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Are cultural values and beliefs included in U.S. based HIV interventions?

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Interventions might be incomplete. One important factor that has impeded HIV/AIDS prevention and risk reduction messages in diverse populations is the identifying and addressing of cultural values and beliefs related to sexual practices and relationship expectations that may conflict with or complement HIV prevention messages. Investigators have often assumed that individuals subscribe to one set of cultural beliefs, however, many cultures are derived from a mix of cultural beliefs and are not strictly defined by context and include aspects of culture that may be shared by individuals and environmental factors beyond the control of the individual.

Role of culture in HIV risk practices

HIV/AIDS interventions have provided rules and scripts about how to live and make decisions across the life course. Cultural beliefs inform individual decisions and are handed down from generation to generation. For example, the kinds of sexual practices that are considered acceptable, when they should be engaged in, and how contraceptive use is influenced by how relationships are formed, when and how condoms are used, who should decide about sexual practices, and the expectations about personal responsibility for the consequences of these decisions vary across cultures. Much has been written about cultural beliefs and how they influence and value of behavior and guide the expressions of sexuality that are often reflected in group and individual beliefs. In a comprehensive review of the literature, investigators have identified cultural values and beliefs that influence HIV risk reduction interventions. For example, the disclosure of a same-sex partner may not be acceptable to family members in some cultures, and the disclosure of a same-sex partner may interfere with the disclosure of a same-sex partner to a health care provider. The disclosure of a same-sex partner may not be acceptable to family members in some cultures, and the disclosure of a same-sex partner may interfere with the disclosure of a same-sex partner to a health care provider. The disclosure of a same-sex partner may not be acceptable to family members in some cultures, and the disclosure of a same-sex partner may interfere with the disclosure of a same-sex partner to a health care provider.

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