

Expanding through intersectionality and language justice at SisterLove

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This summer, I have had the pleasure of working at the reproductive justice non-profit SisterLove, based out of Atlanta, Georgia. SisterLove supports Black women and focuses on HIV advocacy in the forms of testing, education, and activism.

Through the first couple of weeks at SisterLove, I was able to gain a new understanding and perspective on the multi-layered ways that HIV affects the Black community, especially in Atlanta. I found that to eradicate HIV, care needs to be given on many levels, most of which have a racist and sexist history. The social determinant of health such as food deserts, access to transportation, economic inequality, and poverty intersect and affect transmission rates while making it exponentially more difficult to access care for people living with HIV. SisterLove's core value is to intentionally center the Black community and provide holistic care to empower people who have been overlooked in the past.

My position within the organization is with the Health Love Workshops, which aim to educate and create an open dialogue about sex and STDs. These small group sessions allow women to lean into the vulnerability and taboo of talking about sex by learning about prep options for HIV. Since going to college, I have realized the vast range of people's backgrounds when it comes to sex education. While I believed I had comprehensive sex education, it was still influenced by heterosexual, white, monogamous ideals. SisterLove allowed me to recognize the multiplicity of these lenses and how we can further open up the dialogue through language justice. I believe that access to sex education is a fundamental right and through working with SisterLove I have seen the positive impact it can have on all age ranges. My work at SisterLove aims to include more youth and LGBTQIA+ communities by expanding the way we talk about sex. My main project for the summer is to create and facilitate focus groups to start a conversation around what language best reaches and serves each community so that every individual can feel empowered and educated.