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The Well Project Leadership Exchange

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The Well Project Leadership Exchange is a series connecting thoughtleaders in the HIV community to explore one another's work, activism, and personal experiences. This series brings together, in dialogue, cis and trans women and others who uplift women's voices across the HIV community. Episodes of the "spinoff" series Leadership Exchange LIVE are streamed and recorded before live online audiences.

Please join us for this remarkable series as we find new ways to connect leaders and learn from one another during these unusual and challenging times.

Upcoming Sessions

Future dates and topics of future episodes to be posted here soon. Check back often!

Leadership Exchange LIVE: Past Sessions

[Sex, Pleasure, and PrEP – March 2024](#)

Each year, National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (#NWGHAAD) takes place on March 10. This year for #NWGHAAD, The Well Project presented a powerful new episode of Leadership Exchange LIVE. Moderated by Ciarra "Ci Ci" Covin (senior manager of community programming), don't miss this empowering and informative discussion between The Well Project's community advisory board member Kim Canady (Pleasure Activist) and sexologist Ashley Cobb (The Black Dr. Ruth) as they explore the unique aspects of women's sexual experiences and discuss the importance of prioritizing pleasure and sexual satisfaction for all women living with and vulnerable to HIV.

[Black Women Living with and Vulnerable to HIV in the US: Needs, Priorities, and Optimal Care – December 2023](#)

Do not miss out on the December 2023 episode of Leadership Exchange LIVE! Copresented with [NASTAD](#), this episode features a dynamic and practical exchange between program manager Ciarra "Ci Ci" Covin (The Well Project) and Latesha Elope, MD, MSPH (University of Alabama at Birmingham), to uplift the unique needs, priorities, and insights of Black women living with and vulnerable to HIV, with an emphasis on the US South. It also highlights optimal care for women and provides participants with best practices to improve their capacity to serve women living with and vulnerable to HIV.

[HIV, Women, and Menopause – October 2023](#)

The Well Project believes in promoting not only health literacy, but also health information, and strives to fill in gaps where they exist. The October 2023 episode of Leadership Exchange LIVE examines menopause among women living with HIV. We talked about what it is and what it is not, and learned about some exciting research.

Our stakeholder liaison, Bridgette Picou, LVN, was joined by Sara E. Looby, PhD, CNP-BC, FAAN, Harvard Medical School Metabolism Unit and Yvonne L. Munn Center for Nursing Research; Sara H Bares, MD, FIDSA, associate professor of medicine, Division of Infectious Diseases, UNMCC; and Gina Brown, RSW, who will help us navigate this topic that is often left out of research and conversations that are vital for women's physical and mental health.

[Updates to the Perinatal HIV Clinical Guidelines! – February 2023](#)

Leadership Exchange LIVE (BEEEEBAH Edition) is a live video interview series featuring experts in breast/chestfeeding. The fourth session features Ciarra "Ci Ci" Covin (The Well Project) and Lealah Pollock, MD, MS (University of California, San Francisco) discussing recent updates to the Perinatal HIV Clinical Guidelines.

Updates to the section Infant Feeding for Individuals with HIV in the United States now assert the need for shared decision-making between providers and parents living with HIV and increased support from providers for parents' infant-feeding choices. This is big news!

Please watch now to learn about these updates; hear Ci Ci relate her own experiences and describe what these changes can mean for women and other birthing people living with HIV; and listen as Lealah shares what this means more broadly for the landscape of breast/chestfeeding and HIV.

This series of exchanges with thoughtleaders on breast/chestfeeding and HIV has been essential to our efforts to raise awareness, inspire action, and ensure that women living with HIV can experience their fundamental right to make informed, uncoerced infant-feeding decisions.

[Breastfeeding, HIV, and Criminalization: Legal Considerations from a US Attorney – June 2022](#)

[BEEEEBAH \(Building Equity, Ethics, and Education on Breastfeeding and HIV\)](#) is a three-year program launched earlier this year by The Well Project. The third session of our Leadership Exchange LIVE (BEEEEBAH edition) features Ciarra "Ci Ci" Covin (The Well Project) and Catherine Hanssens (The Center for HIV Law and Policy). Ci Ci relates her personal experiences as a woman living with HIV, new parent, and advocate; Catherine shares insights from her work as an attorney who has been active in HIV legal and policy issues since 1984.

[The Big Picture: Health Implications and Bioethical Considerations of Breastfeeding and HIV – February 2022](#)

For our second session of Leadership Exchange LIVE: BEEEEBAH Edition, The Well Project's Ciarra "Ci Ci" Covin was joined by Marielle Gross, MD, MBE, an OB/GYN and bioethicist at the University of Pittsburgh and Johns Hopkins. Ci Ci and Marielle have [shared a stage to talk about breast/chestfeeding and HIV before](#); the two reconnected to discuss race, maternal health, and ethics around infant feeding and HIV - including supporting parents living with HIV to engage in shared, informed infant feeding decision-making.

[Breastfeeding and HIV: Viewpoints from an Adult and Pediatric Provider – December 2021](#)

In the inaugural session of Leadership Exchange LIVE: BEEEEBAH Edition, The Well Project's Ciarra "Ci Ci" Covin sat down with pediatric and adult infectious disease physician Allison Agwu, MD, ScM, of Johns Hopkins. Covin related her personal experiences as a woman living with HIV, new parent, and advocate; Agwu shared insights from her work caring for women living with HIV across the lifespan (from pediatrics to adults), including women who choose to breastfeed.

Leadership Exchange: Past Sessions

[Bridgette Picou, LVN and Mariam Davtyan, PhD, MPH – September 2022](#)

This remarkable episode in The Well Project's Leadership Exchange series features a discussion between The Well Project Stakeholder Liaison and nurse Bridgette Picou and Mariam Davtyan, a researcher and assistant professor at the Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California. This dialogue between two leaders in the field touches on a multitude of important topics, including HIV research among women and kids, the role of stigma in the lives of Black and other women of color living with HIV, interactions with providers, and rethinking the way we think about "risk." Check it out!

[Marissa Gonzalez and Grissel Granados - May 2022](#)

The 10th episode in our The Well Project Leadership Exchange series features a discussion between The Well Project Community Advisory Board member Marissa Gonzalez and The Well Project's new deputy director Grissel Granados. This engrossing conversation includes a discussion of opportunities around serving the Latinx community, as our speakers share both professional and personal experiences. Don't miss it!

[Masonia Traylor and Dázon Dixon Diallo – July 2021](#)

The ninth in our The Well Project Leadership Exchange series features a conversation between The Well Project Community Advisory Board member Masonia Traylor and SisterLove Founder and President and WRI member Dázon Dixon Diallo. Don't miss this moving conversation about serving Black women living with and vulnerable to HIV and the ways in which global and domestic advocacy work can inform each other.

[Porchia Dees and Gina Brown, MD – March 2021](#)

The eighth in our The Well Project Leadership Exchange series features a conversation between The Well Project Community Advisory Board member, Senior HIV Testing Coordinator at Black AIDS Institute, and HIV advocate/influencer, Porchia Dees and Gilead Science's Principal Medical Scientist and WRI member Gina Brown, MD. Join us as these inspirational leaders talk about pregnancy and HIV and the ways that treatment and care have and continue to evolve.

[Destiny Smith and Gina Brown, RSW – February 2021](#)

The seventh in our The Well Project Leadership Exchange series features a conversation between The Well Project community advisory board (CAB) member, HIV advocate, blogger, and author Destiny Smith and The Well Project CAB chair and WRI member and Gina Brown, RSW, community engagement manager for the Southern AIDS Coalition. Please tune into to this incredible cross-generational dialogue and hear what each of these remarkable advocates had to learn from the other.

[Katie Willingham and Naina Khanna – January 2021](#)

The sixth in our The Well Project Leadership Exchange series features a conversation between one of The Well Project's newest community advisory board (CAB) members, Katie Willingham, and WRI member and partner Naina Khanna, co-executive director of Positive Women's Network – USA (PWN-

USA). Please check out this fascinating discussion to learn more about these two amazing women, their journeys to HIV advocacy, and about how they practice self-care, particularly in these extremely challenging times.

[Gina Brown, RSW and Chuck Wira, PhD – December 2020](#)

The fifth in our The Well Project Leadership Exchange series features a conversation between The Well Project community advisory board (CAB) and Women's Research Initiative on HIV/AIDS (WRI) member Gina Brown, RSW and our WRI member Chuck Wira, PhD. Gina is a community engagement manager at the Southern AIDS Coalition and Chuck is a professor at the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth College. They are both long-time and highly valued members of the WRI. Please check out this warm dialogue as two long-time colleagues learn new things about each other and the ways they are each working to change the landscape of HIV for women.

[Abosede Olotu and Judy Auerbach, PhD – November 2020](#)

The fourth in our The Well Project Leadership Exchange series features a discussion between our global ambassador and community advisory board (CAB) member Abosede Olotu and our board member Judy Auerbach, PhD. Abosede was one of The Well Project's original CAB members (starting in 2014) and has served as a global ambassador for the organization since 2015, as she conducts grassroots outreach and education for adolescents and women in Nigeria. Judy became a member of our Board of Directors in 2013 and is a professor in the school of medicine at the University of California at San Francisco. She is also a long-term Advisory Board member for our Women's Research Initiative on HIV/AIDS (WRI). Join us to hear the remarkable conversation between these two leaders on opposite sides of the world as they talk about what it will take to change the world for women and girls living with HIV.

[Maria Mejia and Linda Scruggs – October 2020](#)

The third in our The Well Project Leadership Exchange series features a discussion between our global ambassador and community advisory board (CAB) member Maria Mejia and our board member Linda Scruggs. Maria joined The Well Project in 2010 as one of the very first bloggers for *A Girl Like Me*. She has been a CAB member since 2014 and served as a global ambassador for the organization since 2015. Linda became a member of our Board of Directors in 2019 and is the founding director of Ribbon Consulting Group. This engaging dialogue between two brilliant leaders delves into mentorship and the vital role that self-care plays in the lives of advocates.

[Masonia Traylor and Vignetta Charles, PhD – September 2020](#)

The second in our series of The Well Project Leadership Exchange features a discussion between our community advisory board (CAB) member Masonia Traylor and our board member Vignetta Charles, PhD. Masonia joined The Well Project in 2017 as a CAB member and began blogging for *A Girl Like Me* in 2018, and is the owner of Lady BurgAndy. Vignetta became a member of our Board of Directors in 2019 and is the Chief Executive Officer at ETR. This session focuses on the work that both of these leaders do to help foster leadership among others and lift up the voices and experiences of youth.

[Ciarra Covin and Celeste Watkins-Hayes, PhD – August 2020](#)

Check out the first Well Project Leadership Exchange between our community advisory board (CAB)

member Ciarra Covin and WRI member and sociologist Celeste Watkins-Hayes, PhD. Ciarra joined The Well Project in 2019 as an *A Girl Like Me* blogger, became a CAB member in 2020, and is the owner of Healing is Voluntary. Celeste is a member of our Women's Research Initiative on HIV/AIDS (WRI) whose work has focused on Black women and HIV and the HIV safety net and the author of *Remaking a Life: How Women Living with HIV/AIDS Confront Inequality*. Ciarra became interested in speaking with Celeste after seeing her plenary presentation at AIDS 2020.



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