

# Evaluation of the Journeys of Shared Resilience group program among Black sexual minority men in Washington, DC

<b>Submission date</b> 08/10/2024	<b>Recruitment status</b> No longer recruiting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered <input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
<b>Registration date</b> 09/10/2024	<b>Overall study status</b> Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input type="checkbox"/> Results
<b>Last Edited</b> 09/10/2024	<b>Condition category</b> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data <input type="checkbox"/> Record updated in last year

## Plain English summary of protocol

### Background and study aims

Stigmas due to identifying as a sexual minority, being at risk for/living with HIV, and due to race, are common and often manifest as internalized stigmas (self-stigmas). Such stigmas, especially when they are multiple and compounding, impede psychosocial wellbeing as well as HIV prevention and care. Yet there are few, if any, interventions specifically focused on reducing intersecting internalized stigmas and promoting shared resilience. In this study, the researchers will evaluate Journeys of Shared Resilience - a novel, group-based program that positively affirms identities and builds cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) skills among Black sexual minority men living in the Washington, DC area.

### Who can participate?

Black sexual minority men ages 18 years or older, who are living or working in the Washington, DC area.

### What does the study involve?

Participants will attend four weekly in-person group Journeys of Shared Resilience sessions facilitated by community health workers. Surveys will be carried out before and 3 months after the program to assess its acceptability, appropriateness, feasibility, and effectiveness. Additional qualitative in-depth / group interviews will be completed with a subset of participants, as well as other stakeholders.

### What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Participants may benefit from the group sessions, specifically the opportunity to learn and talk about stigma, information about available health services, and support from peers and community health workers.

The main risks posed to participants from the study and intervention procedures are psychological distress and breach of confidentiality. Psychological distress could arise from participating in the group sessions and surveys since they touch upon enacted and internalized stigma, depression and anxiety, HIV risk, living with HIV, and experiences of violence. Psychological distress could also arise from breaches of confidentiality, particularly given the

often stigmatized nature of the identities in question. While a breach of confidentiality is unlikely given protections in place, any potential breach would be concerning.

Where is the study run from?

Us Helping Us, Washington, DC (USA)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

June 2023 to May 2025

Who is funding the study?

National Institutes of Health via the Washington DC CFAR (Center for AIDS Research) (USA)

Who is the main contact?

1. Dr Julie Pulerwitz, [jpulerwitz@popcouncil.org](mailto:jpulerwitz@popcouncil.org)

2. Dr DeMarc Hickson, [dhickson@uhupil.org](mailto:dhickson@uhupil.org)

## Contact information

### Type(s)

Scientific, Principal investigator

### Contact name

Dr Julie Pulerwitz

### ORCID ID

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5177-1508>

### Contact details

1015 15th st nw

Office 529

Washington, DC

United States of America

20005

+1 (0)202 237 9400

[jpulerwitz@popcouncil.org](mailto:jpulerwitz@popcouncil.org)

### Type(s)

Principal investigator

### Contact name

Dr DeMarc Hickson

### Contact details

Us Helping Us

3636 Georgia Avenue NW

Washington DC

United States of America

20010

+1 (0)202 446 1092

[dhickson@uhupil.org](mailto:dhickson@uhupil.org)

**Type(s)**

Public, Scientific

**Contact name**

Dr Ann Gottert

**Contact details**

1015 15th St NW  
Washington, DC  
United States of America  
20005  
+1 (0)202 237 9400  
agottert@popcouncil.org

**Additional identifiers****Study information****Scientific Title**

Evaluation of Journeys of Shared Resilience: a group program to address intersectional stigmas, and support shared resiliency and HIV wellness, among Black sexual minority men in Washington, DC

**Acronym**

JSR Eval

**Study objectives**

The program will result in significant declines in internalized stigma and depression, and improvements in community connectedness.

**Ethics approval required**

Ethics approval required

**Ethics approval(s)**

approved 10/07/2023, Population Council Institutional Review Board (1230 York Avenue, New York, 10065, United States of America; +1 (0)917 685 7660; ngontarz@popcouncil.org), ref: 1023

**Study design**

Pre-post comparison, complemented by qualitative research

**Primary study design**

Interventional

**Study type(s)**

Other, Prevention

**Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied**

Prevention of internalized stigma and depression and promotion of community connectedness among Black sexual minority men

## **Interventions**

Group program based on affirmative cognitive behavioral therapy, with four curriculum-based sessions, each ~2.5 hours long, facilitated by trained community health workers. The program will be evaluated by pre- and 3-month post-surveys, complemented by qualitative research.

## **Intervention Type**

Behavioural

## **Primary outcome(s)**

Intersectional internalized stigma, as measured by several scales (including a nine-item scale adapted from scale developed by Dr Lisa Bowleg and colleagues), at baseline and 3-month post assessments

## **Key secondary outcome(s)**

1. Acceptability of program, measured using survey responses to a set of 11 satisfaction questions at the end of the final program session, plus themes elucidated from post-assessment in-depth/group interviews
2. Depression measured by the Patient Health Questionnaire-8 at baseline and 3-month post assessments
3. Community connectedness measured by a nine-item Community Connectedness scale, at baseline and 3-month post assessments
4. Exploratory outcome: self-reported current PrEP use at baseline and 3-month post assessments

## **Completion date**

31/05/2025

## **Eligibility**

### **Key inclusion criteria**

1. Lives or works in the city of DC or neighboring Prince George's County, Maryland
2. Age 18 years or older
3. Self-reported sexual orientation is gay/sexual minority man/MSM
4. Self-reported sex assigned at birth is male
5. Self-reported race is Black/African American
6. Has ready access to a personal computer, tablet, or smartphone with a connection to the internet
7. Speaks English well enough to read English study-related documents and participate in the intervention, conducted in English
8. Willing and able to participate in the intervention/study

### **Participant type(s)**

Healthy volunteer

### **Healthy volunteers allowed**

No

### **Age group**

Adult

**Lower age limit**

18 years

**Upper age limit**

99 years

**Sex**

Male

**Key exclusion criteria**

1. Participated in previous formative research related to the program
2. Do not agree to participate in either the group sessions or study surveys

**Date of first enrolment**

15/10/2024

**Date of final enrolment**

28/02/2025

**Locations****Countries of recruitment**

United States of America

**Study participating centre****Us Helping Us**

3636 Georgia Ave NW

Washington

United States of America

20010

**Sponsor information****Organisation**

Population Council

**ROR**

<https://ror.org/03zjj0p70>

**Organisation**

Us Helping Us People Into Living

**ROR**

<https://ror.org/05w0kdr76>

## **Funder(s)**

### **Funder type**

Government

### **Funder Name**

National Institutes of Health (NIAID) via Washington DC Center for AIDS Research

## **Results and Publications**

### **Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan**

The dataset generated during the study will be stored in a publicly available repository (<https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/popcouncil>). The type of data stored – quantitative de-identified data from each survey round.

The process for requesting access (if non-publicly available): Although it will be made available on DataVerse, given the sensitive nature of the topic, the researchers will require anyone interested in the data to contact the investigators for permission to use the data.

### **IPD sharing plan summary**

Stored in publicly available repository