



weSpeak: Straight Black Men Building Resilience to HIV in Ontario Project

Toronto Site - Participant Consent Agreement (ACB Men Focus Groups)

You are being invited to participate in **weSpeak**, a research project funded by the Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN) and Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR). Please read this consent form so that you understand what your participation will involve. Before you consent to participate, please ask any questions to be sure you fully understand what your voluntary participation will involve.

INVESTIGATORS:

weSpeak is carried out by a large team of researchers in Toronto, Ottawa, London and Windsor. All team members are listed on the last page of this consent form. The principal investigators of this study are:

- Dr. Josephine P. Wong (Associate Professor, Ryerson University)
- Dr. Winston Husbands (Director of Research, AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT))
- Dr. Josephine Etowa (Professor, University of Ottawa)
- Dr. Isaac Luginaah (Professor, Western University)
- Dr. Francisca Omorodion (Associate Professor, University of Windsor)

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

The goal of this research project is to reduce HIV vulnerabilities and promote resilience through active engagement of self-identified heterosexual African, Caribbean and Black (ACB) men in community HIV responses, programs, research, and policy. We will engage and mobilize self-identified straight (heterosexual) ACB men who are: aged 16 and over; residing in the Greater Toronto Area, London, Ottawa, and Windsor; and HIV-positive, or have never been diagnosed with HIV. We will also engage service providers, policy/decision-makers and other relevant stakeholders who work in or with ACB communities to address HIV and other related issues that affect the health and wellbeing of straight ACB men and communities.

TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY

Taking part in this study is totally voluntary. You must self-identify as a straight ACB man, aged 16 or over, and living in one of the four project cities – Toronto, Ottawa, London, or Windsor. If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

- Complete a short demographic and health practices survey, which consists of a range of questions about you (e.g., your age, faith/religion, housing arrangement), your sexual practices (e.g., condom use) and your access to health information and services (e.g., whether you have a family doctor).
- Join a focus group discussion to share your ideas about: what being a straight ACB man means; intimacy and relationships; gender roles and cultural expectations, challenges and HIV vulnerabilities faced by ACB men; and strategies used by ACB men to overcome these challenges. Since a focus group involves numerous participants, your agreement to be audio-taped is a criteria to take part in this focus group.

FUTURE PARTICIPATION IN OTHER RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

If you agree to take part in this study, you will also be asked if you wish to be contacted to take part voluntarily in the following activities at a later date:

- **Individual In-depth Interview:** This interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes and will be audio-taped with your permission. The interview builds on the focus groups interview to explore issues regarding your personal views and experiences surrounding sexual practices, HIV /AIDS, gender, racial and cultural identity, discrimination and barriers, and other experiences that may affect your health and wellbeing.
- **weSpeak Survey of Straight ACB men:** This survey takes approximately 35 minutes to complete; it will ask questions about masculine role identity, resilience, HIV knowledge and condom use.
- **Concept Mapping Focus Group Sessions:** This is a series of 4 focus group sessions during which you will work with other straight ACB men to draw on the weSpeak study results to develop a best practices model for HIV prevention and resilience promotion for straight ACB men and communities.

If you wish to be contacted to take part in the survey and/or the individual interview, you may fill out a separate contact information form at the end of today's focus group.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Taking part in this research study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time. Withdrawing from the study will not affect any services that you now receive or will receive from any of the weSpeak partnership agencies (see list of research team members on the last page). Should you choose to withdraw, we will remove your individual research data (demographic and health practice surveys). We will also do our best to remove your focus group data. However, in a focus group discussion, what you share is mixed in with what other participants share. Thus, it may not be possible for us to remove all your data when you withdraw. We will do our utmost to delete your portion as long as it does not lead to the loss of someone else's ideas and sharing.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information you provide during the research will be kept private. Your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. We will use a study code on all the data we collect from you. The surveys and focus group interview notes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in a secured office. We will store the consent form and your contact information separate from research data. The audio-recorded focus group interview will be downloaded onto a password-protected computer and be transcribed into written texts as a password protected document. Once the transcription is completed, we will store the audio files on password-protected computers. These computers will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in a secured office. Only the research team will have access to this office. All audio files questionnaires, focus group transcripts and notes will be destroyed 5 years after the study has been completed as required by the funding agency.

The research team will keep what you share in the interview confidential, except in situations where we are required by law to release the information (e.g., if we hear information that a child has been or is being abused; if we hear that you may harm yourself, that is, there is reason to believe that you are at risk to commit suicide; if we hear that an individual who is HIV positive is having unprotected sexual relations without disclosing his status to his partner(s); or if we hear that someone has threatened your life or someone else's life, etc.).

LIMITS ON CONFIDENTIALITY

Since this focus group involves a number of participants, confidentiality cannot be absolutely guaranteed. Confidentiality is kept only when all of us agree to keep everything that is shared in this room confidential and not share any information with anyone outside of this focus group interview.

To protect your confidentiality, we encourage you to think through and decide what you will and will not share in a group setting. To protect everyone's privacy, we will ask each of you to sign the agreement to confidentiality at the bottom of this consent form. You are also encouraged to use a made-up name while taking part in the focus group discussion to enhance your privacy.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

This study is not expected to cause you or others any known harm. However, you may experience some unexpected emotion or discomfort during the discussion. If you feel upset during the focus group, and you wish to express your discomfort, please feel free to contact any member of the research team. You may also refer to the list of community resources that you received from the research team member. This list contains information on support services in the community that may be helpful to you.

BENEFITS OF THE RESEARCH

Although you may not have any direct benefit from taking part in this study, your ideas and sharing may help us develop effective programs and policy to improve HIV programs, services and policies for ACB men and communities in Ontario.

HONORARIUM

You will receive a \$30 honorarium for taking part in this focus group. You will keep this honorarium even if you decide to withdraw from the study at any point in time. A light meal will also be provided.

RESEARCH REPORT

You can access our research project results at the weSpeak website (www.we-speak.ca)

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH

If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact: Dr. Josephine Wong, Principal Investigator, Ryerson University, at 416-979-5000 ext. 6303, or by E-mail: jph.wong@ryerson.ca;

This research has been reviewed by the Ryerson University's Research Ethics Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study please contact: Research Ethics Board, Ryerson University, at 416-979-5000 ext. 7112, or by E-mail: rebchair@ryerson.ca

**** You do not need to use your full name or real name in signing this consent**

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE		
I have read this consent form. I am satisfied with the answers to all my questions about this study. I agree to take part in this study. I have been given a copy of this consent form, and I fully understand my rights as a person taking part in this study.		
_____ ,	_____ ,	_____
(Participant's signature)	(Date)	(City)
I agree to be audio-recorded during the focus group.		
_____ ,	_____ ,	_____
(Participant's signature)	(Date)	(City)

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

We remind you that since this focus group involves a number of participants, confidentiality cannot be absolutely guaranteed. To protect your confidentiality, we encourage you to think through and decide what information you will and will not share in a group setting. You are also encouraged to use a made-up name while taking part in the focus group discussion to enhance your privacy.

I understand that confidential information may be made known to me during the focus group discussion. I agree that I will not tell anyone about any of the information that I hear in the focus group interview today, unless the speaker has told me personally that it is okay to do so.

_____, _____, _____
(Participant's signature) (Date) (City)

RESEARCH TEAM MEMBER - CONFIRMATION

I confirm that I have reviewed this consent form with the participant named above and I have answered all questions.

_____, _____, _____
(Research team member's signature) (Date) (City)

LIST OF RESEARCH TEAM MEMBERS

Co-Principal Investigators	Affiliation
Josephine P. Wong	Ryerson University
Winston Husbands	AIDS Committee of Toronto
Josephine Etowa	University of Ottawa
Francisca Omorodion	University of Windsor
Isaac Luginaah	Western University
Co-Investigators	Affiliation
Alexander Asamoah	Peel HIV/AIDS Network
Kenneth Fung	University of Toronto
Carl James	York University
Jelani Kerr	University of Louisville
Erica Lawson	Western University
Hugues Loemba	University of Ottawa
Henry Luyombya	Committee for Accessible AIDS Treatment
Lance McCready	University of Toronto
Frank McGee	OMHLTC
Paul Mkandawire	Carleton University
Wesley Oakes	York University
Fanta Ongoiba	APAA
Valérie Pierre-Pierre	ACCHO
Maurice Poon	York University
Wangari Tharao	WHIWH
Zhaida Uddin	Ottawa Public Health
Mandana Vahabi	Ryerson University
Charmaine Williams	University of Toronto