

For Immediate Release
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The Columbia University School of Social Work and CCNMTL Awarded \$3.5 Million Grant for Multimedia HIV Prevention Program

NEW YORK— July 30, 2007 The Columbia University School of Social Work's Social Intervention Group (SIG) and the Columbia Center for New Media Teaching and Learning (CCNMTL) announced today the receipt of a \$3.5 million, five-year research grant award from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). The goal of the collaborative project is to evaluate the outcomes of using multimedia and Web-based technology to disseminate an HIV prevention program.

Project Connect is the first prevention program designed for heterosexual couples at risk of HIV infection. "The incidence of new HIV infections is not yet declining, but we know how to reduce potential risks," said Dr. Susan Witte, principal investigator and associate professor at the School of Social Work. "While paper-based materials have been traditionally utilized in prevention programs, multimedia strategies promise a greater likelihood of more rapid and widespread risk reduction. Our goal is to determine the most effective method for the dissemination of important information to the larger community."

Funds from NIMH will further this goal: 80 community-based organizations in New York State will be randomly selected to receive either the paper version of Connect or the Web-based Multimedia Connect developed by the SIG/CCNMTL team. Multimedia Connect incorporates videos, interactive tools and activities that support both the facilitator in sessions with clients as well as training of the facilitator. The technology also reduces facilitators' preparation time, enabling them to focus more on clients. SIG researchers will evaluate the successful adoption of the intervention at the end of the five-year period.

"CCNMTL's work with SIG on Multimedia Connect has advanced the research they pioneered, positioning them now to undertake the study of a large-scale dissemination of their proven intervention," said Frank Moretti, executive director of CCNMTL. "An additional and important benefit of this work is its active use in social work classrooms as well as in the field."

To read more about Multimedia Connect please visit http://ccnmtl.columbia.edu/projects/feature_pages/triangle_connect.pdf. For more information, or to interview Drs. Witte or Moretti, please contact Jeannie Hii 212-851-2327 or jy2223@columbia.edu.

About the Social Intervention Group (www.socialwork.columbia.edu/sig)

The Social Intervention Group is a multidisciplinary research center that works to bring prevention and intervention models to local, national, and international communities. The center addresses co-occurring problems such as HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, and interpersonal violence and trauma.

About CCNMTL (<http://ccnmtl.columbia.edu>)

CCNMTL is a service of Columbia University whose mission is to enhance teaching and learning through the purposeful use of technology and new media. CCNMTL is part of Columbia's Information Services Division.