

# Cultural Competent Care for Haitian Americans with HIV/AIDS

Prepared and Presented by: Mario Theliard, MD



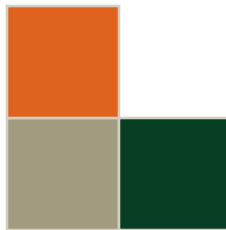
# Cultural Competent Care for Haitian Americans with HIV/AIDS

- Statement of disclosure
  - This presentation is free of any commercial bias what so ever.



# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- What is Cultural Competence?
- Understanding the impact of the epidemic among Haitian American
- Identify critical cultural issues and other considerations related to Haitian American and HIV infection
- Using Cultural Competence To Improve the Quality of Health Care for Haitian/Americans with HIV/AIDS



# What is Cultural Competence?

## Health People 2020 definition:

- Cultural competence describes the ability of an individual or organization to interact effectively with people of different cultures to produce positive change.
- Practitioners must understand the cultural context of their target population, and have the willingness and skills to work within this context.



# What is Cultural Competence?

## "Healthy People 2020: Understanding and Improving Health

- The cultural competence as the strategy to accomplish their second objective which is “Eliminate Health Disparities”
- Strategy: "The design, implementation, and evaluation process that accounts for special issues for select population groups (ethnic and racial, linguistics) as well as differing educational levels and physical abilities "

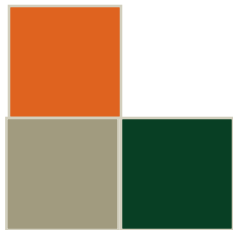


# Why Cultural Competency is important?

- Because of the increasing diversification of our country, cultural competence is a necessary skill to help improve public health and eliminate ethnic and racial health disparities.



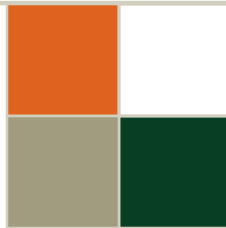
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# Why Cultural Competency is Important?

Cultural competency:

- Core competency for public health professionals.
- Core competencies: Skills necessary to be proficient at the practice of public health. In addition, one of the Essential Services of Public Health is to "assure a competent public health and personal health care workforce."

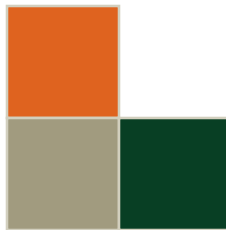


# Why Cultural Competency is Important?

Cultural competency:

- Legally mandatory: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states "No person in the United States shall, on ground of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance".

Both the Surgeon General and the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations maintain that cultural competency is essential to provide adequate care.





# Cultural Competent Care for Haitian Americans with HIV/AIDS

- Why Haitians?



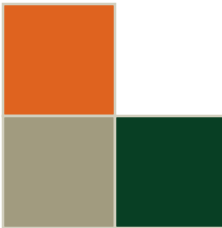
# Why Haitians?

- Early 1980, No name for the disease created by HIV infection
- CDC chose 4 H as the Acronym for the Risk factor related to HIV infection with one of the H stands for “Haitian”.
- In the early 1980s at the beginning of the epidemic, until at the present time, Haitian have been victim of the most humiliating stigmatization for bringing HIV in the United States!
- The CDC could have been more careful in considering language and cultural barrier and literacy level of Haitian filling out demographic form in Hospital or outpatient setting used to gather epidemiologic data to determine the risk factor of HIV infection.



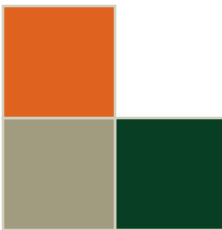
# Why Haitians?

- While HIV shows no discrimination, the Haitian American community is overrepresented among groups affected by HIV/AIDS and yet remains underserved in health care and social services.
- By 1990 Haitians were removed from the high-risk category. Nevertheless, almost 27 years later a publication in the Proceedings of The National Academy of Sciences concluded that Haiti was the key conduit for the introduction of HIV to the North American continent.



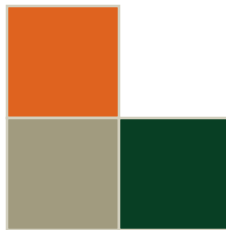
# Why Haitians?

- An estimated 830,000 people with Haitian ancestry live in the United States, up from 290,000 in 1990 (Buchanan, Albert, & Beaulieu, 2010).
- Florida has the highest number with 376,000 and New York follows with 191,000 (Buchanan, Albert, & Beaulieu, 2010).



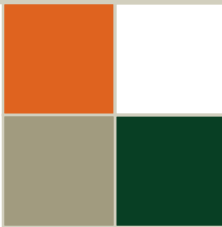
# Why Haitians?

- According to Whitsitt (2009) political, economic, social and cultural views affect how people perceive health.
- It is therefore important to have a clear and understandable picture of the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of Haitian immigrant towards HIV transmission.
- If cultural, economic, social, and political considerations play a role, so programs aimed at reducing this health hazard could benefit from considering these factors (B. Isma, 2016).



# Impact of HIV/AIDS among Haitians

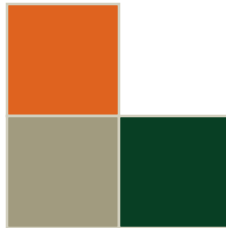
- Haitian Americans reside in almost all the area of the country in large cities; in Florida they represent one of the largest foreign-born groups.
- The 2006 American Community Survey estimated that there were 366,284 people of Haitian descent in FL (US Census Bureau, 2007). This community has been impacted disproportionately by the HIV epidemic. In Miami, for instance, Haitians comprise 9% of HIV infection cases and 16% of AIDS cases, although they comprise only about 5% of the County population ([Miami Dade County Health Dep, 2009](#)).



# HIV/AIDS among Haitian-Born Adults in Florida

- Among both male and female Haitian-born adults living with HIV disease, the greatest proportion of cases reported through 2013 were among those aged 50 or older. More specifically, 64% of cases among Haitian-born males were aged 50 or older and 49% of cases among Haitian-born females were aged 50 or older
- In Florida, there were 7,455 Haitian-born adults living with HIV disease reported through 2013

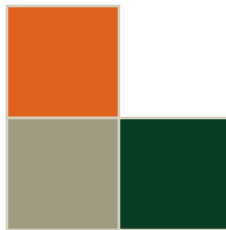
**Haitian-born adults represent the majority of case deaths over the past ten years**



# How is Cultural Competency Achieved?

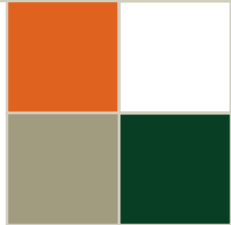
Over the years, health care services have used a range of strategies to try to ensure that these populations, and indeed all people affected by HIV/AIDS, have access to proper care despite the stigma.

Cultural Competent Care can be achieved to reduce health disparity when Healthcare professional and policy makers finally realize that: meaningful ethno-cultural approach is the cornerstone to address health issues within any ethnic group in the United States.





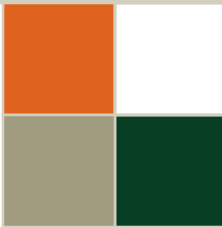
# Haitian Concept of Health



# Haitian Concept of Health

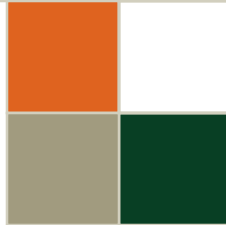
The traditional Haitian concept of health is based on the balance and equilibrium of several factors (Colin and Paperwalla 2003):

- Physical health: is maintained by Proper diet, Cleanliness, Exercise, Adequate rest
- Emotional health: Avoid excessive anger, fear, sadness.
- Social stability: Being in harmony with family and friends, having good behavior in your society.
- Spiritual well being: Good relationship with God or the spiritual world. For Haitian, God is the final decider of health, disease, life and death. That is why, Haitian always tell you **“Si Bon Dieu Vle: if God willing”**.



# Haitian Concept of Health

- **Illness is viewed in varied stages** or degrees of severity (Colin and Paperwalla 2003):
  - **Kom pa bon:** the person is generally not feeling well
    - Usually a brief illness with easy recovery
    - Does not restrict normal activities
  - **Moin malad:** Feeling sick:
    - Disrupts normal activities
  - **Moin malad anpil** (very sick) - severe illness
    - Disrupts normal activity, Patient may be bedridden
  - **Moin pap réfè** (dying): fatal illness: AIDS, Cancer



# Haitian Concept of Health

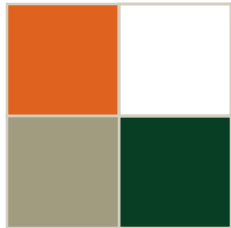
Haitian also classify disease based on their cause:

Natural Causation VS Supranatural Causation

This classification is determinant to the type of care they think they deserve.

## - Natural Causation

- Sometimes referred to as Maladi Bondye/allowed by God
- If not resolved on their own, can seek medical care for them
- These ailments usually are not chronic
- Food poisoning, URI, seasonal allergy, migraine, back pain, gas, etc. are thought to be from natural causation.

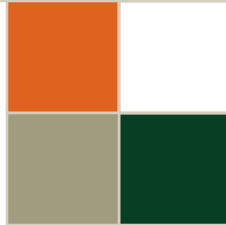


# Haitian Concept of Health

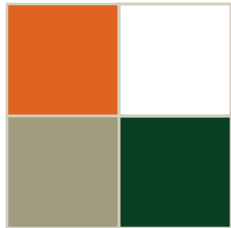
## Supranatural Causation

- believed to be caused by:

- **Vexed spirits:** Feasts (manger morts or loas) are prepared and offered to protector spirits. If this and other rituals to honor the spirits are not performed, the angered spirit may cause calamity and illness in the unfaithful.
- **Curses cast by jealous and/or angry people** may cause illness (Ex: Yo voye on Mort SIDA sou moin)
- **Witchcraft:** Toxic powder (Kout poud), victim for being guilty (Poze ve)
- Once they believe it is from supranatural causation, they will consult a Voodoo priests for diagnosis and cure of supernatural or they will go to church, some time, both.

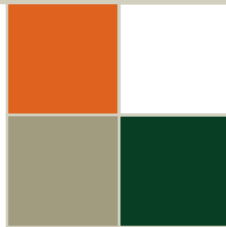


# Beliefs/Practices That Might Impact Health Care Decisions



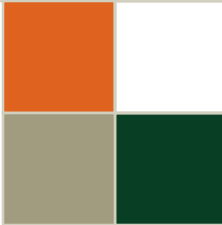
# Beliefs/Practices That Might Impact Health Care Decisions

- Supernatural illness causation of disease (Colin and Paperwalla 2003);
- Influence of Voodoo priest and natural healer for voodoo practitioner;
- Influence of Faith based organization leader for Christian (Pastor, Priest), Muslim Imam;
- The Haitian strong belief in miracle by Holy Spirit for Christian or in magical potion to heal disease for Voodoo practitioner;
- Belief that if seeking medical care for supranatural disease can lead to death;
- The tendency to use natural remedies instead of seeking medical care.



# Beliefs/Practices That Might Impact Health Care Decisions

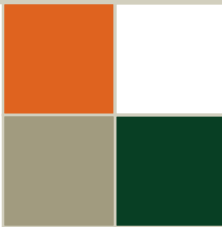
- **Diagnosis Expectation** (Beauvoir 2006)
  - Some Haitians, especially those who visit traditional healers, expect the practitioner to diagnose their problem without asking for information. (Fè chandèl, bat carte)
  - They may not be accustomed to nor obliging when confronted with many question about their health.





# Beliefs/Practices That Might Impact Health Care Decisions

- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are a common health problem in Haiti. The rates can be attributed to the acceptance of the polygamous lifestyles of men.
- Also, due to their health belief system,
  - Many Haitians do not associate STDs with sexual intercourse.
  - Haitian men are generally not willing to use contraceptives.
  - STD is almost always the women's fault.
  - STDs difficult to eliminate because it is common to stop taking antibiotics once symptoms subside.



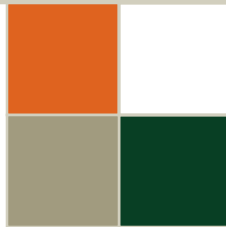
# LIMITATIONS



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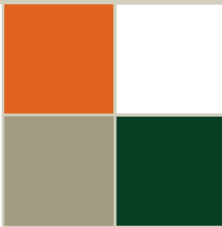
Access to Healthcare can be impacted by some major limitations:

- Cultural issues that may affect access;
- Low medical literacy, Low overall literacy;
- Limited transportation options (Lack of support system);
- Inability to communicate with caregivers (Language barriers);
- Lack of awareness of how to navigate the healthcare system;
- Limited availability of services;



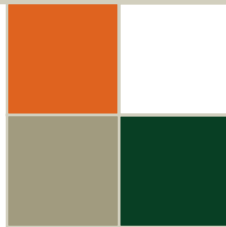
# LIMITATIONS

- Refuse to ask service from family member to protect privacy;
- Fear of deportation;
- Refuse to use service specific for Patient with HIV;
- Few health facilities are culturally competent in caring for Haitian patients;
- Inadequate financial resources (48% uninsured);
- Lack of Patient-Physician trust due to cultural barrier;



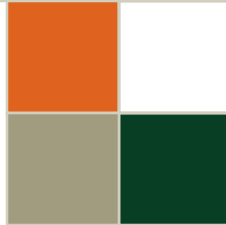
# HOW TO OVERCOME THESE LIMITATIONS

- Haitian born and Creole speaking social worker;
- Haitian Born Staff, Nurse and medical Provider;
- Haitian born and Creole speaking translator;
- Creole Translation of educational materials;
- Avoid service specific for HIV patient: More than any other ethnic group, Haitian like CONFIDENTIALITY in HIV management.
- Improve community service to increase Patient self-sufficiency: Transportation, translation, Case management, healthcare system navigation assistance;



# HOW TO OVERCOME THESE LIMITATIONS

- Create a cultural non-judgmental environment to make patient feel comfortable to disclose their private information;
- Build Pt.-Provider and Pt.-staff relationship that are based on TRUST!
- Health Department, Community Health Centers, Providers and Policy Makers needs to finally take into consideration Haitian literacy level, language barrier, cultural barrier, low socio-economic level in their effort to reduce health disparity that this ethnic group is facing. Stop blaming them, address them appropriately, listen to them!



# Culturally Relevant Factors in Haitian Community

- **SPIRITUALITY**

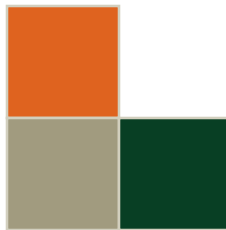
Avoid cultural conflict when Haitian patient evoke traditional or spiritual healing method, this can create discomfort with the patient or with the community.

Instead, acknowledge it, discuss about the good effect and the adverse effect it can have on patient compliance.

- **USE OF TRADITIONAL REMEDIES**

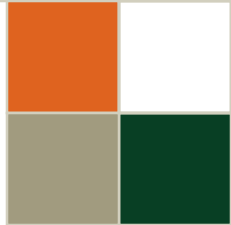
Some participants reported using both western medicine and traditional remedies. Pt. needs to be comfortable to disclose this information to his provider.

Try not to be judgmental, not to reject his confession at the first word, Instead, acknowledge them, discuss the good effect and the possibility of interaction with conventional medicine, introduce your concept slowly.



# Culturally Relevant Factors in Haitian Community

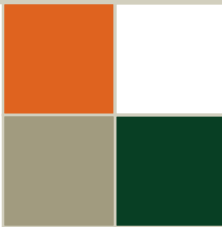
- Church in Haitian community:
  - Haitian relies on God for any social, economic or medical issue;
  - Faith based organization leader can help improving community approach;
  - But some Haitian churches in the past considered HIV/AIDS as a curse that God places on sinners, that is why, believers usually request prayer for Cancer, Diabetes, but not for HIV/AIDS.





# Culturally Relevant Factors in Haitian Community

- Lack of appropriate Sexual Education:
  - Old school Haitian couple don't discuss sexual life and sexual Health;
  - Polygamous lifestyle in Haitian Men of previous generation;
  - STD is always woman's fault;
  - Previous generation refused to use condom;
  - Haitian men from previous generation refused to disclose their STD symptoms to partner, sometime to provider, when they finally do, they don't usually complete treatment.



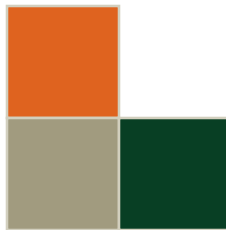
# Culturally Relevant Factors in Haitian Community

- Mental Health Services:

- Haitian Patients are usually reluctant when evoking mental health, psychotherapy, psychiatry, because for them, you mean they are crazy.

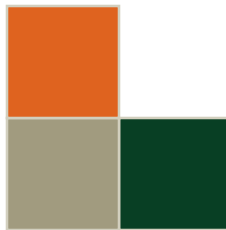
- More than any other ethnic group, Haitian living with HIV needs mental Health service. With this feeling of guilt associated with self-rejection, low self-esteem, rejection by fellow Haitian or family member, rejection by church, this category of patient is carrying the burden of depression that can affect their compliance down the road.

(Santana & Dancy, 2000)



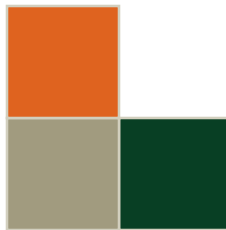
# Conclusion

- With the Haitian-born population standing:
  - At 2% of the total population in Florida in 2012
  - 0.17% of the U.S. population that same year
  - But making up nearly 16% of black foreign-born adults living with HIV disease.
- Much more effort still needs to be done to decrease the incidence and the prevalence in this community.



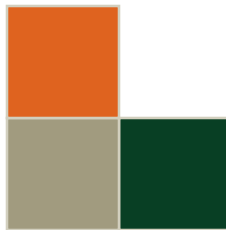
# Conclusion

- The most effective programs for Haitian population are comprehensive, interactive/ objective strategies for delivering prevention messages.
- Comprehensive programs should be: culturally competent, have clearly defined audiences, objectives, and be based in behavioral and social science theory and research.
- Since the main mode of exposure to HIV infection for both Haitian-born men and women is heterosexual contact, focusing on changing HIV-risk behaviors would be the most beneficial.



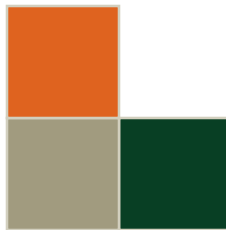
# Conclusion

- To ensure that Haitian Americans living with HIV/AIDS access appropriate services, health care providers need to ensure their programs and staff address cultural attitudes, beliefs, and expectations.
- In particular, clinicians should demonstrate respect; provide confidentiality and privacy, and address language barriers, transportation needs, housing, and family needs.



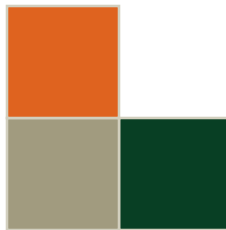
# SUMMARY

- The findings emphasize the need for health care practitioners to pay close attention to the education levels of their Haitian patients, as well as their mental health status.
- The data also suggest that once these individuals are linked to care and offered assistance with their daily challenges there is a high likelihood that they will maintain an adequate level of adherence to care.



# SUMMARY

- Improved quality of care is the outcome measure that indicates whether implementing training programs, policies, and culturally or linguistically appropriate standards makes a difference
- For Haitian Americans living with or affected by HIV/AIDS to maximize the quality and length of their lives, it is imperative that health and social service providers adapt services to be culturally sensitive and appropriate

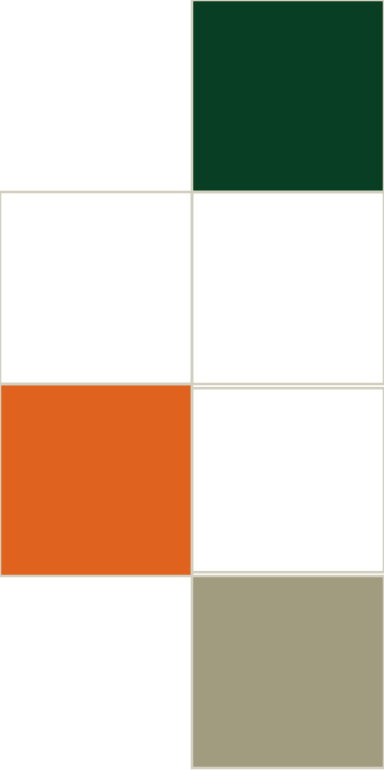


# KEY MESSAGES

- Culturally sensitive health care services are provided.
- Clinicians need to understand the traditional and spiritual healing methods of the Haitian American community.
- They must show respect and provide confidentiality and privacy.
- They should consider accessibility issues such as language barriers, difficulty navigating bureaucratic systems, transportation, housing, and family needs.
- Whenever possible, Creole-speaking case managers, doctors, and nurses should be utilized.
- Providing culturally sensitive services will translate into greater access and more effective health care for this population







THANK YOU

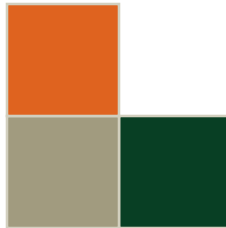


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