

# Black Families Defying Diabetes Together (Defying Diabetes): A culturally adapted intervention for diabetes management and prevention

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## BACKGROUND

Type 2 diabetes is often viewed as an individual lifestyle disease. To control it, a person with diabetes (PWD) is expected to engage in activities that can affect the entire family's lifestyle.

The Defying Diabetes program was developed on the belief that type 2 diabetes self-management and prevention is best addressed in a family context. Black PWDs took a 12-week DSMES program and family members participated in National DPP (first 16 weeks). Each family was assigned a community health worker (CHW) who helped integrate individual and family behavior change.

The team explored the benefits of a family approach including:

- Common diabetes messaging and improved family communication,
- Increased acceptance of household changes,
- Increased likelihood of changing intergenerational family practices.

### BLACK FAMILIES DEFYING DIABETES TOGETHER



## PROJECT GOALS

Project goals are:

- Identifying family-centered structural, functional, cultural, and social factors that promote type 2 diabetes control and prevention for Black families.
- Understanding how to create supportive environments for enhancing diabetes communications, management with PWDs, and prevention with persons at risk for type 2 diabetes (PARs).

## METHODS

- We developed tools for recruitment and implementation of Defying Diabetes, our Black family specific diabetes management and prevention program.
- The program was conducted in Montgomery County, MD by the African American Health Program (AAHP). AAHP recruited and enrolled families into Defying Diabetes. Families consisted of 1 adult PWD and 1 or 2 PARs.
- The program was 19–20 weeks per cohort and each family was supported by a CHW.
  - Families participate in 3 initial sessions encouraging family discussions, facilitated by CHWs.
  - Participants attend DSMES/National DPP, create family-level goals, meet with CHWs, and use family-focused activity suggestions and resources (worksheets).
- Evaluation data collection:
  - Baseline, midpoint, and final surveys with PWDs and PARs
  - Baseline, midpoint, and final interviews with family units and CHWs
  - Baseline and final A1C/weight

## RESULTS

### OVERALL:

- 19 Black families joined Defying Diabetes. 17 of the families enrolled (89%), completed the program.
- 83% of PWDs completed DSMES and 53% of PARs completed National DPP.
- 82% of all participants strongly/very strongly agreed that diabetes is best addressed together with family/friends.



- 82% of all participants strongly/very strongly agreed that materials, DSMES/National DPP, and CHW-led activities were relevant to them as a Black family.

*[Defying Diabetes] was encouraging. It kept us in remembrance of what we needed to do.*

*I liked the length of the program and the different methods of engagement. Videos, CHW, worksheets.*

- 89% of all participants strongly/very strongly agreed that they would recommend Defying Diabetes to other Black families.

### PROGRAM ELEMENTS:

#### 100% of participants met with their CHWs to get tips and support and found this very useful

- CHWs facilitated conversations between family members, encouraged active positive engagement, and helped participants build a diabetes-healthy family lifestyle.

*Our meetings [with our CHW] were great and informative, personal, and focused on us as a family*

- 75% of participants consistently met with the CHW with their family member(s). Of those who met with the CHW:

- 93% strong/very strongly agreed that the CHW was helpful in the program.

- 82% strongly/very strongly agreed that the CHW helped their family members and themselves work better together.



#### The first three sessions were developed specifically for Defying Diabetes

- Session 1: What health means to participants as a Black family

*I really like how it started, because it gave me emotional permission to recognize it and that's really nice, like family is everything. And this is important, and we are here to be a support for each other, and that was official as opposed to casual.*

- Session 2: Family's relationship with food

- Session 3: How system barriers/racism impact health and healthy lifestyle as a Black family

*[Racism] It's a topic that's not discussed in medical settings. It was a good to see that [racism] is recognized as an influence on eating and our health*

## CONCLUSIONS

- 1 Data indicate Defying Diabetes participation has contributed to Black families taking steps to build healthier and more supportive environments.
- 2 Families report that the program has helped create spaces for Black families to discuss topics relevant to their health and culture.
- 3 Families report the CHWs are critical to all aspects of Defying Diabetes.

#### Worksheets with activity suggestions and resources were developed for participants to use as a family to build communication and a shared healthy lifestyle.

- Of participants that used the worksheets:
  - 72% thought they were useful or very useful to themselves and their family.
  - 67% agreed or very strongly agreed that the worksheets helped themselves and their families understand how to support one another.

