



**ConnectHIV**  
Pfizer Investments in Health

*Connect HIV New Directions in  
Prevention and Care Conference  
Philadelphia May 2008*



**L·I·F·E<sup>®</sup>**  
P R O G R A M

Biological

Psychological

## Implementing L.I.F.E. in the African-American Community in San Francisco

Social

A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT AGAINST HIV/AIDS



The Pfizer Foundation

# Situation

- **Challenge**
  - It is difficult to recruit and retain HIV+ African Americans into the L.I.F.E. Program® in San Francisco.
- **Impact:**
  - 2006 Epidemiological data suggests that African American MSM have an HIV prevalence rate of 32% and represent 8% of the total HIV+ population in San Francisco.
  - This population also has an estimated  $\geq 8\%$  lower survival rate of an AIDS diagnosis compared with other race/ethnicities.
  - This population which is most in need of health enhancement, is not accessing the L.I.F.E. Program®.
- **Solution:**
  - Tailor and adapt the L.I.F.E. Program®, an effective psycho-educational behavioral intervention, to give participants the knowledge, motivation, skills, and the emotional and practical support necessary to improve health.

# Solution: Tailoring and Adapting

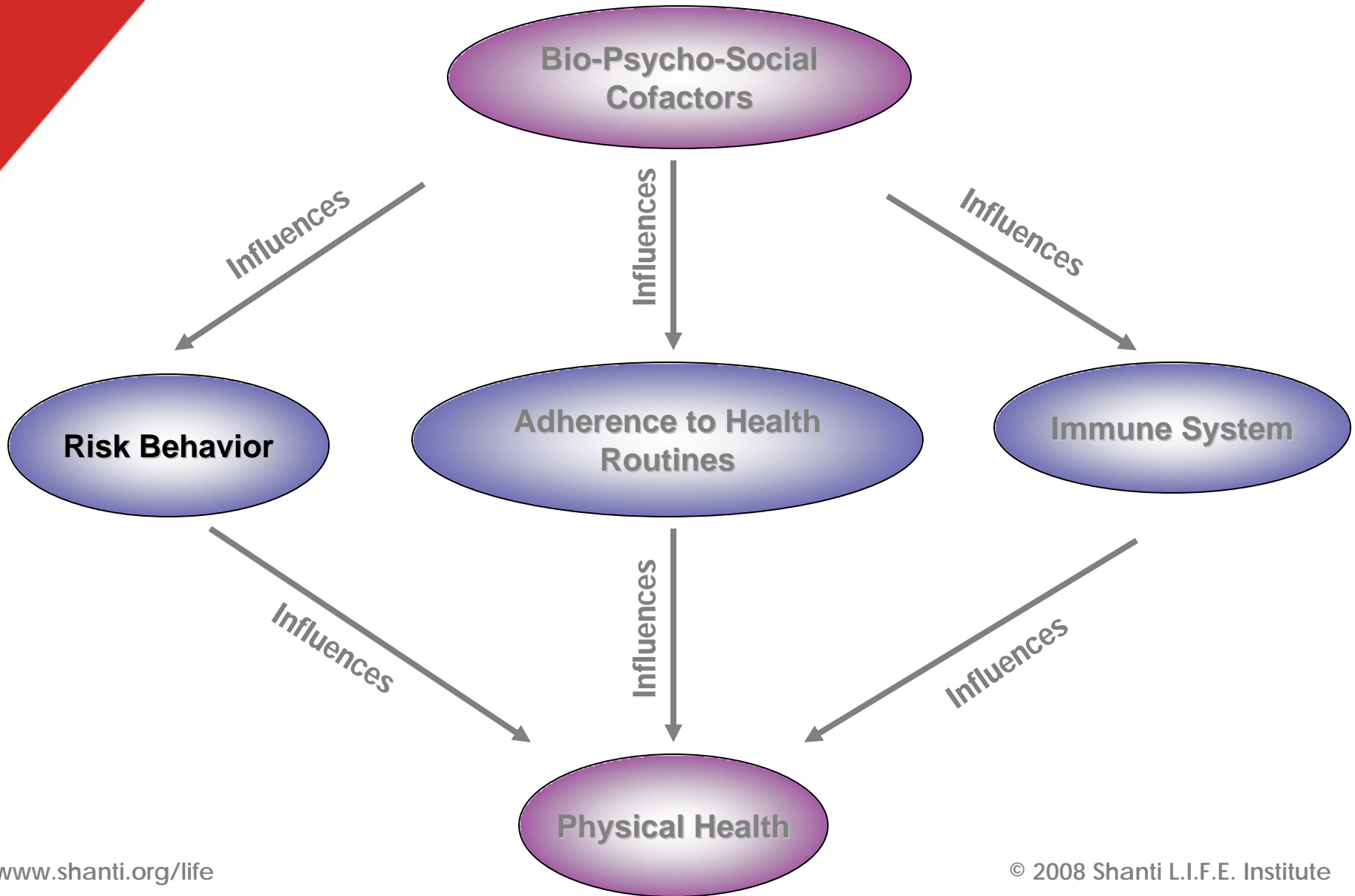
- Solution:
  - Tailor and adapt the L.I.F.E. Program® to be culturally relevant and appropriate for African Americans living with HIV in San Francisco.
- Approach:
  - Use focus groups with the target population to identify barriers to accessing The L.I.F.E. Program®.
  - Implement the intervention in collaboration with an established agency already well-known for serving the needs of the target population, the Black Coalition on AIDS (BCA).
  - Offer the intervention in a familiar setting that BCA clients already receive services.
  - Train BCA staff to facilitate the intervention with their target population.
  - Build capacity at BCA through ongoing training, technical assistance, and collaboration.

# Program Structure: Overview

- L.I.F.E. stands for **Learning Immune Function Enhancement**
  - Designed to
    - support immune system functioning
    - reduce health risking behaviors
    - increase adherence to health routines including medication protocols
    - 18 meetings address 26 biological, psychological, and social cofactors that influence health
    - 9 core elements



# Program Structure: Logic Model



# Program Structure: Meetings

Pre-Workshop Social

Meeting #1: Introduction to L.I.F.E.

Meeting #2: How L.I.F.E. Works

18 weekly meetings,  
each lasting 3 hours

Meetings # 3 through 15:  
Focus on Individual  
Cofactors

Individual Health  
Counseling  
Sessions

Meeting #16: L.I.F.E. in Review

Post - Workshop Graduation Ceremony & Celebration

# Program Structure: Cofactors



Biological, Psychological, and Social Cofactors Influence Health by:

- Boosting or suppressing immune system functioning
- Influencing decision-making regarding health-risking behaviors (including sexual, drug/alcohol, and needle use)
- Influencing ability and willingness to adhere to health routines (including medication protocols)

# Program Structure: Core Elements



## Nine Steps to HIV+ Health



1. Increase awareness of your health-risking & health-supporting behavior



2. Gain knowledge about the cofactor



3. Increase self-awareness about how you are doing on the cofactor



4. Explore your beliefs, emotions and behaviors about the cofactor



5. Build supportive relationships



6. Learn how others are improving on the cofactor



7. Develop a health action plan



8. Visualize health and foster optimism



9. Implement your health action plan



# The Impact of L.I.F.E.: Evidence-Based & Evidence-Producing

- L.I.F.E. Program health curriculum is based on published science in medicine, psychology, mind-body medicine (psychoneuroimmunology or PNI), and health psychology.
- Anecdotal and program evaluation feedback consistently positive across different agency sites and client populations.
- California clinical trial (subjects randomly assigned to treatment or control group), conducted by the CA State Office of AIDS. Research results show program effectiveness.
- National L.I.F.E. Research project on L.I.F.E. clients in 14 agencies nationally shows program effectiveness.

Download our research article at [www.shanti.org/life](http://www.shanti.org/life)



# The Impact of L.I.F.E.: Effective at Improving HIV+ Health

## L.I.F.E. Graduates\*:

Decrease overall health problems

(by 27-44% on average)

Decrease overall personal problems:

(by 38-50% on average)

- Decrease use of alcohol & drugs
- Decrease health-risking behavior
- Increase adherence to health routines including medication schedules
- Increase Trusted Support with peers
- Improve Coping with Grief and Depression
- Improve Coping with Survival Stress (housing, money, health)

\*Based on two recent research studies, the 2005 National L.I.F.E. Research Study, and the 2004 California Clinical Trial Research Study. Read the full research articles at [www.shanti.org/life](http://www.shanti.org/life)



# To learn more about implementing L.I.F.E. in your agency, contact

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