

# **EVALUATION ABSTRACT: THE EVALUATION OF ACHIEVING CONDOM EMPOWERMENT (ACE)-PLUS IN NEW YORK CITY**

## **Grantee**

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## **Intervention Name**

Achieving Condom Empowerment-Plus (ACE-Plus)

## **Intervention Description**

ACE-Plus is a teen pregnancy prevention program designed for males from 16 to 20 years old who are in foster care or preventive services. ACE-Plus is a two-session program that teaches males about correct and consistent condom use as well as engagement with female partners to obtain and use contraception. Trained foster care agency staff deliver the curriculum to participating youth in two one-on-one sessions at agencies. Foster care agency staff receive extensive training from CAI before engaging youth. Additional refresher trainings and ongoing technical assistance are available as necessary. Each session is approximately one hour in length. Session two occurs 10 to 14 days after session one.

## **Comparison Condition**

On Track

## **Comparison Condition Description**

On Track is the alternative program provided to males in the comparison group. On Track is a two-session program that will assist participants in identifying their aptitudes and preferences regarding their careers, their values associated with employment, and tools to prepare them for the work setting and future job interviews. Trained foster care agency staff deliver the curriculum to participating youth in two one-on-one sessions at agencies. All facilitators receive training on both ACE-Plus and On Track. Each session is approximately one hour in length. Session two occurs 10 to 14 days after session one. On Track youth do not receive any portion of the ACE-Plus intervention program.

## **Behavioral Outcomes**

Condom use, dual methods of contraception (condoms plus a female-controlled method), pregnancy, and occurrence of sexually transmitted infections

## **Non-behavioral Outcomes**

Attitudes toward condom use, attitudes about female-controlled methods of contraception, communication about methods of contraception, and knowledge about intrauterine devices, implants, and emergency contraception

## Sample and Setting

The evaluation will take place in eight foster care agencies in New York City. Caseworkers will recruit males from 16 to 20 years old who are in foster care or preventive services to participate in the evaluation. To be eligible for the study, participants must have been born with a penis, have had vaginal intercourse, and not be currently enrolled in any other teen pregnancy prevention program. Foster care agency caseworkers recruit youth for the evaluation by explaining the program to young people or their parents if they believe the young person is appropriate for participating in the program. The program plans to recruit a total of 960 youth.

## Research Design and Data Collection

The research design is an individual randomized controlled trial. Youth are randomly placed into either the ACE-Plus intervention group or the On Track comparison group. The evaluation consists of the participating youth completing a series of surveys at baseline (at enrollment), and again at 3- and 9-months after the second session.

Trained foster care agency staff screen youth to participate in this study based on the study enrollment criteria. After youth meet the screening criteria, staff obtain parental consent and youth assent for each male age 16 or 17 to participate in the study. Participants who are 18 to 20 years old will provide consent. Staff will obtain consent for freed minors from the Commissioner of Administration for Children's Services.

After a youth is deemed eligible to participate and has proper consent or assent, he will start the baseline survey via a web survey at the foster care agency. Randomization occurs at the time of the final question on the baseline survey, which prompts the youth to draw a chip from a bag and determine which group he will join. The caseworker oversees this process to ensure accuracy.

Follow-up assessments will be completed 3- and 9-months after the end of session two. The evaluators will follow-up with participants via email, phone, and mail to have them complete the 3- and 9-month follow-up surveys.

For the implementation evaluation, staff will collect fidelity and attendance data at the intervention and comparison sessions. Foster care agency staff will document attendance for each session to track youth's receipt of both sessions. All study participants and educators will complete a short feedback form at the end of each session to rate the topics learned and satisfaction with the session, as well as assess the educators' knowledge, skill, and cultural competency. Educators complete measures of adherence on the ACE-Plus feedback forms as well. Additionally, 20 percent of the ACE-Plus sessions and 10 percent of the On Track sessions will be audio recorded and reviewed for fidelity monitoring. Some ACE-Plus participants can participate in an interview at the end of this study to determine how well they liked the program.

## Schedule/Timeline

Enrollment and baseline data collection began in August 2016, 3-month follow-up data collection began in December 2016, and 9-month follow-up data collection began in February 2017. Due to the shortened project period, data collection will end in June 2018.