluation for 1 year