

# Assessed, Addressed, and Highly Favored!

## High-Touch Coaching™ for Positive Change with Women of Color

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### Introduction

The combined impact of race, class, and gender contributes to higher rates of obesity and chronic stress, making Black and Latina women more susceptible to type 2 diabetes and challenges when attempting to make positive behavior changes. The Black Women's Health Imperative (BWHI) was one of six national organizations selected to take the National Diabetes Prevention Program (National DPP) to scale in 2012. During those first five years, participants expressed various issues not covered in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) curriculum, leading BWHI to encourage lifestyle coaches to take a more engaged approach to work with participants. "High-touch" engagement was not new for BWHI as the organization was originally grounded in high-touch and self-help, considering all aspects of the participant, their intersectionality, and their lived experience.

### Assessed: Lessons Learned in the First Years of the CDC Cooperative Agreement

#### Impetus and development of HTC

In the early years of BWHI, founder, Byllye Avery, used a high-touch model working with Black women in several states, both individually and in organized self-help groups, helping women see the power they possessed within. BWHI continues that legacy. BWHI believes women are strong, intelligent, resilient, and able to make good decisions about their lives, their health, and their well-being. Since the organization was founded in 1983, the concept of High-Touch™ has not only guided BWHI, it has defined them and helped them to evolve.

#### Coaching Experiences That Informed the 10 Pulses of HTC

When I ask what motivates them, they say it's me. I think being accountable to the group is a huge motivator. I always give them the "extra" information they need/want. They get a lot of negative feedback and teasing from people around them. We spend a good amount of time talking about how to respond to negative comments and stay on track. My diversity and inclusion training has been a huge benefit in this area as I teach them self-advocacy and language to wrap around their feelings.

- Tanynya, Lifestyle Coach, Black Women for Wellness



#### The 10 Pules of HTC

- 1 Respect for the lived experience** of women of color, which influences all aspects of their lives.
- 2 Awareness of how intersectionality** can create a bigger challenge for women of color.
- 3 Thoughtful, authentic, and patient-centered engagement** that builds trust and credibility.
- 4 Personalized/customized learning** in response to diverse personalities, learning styles, needs, and realities.
- 5 Cultural and linguistic tailoring** of program content, strategies, and activities.
- 6 Creating a safe space** for women to be reflective so they can self-assess and find their own solutions for change.
- 7 Knowing that the participant's voice** is the most important voice in the room.
- 8 Accessible and consistent support** and acknowledging that referrals to other resources is a must.
- 9 High-Touch™ coaches** who are authentic, vulnerable, and **build relationships**.
- 10 High-Touch™ coaches** who are also **reflective** and embrace their own uniqueness and **self-assessment**.

### High-Touch Coaching™

BWHI'S *Change Your Lifestyle. Change Your Life.* (CYL<sup>2</sup>) lifestyle change program is led by High-Touch™ coaches who are empathetic, compassionate, and share many of the lived experiences of their participants. High-Touch Coaching™ reflects understanding, value, and respect for the lived experience of Black women and Latinas, as well as the influence that experience has on every thought they have, every change they are faced with, and every decision they make. They help participants get to the heart of what is required for lifestyle change by helping them understand how their lived experiences contribute to their current behavior, what got them to where they are, and how to turn that knowledge into positive behavior change. High-Touch™ coaches do not pressure participants to change who they are but help them realize they are worthy and capable, and because they are, they have everything they need to meet their goals.



### Addressed: Mastered Strategy for Providing Cost-Effective, Team-Based, Quality Care

#### Early Strategies and Activities That Became Best Practices

- Holding group sessions in comfortable community spaces like parks, rec centers, and churches
- Partnering with organizations to make screenings more accessible for participants
- Hosting activities, like group grocery shopping trips, healthy cooking demos, and line and ballroom dance classes
- Allowing participants to shine by showcasing their interests, skills, and talents to help other group members
- Offering supplemental sessions with guest professionals presenting relevant information, practices, and techniques

Lifestyle coaches use **ENGAGEment** strategies:

- **E** - Exploration/Examination of group members' needs, interests, values, issues, and motivations
- **N** - Navigation through participants' life circumstances, culture, challenges, and triggers
- **G** - Generation of opportunities for participants to shine, and identification of resources to support success
- **A** - Assignment of responsibilities to participants that establish and encourage program ownership, confidence, and accountability to self and others
- **G** - Growth of advocates, ambassadors, and coaches
- **E** - Evolution through doing all the previous items on an ongoing basis

#### HTC on Any Budget

- Coaches learn the participants' culture from them by listening to their experiences and concerns and then tailoring the delivery, examples, and solutions to fit their needs and resources
- They also help eliminate barriers that result from the social determinants of health that could prevent them from completing the program and achieving their goals
  - One example is a virtual **Resource Bank**, in which participants can deposit or withdraw community resources

#### Technology Integration

- **Zoom:** Virtual classes have been offered since the onset of the pandemic, opening up the program to a larger audience and making the program more convenient for participants
- **BWHI App:** Virtual classes led by live lifestyle coaches on the App, and the App offers public communities that function as communication hubs available to the public. There are live events like cooking demonstrations and talk shows and public and private communities to discuss health and wellness, offer support, and get access to content about nutrition, stress, self-care, and many other topics.
- **Gamification Strategies:** To increase virtual engagement, coaches use interactive activities, group playlists, virtual healthy snacks and cook-offs, Sketchnote or Doodle, and mindfulness exercises



### Highly Favored: Delivering Equitable Care For Diverse Populations

#### Participant Spotlights



Christina is very down to earth and shared personal things about her life. She set a comfort level for the group to share their own experiences. The topics were always relatable and the entire group was looking forward to each class. We met as strangers but became more like friends after a few weeks in the program. I was already focused on managing my diabetes. Recently, I had a total knee replacement and needed my A1C to be at an acceptable level before surgery. The things I learned from the class helped me do that.

- Deborah Byrd



I made a commitment - once I signed up for the program that was it. I was on a path to become the best version of myself. I made an investment in my health. Everything in the program was so culturally relevant. Accountability was a big key for me! I gained a better understanding of stress and how that was affecting me. I was able to make a plan to manage it. Getting rid of stress helped me lose weight. As a result of this program, I found my voice and created boundaries that needed to be created for my well-being. This program has been so much more than just losing weight and eating healthy. I felt cared for in my full embodiment as a Black woman.

- Nakisa Glover



This program seemed daunting at first and at 3 months in I was ready to quit. My sister who was also in the program made it her mission to keep me focused and accountable. She became a big inspiration to me along the way. Also, my best friend (Angela) works for BWHI and had referred me to the program. I didn't want to let her down.

Coach Callie was upbeat, pleasant, and consistently warm. She made us feel like we mattered and she cared about us. Any obstacles that were faced, she would try to problem solve with us. Her spirit was wonderful! The programming was well thought out and organized. The other participants were really nice and all of similar ages. Never understood the importance of tracking fat and eating the good fats until this program. Loved the emphasis on self-care.

- Evelyn Savido

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