

2<sup>nd</sup> World Conference on

# STDs, STIs & HIV/AIDS

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## Terrence O Lewis

West Chester University, USA

**Addressing the intersections between religion, LGBTQ identities and psychosexual health in African-American Communities**

There is a psychosexual health crisis in the African-American community, with disproportionate rates of HIV/AIDS infections and poorer medical treatment outcomes. In contrast to the homophobic responses of most historically black churches (HBCs), some HBCs are offering an affirmative ministry for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) individuals. Dr. Lewis has been exploring the experiences of LGBT-affirming African-American ministers and HBCs, and their responses to the psychosexual health needs of LGBT individuals in the African-American community. In his dissertation research, Dr. Lewis used a Heuristic methodology to explore the historical, theological, and practical dimensions of four LGBT-affirming HBCs. In his current research project, Dr. Lewis is conducting a narrative study with African-American minister who offer an LGBT affirmative ministry within the African American community. In addition to sharing the research findings, Dr. Lewis will discuss the lessons learned from conducting community-based research projects with HBCs and ministers in the African-American community. The objectives of present

study are: (1) The impacts of religiously-based stigmatization on the psychosexual health of African-American LGBT individuals and their families; (2) The emerging LGBT affirming ministries within Historically Black Churches and African American Communities and (3) The importance of interdisciplinary collaborations between churches, public health workers, and social workers for addressing the biological, psychological, social, sexual, and spiritual health needs African-American LGBT individuals and their families.

### Speaker Biography

Terrence O Lewis has extensive clinical experience working with individuals and couples in community mental health settings and private practice. As a community-based researcher, he focuses on the relationships between churches and marginalized populations including LGBT and ethnic minority communities. His dissertation research was on the phenomenon of LGBT-affirming Black churches and their responses to the HIV/AIDS crisis. Building on the rich findings from the dissertation, his current research project is a narrative study with African-American pastors who develop and offer a LGBT-affirming ministry within African American Communities.

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