

# The Road to Washington

Mobilizing Communities to create a supportive environment  
to help eliminate vertical Transmission

GIPA Facilitator

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Jamaican Network of Seropositives  
(JN+)

Creating an enabling environment for more  
meaning involvement of people with HIV  
within self support groups and HIV positive  
women's networks

# Presentation Content

- Background and concept of Jamaican Network of Seropositives Self Support Groups
- Partnerships and collaborations that supports the strengthening of PHIV involvement
- Jamaican Community of Positive Women
- Opportunities for more meaningful involvement in the PMTCT program
- Barriers to more meaningful involvement

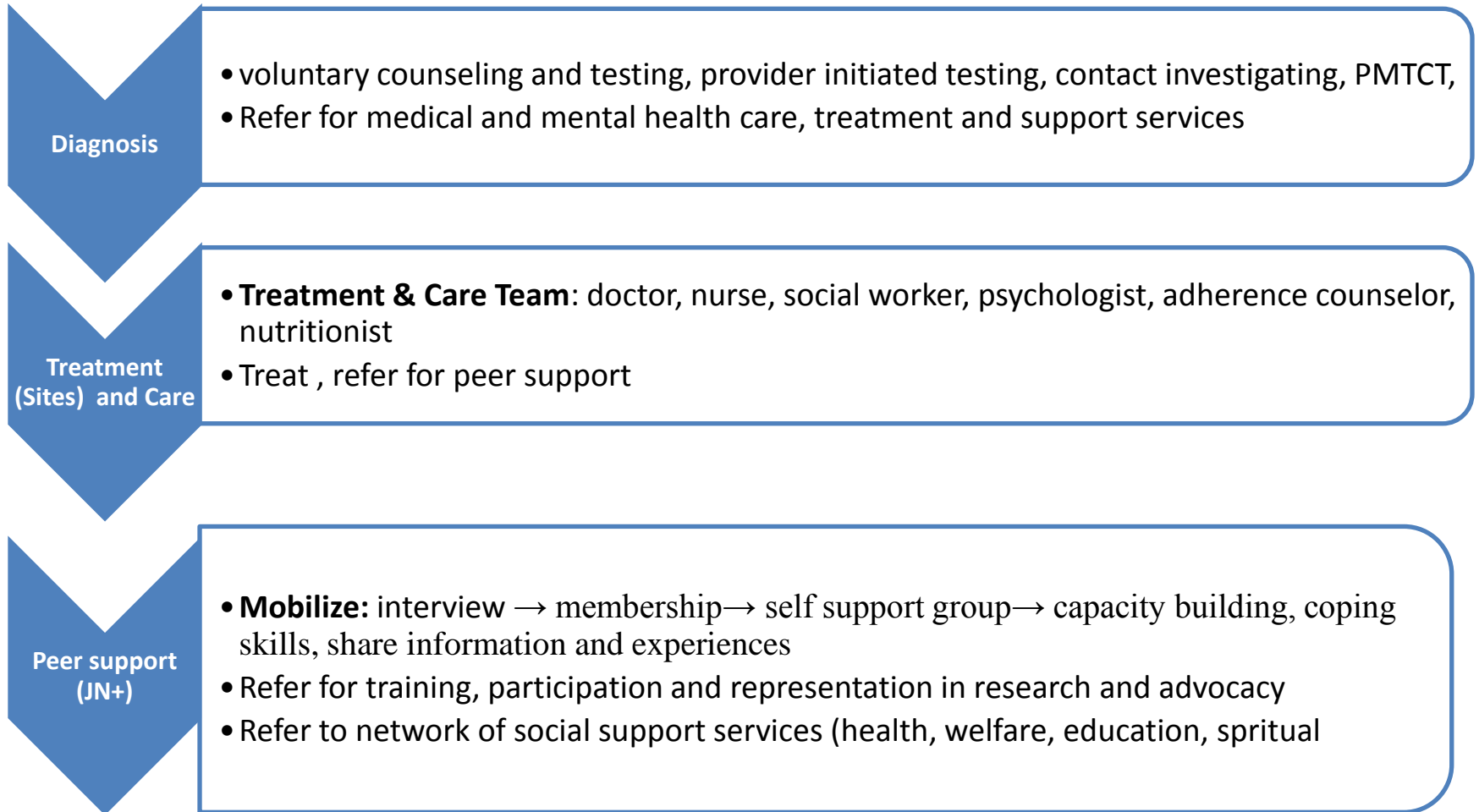
# Background and concept

- JN+ established 1996 and registered 1999 after its first assembly of 60 **men and women** living with HIV in 1998.
- Vision:... PLHIV recognized as full citizens
- Mission: to advocate for rights and concerns of PLHIV and their **affected family**
- Motto: “Supporting ourselves for survival”
- Constitution stated that JN+ is a network of support groups

# Concept & Operations Systems

- The draft operations systems for self support groups 2007
- The concept is inclusive of health system services, social service partners and network of self support groups
- and their role in the health and wellbeing of people diagnosed HIV positive and their families.

# Illustrated Diagram



# A Network of Self Support Groups (JN+ SSG)

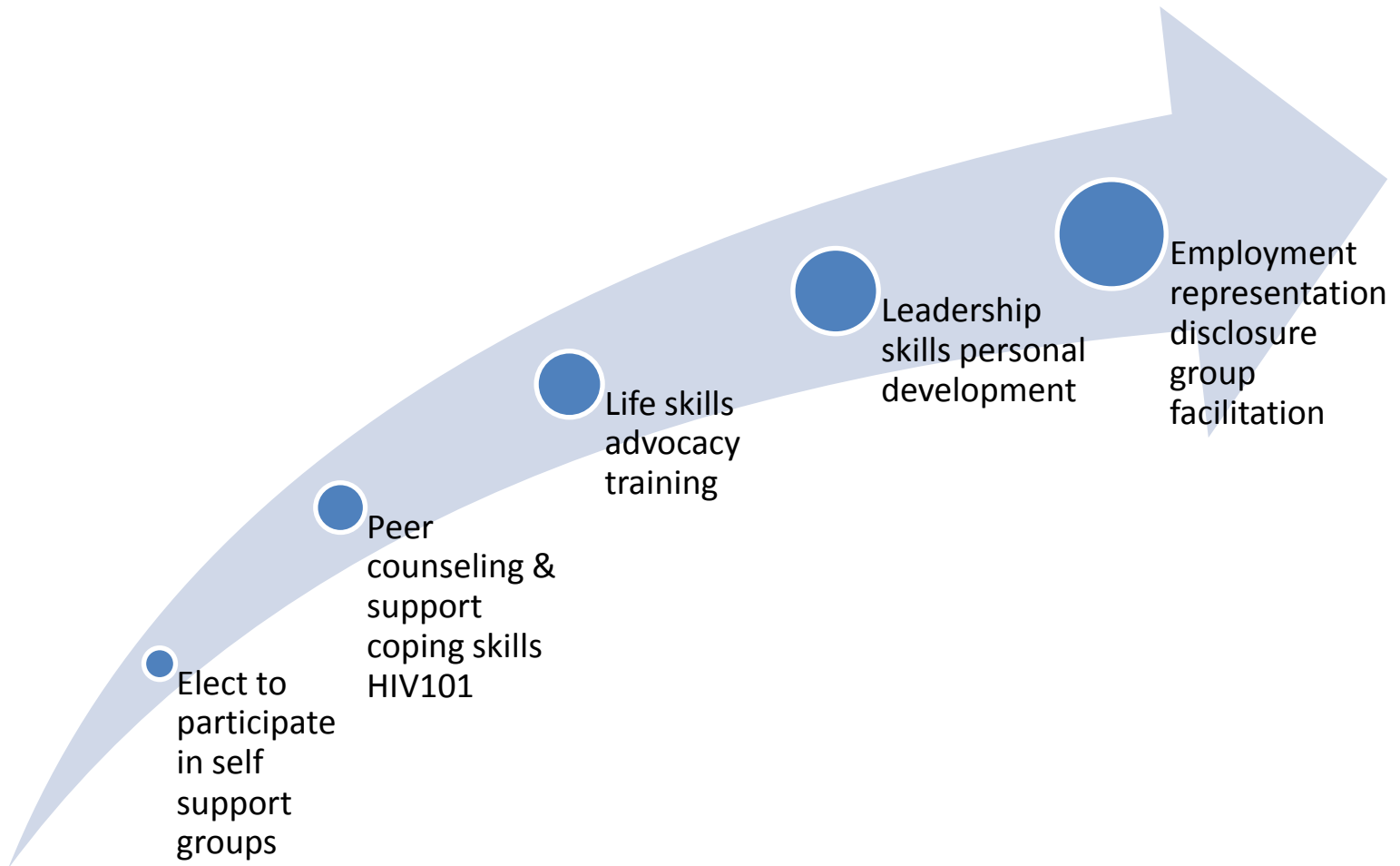
- **Goal:** People living with HIV empowered to participate in the reduction of stigma and discrimination, new infections and achieve their full potential.

## *...Mending*

- The HIV positive person decides to become a member of the JN+ self support group (SSG)
- The principle of GIPA (greater involvement of people with HIV) becomes a part of their existence.
- GIPA enables a HIV positive person to be more likely to participate in groups and gatherings



# Redefining Life



# 2004, 2006 needs assessments

- more men than women were registered members of JN+
- women were facilitating 10 of the 12 groups
- more than 75% of those who attended meetings were women.

# Discussion with the group leaders

concluded that:

- the specific health and social need of women had to be targeted for attention
- the only compensation for their work was when they participated in sensitization interventions as living testimony
- Training in group facilitation, report writing and computer literacy was needed

# **An enabling environment for more meaningful involvement of PHIV**

Requires:

- ✓ Partnerships (program planning, M&E)
- ✓ Collaborations (implement, sustain,
- ✓ Networking (linking, sharing, gain, maintain
- ✓ Resources (human, financial, space, equipment, materials)
- ✓ Advocacy (human rights, laws, redress

# Partnerships & Collaborations

## **The National HIV/STI Program/Enabling Environment and Human Rights Component**

- Employment for PHIV
- Partner on National HIV related Discrimination Report and Redress System
- Stipends for Presenters, SSG field coordinators
- Training in HIV Sensitization Interventions

# Partnerships & Collaborations

## **ITPC/Collaborative Fund/CTAG**

Strengthening support groups for treatment preparedness

Women's empowerment and life skills building

## **UNFPA**

- Training Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights
- Condom Access (male, female condoms)

# Jamaican Community of Positive Women (JCW+)

The JCW+ is an organization of HIV positive women created to

- Provide a space and forum for positive women to prepare and implement actions and activities aimed at self empowerment and participation in decisions that affect their lives

# Participation in the GNP+/ICW consultation

ICW enabled JCW+ to participate in the  
consultation on IATT's Strategic Framework for  
PMTC Components 1 & 2

Focus Group discussions was a creative way to  
get more responses from women who had  
little or no access to computer and internet to  
complete a survey



# Enabling our participation

- ICW's advocacy enabled our first consultancy and leadership workshop
- UNAIDS Jamaica Office provided guidance for us to plan and implement the three day workshop for 20 women

# Enabling our participation

- ICW and ATHENA enabled the inclusion of Caribbean women in the Universal Access consultation

Result: The JCW+ women were so proud to see their logo and expressions in print!

Now they are trying to access internet to complete Global Fund survey...smile

# Strengthening HIV positive women networks

For more meaningful participation

- the woman must be seen a more that the recipient of PMTCT programs and projects
- The holistic approach to our treatment and care is essential to reaching our full potential
- Investing in positive women's organization will improve ability to participate at all levels of HIV response

# What about our MEN!

The fathers of our children

The partner we don't have... maybe even when  
we are pregnant

# Our men, father of the babies

- Men's Space: A space for HIV infected and affected men who are partners of the HIV Positive women
- To support improvement of sexual reproductive health and family planning among PLHIV
- To enhance treatment adherence support for HIV positive women

# Barriers and challenges

## Barriers to partnerships and collaborations

- Exclusion from crucial HIV planning and programming
- Unsustained initiatives,
- Lack of human and financial resources
- Lack of mentoring and psychological support

# & Challenges

- PHIV personal needs
- Lack of respect and recognition for the work and participation of PLHIV
- Discriminating attitudes of health workers
- Discriminating behavior social service providers
- Internalize Stigma among PHIV

# What would help

- A space and the professional help to debrief after an intervention
- Opportunities to take stock of our work and achievements
- Documenting our activities in a way that captures data useful for evaluation and programming ..and the human resource to assist