



**Yvonne Owens Ferguson, PhD, MPH KHSP-CT (Year 1).**

Training Site: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

***Competencies identified to develop/achieve: # 3, #6, #8, #2, and #9.***

Under the mentorship of Drs. Eugenia Eng and Giselle Corbie-Smith, Yvonne had worked to integrate her Research Clerkship, Teaching Clerkship and Independent Project with Project GRACE (Growing, Reaching, Advocating for Change & Empowerment). Project GRACE is funded by the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NCMHD) and the University of North Carolina Center for AIDS Research and is an academic-community partnership aimed at eliminating health disparities in African American communities through community-based participatory research (CBPR) in Edgecombe and Nash counties in North Carolina. This poster presentation will provide further details of Yvonne's year-1 activities.

For her **Research Clerkship**, Yvonne has worked with Project GRACE in submitting an abstract entitled, "Is the glass half empty or half full: How community members perceive local politicians' role in addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic in rural North Carolina," for the 2009 American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting. Yvonne is currently analyzing key informant data and writing a manuscript with the community partners based on this abstract. After identifying needs within Project GRACE, Yvonne decided to focus her efforts with the project on policy and advocacy (competency #6). Together with the community partners, Yvonne is developing a policy and advocacy curriculum for Teach One Reach One (T.O.R.O.) the Project GRACE Lay Health Advisor HIV/AIDS prevention intervention for youth ages 10-14 and their caregivers. This policy and advocacy curriculum aims to intervene on the social and environmental levels within the community and includes three intervention elements: 1) an "ISMS" training facilitated by VISIONS, Inc.; 2) a Photovoice project; and 3) an Advocacy 101 module. Yvonne has currently been working with her community mentor, Angela Bryant, and other politically active Project GRACE Steering Committee Members in gathering information and resources toward this development.

Within this policy and advocacy curriculum, Yvonne has carved out the implementation of the Photovoice project as her **Independent Project**. The overall objectives of this Photovoice project, developed with the Project GRACE community partners, are to: 1) increase policies and programs that promote healthy dating behaviors and safe sex; 2) provide safe and quality recreational opportunities for youth; and 3) reduce availability of drugs and alcohol to African American youth. Photovoice assignments will be structured around these three broad objectives with the youth and caregivers identifying specific photo assignments. This project will conclude with a community photo exhibit, where youth and their caregivers will present their photos to the public and policymakers in the community.

Yvonne completed her **Teaching Clerkship** during the spring 2009 semester by co-instructing the Department of Health Behavior and Health Education's *Qualitative Research Methods* course with Dr. Suzanne Maman. Yvonne changed the popular methods course by implementing and coordinating a "community engaged option". Half the class (15 students) signed up to participate in this option and conducted key informant interviews in the Project GRACE communities of Nash and Edgecombe County. Yvonne assisted student groups with developing their interview guides, which focused on community change regarding HIV/AIDS prevention, presented community engaged lectures and guided three field teams. Yvonne continues to mentor two students from this course who will be assisting with further data analysis and co-authoring a manuscript based on these findings.