

EVALUATION ABSTRACT: THE EVALUATION OF PROMOTING AWARENESS THROUGH LIVE MOVEMENT AND SOUND-TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION (PALMS-TPP) IN PHILADELPHIA, PA

Grantee

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Intervention Name

Promoting Awareness through Live Movement and Sound-Teen Pregnancy Prevention (PALMS-TPP)

Intervention Description

PALMS-TPP is an innovative theater-based, trauma-informed, group-level intervention for teen pregnancy prevention (TPP) tailored for young black men ages 15 to 22 years old in urban community-based, non-school settings. The intervention is an expansion of a PHMC-developed human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) prevention intervention called Preventing AIDS through Live Movement and Sound (PALMS), which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention included in its *Compendium of Evidence-based HIV Prevention Intervention and Best Practices for HIV Prevention* as meeting “good evidence” for reducing HIV and sexually transmitted infection risk among male adolescents. The aims of PALMS-TPP are to reduce young black men’s risk for teen pregnancy and to strengthen protective factors associated with improved sexual decision making and reduced likelihood of teen or unplanned pregnancy (for example, family support, social connection, goal setting, and positive youth development). The curriculum is grounded in four theoretical frameworks: Social Cognitive Theory, Health Belief Model, Possible Selves Theory, and Developmental Assets/Resiliency Theory.

Trained facilitators with bachelor’s degrees deliver the PALMS-TPP intervention to small groups of young men (10 to 15 participants) over four 2.5 hour sessions. The sessions include a short play that shows real-life situations that young people face intended to convey reproductive health and pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection prevention messages. In addition, sessions includes didactic health information, games, role-plays, and other activities to help young men make plans for a healthy future. The project’s innovative approach includes (1) theater-based strategies using elements of popular culture especially designed to capture the interest of young urban minority males, (2) the use of peer actors who model appropriate behavior, (3) opportunities for young men to actively participate in working out solutions to problems and practicing skills, and (4) intervention content and procedures that can be implemented in a variety of community settings.

Comparison Condition

Business as usual

Comparison Condition Description

The effectiveness study of PALMS-TPP, called the Brotherspeak study, takes place in 10 community-based partner sites across Philadelphia. Each site serves as both an intervention site and comparison site at different times during the project period. Men enrolled in the study from comparison sites receive the typical, existing services available, including recreational activities, General Educational Development test preparation, and job readiness training, depending on the site. Comparison condition participants do not have exposure to any features of the intervention. Study staff collect data throughout (at least biannually) the study to track access to other TPP programming offered at the study sites during the periods when they are serving as comparison locations. In addition, field interviewers ask participants at follow up whether they received other TPP programming.

Behavioral Outcomes

Number of vaginal sexual partners in the past three months; condom use during vaginal sex; any birth control use during vaginal sex; delayed initiation of sex for participants that report never initiated sex at baseline.

Non-behavioral Outcomes

Sexual and reproductive health knowledge; attitudes related to traditional masculine roles; beliefs about young men's responsibility for pregnancy prevention; self-efficacy for condom use, decision-making and communication skills; confidence in goal setting; and feelings of resiliency and hopefulness.

Sample and Setting

The study sample includes black males 15 to 22 years old who attend one of four partner community-based agencies or one of six Philadelphia recreation centers. To be eligible, participants have to (1) identify as a black male, (2) be 15 to 22 years old at the time of the baseline interview, (3) currently attend one of 10 community-based partner locations where they are recruited, and (4) live in Philadelphia. The study excludes young men who do not speak English, are younger than 18 and do not have parental or guardian consent or a waiver of parental or guardian consent, or do not meet the eligibility criteria.

Evaluation and intervention activities take place on-site at these 10 community-based partner sites across Philadelphia. The four community-based social service organizations were selected because they serve a large number of young black men 15 to 22 years old. The six recreation centers were selected in collaboration with the Philadelphia Parks and Recreation Department based on: (1) location in Philadelphia, (2) similarity of demographic and neighborhood characteristics between the young men they serve and those attending the partner community-based agencies, and (3) accessibility by a large number of black adolescents and young men 15 to 22 years old.

Research Design and Data Collection

The Brotherspeak study is a cluster randomized control trial implemented in 10 community-based partner sites across Philadelphia. Over the course of a 30-month recruitment period (organized into six 5-month cycles), a total of 60 clusters will be randomly assigned to condition. The cluster for the purpose of this study is a 4 week site per time period. Each site serves as a treatment condition for one 4 week period during a 5 month cycle, and a comparison condition for a 4 week period during the next 5 month cycle. Thus, each of the 10 sites contributes 6 clusters to the study. In each 4 week period for a site, the evaluation team enrolls 10 to 15 men to serve as either the intervention or comparison condition (depending on the condition to which the cluster has been randomly assigned). Study participants are not aware of the condition for which they are consenting. The first two weeks of the period are for recruitment, and the final two weeks are for program implementation. Approximately 600 eligible men will be enrolled in the study.

Recruitment, informed consent, and data collection protocols are the same for all study participants, regardless of study condition. All participants who consent to take part in the study are asked to complete baseline, 6-months post baseline, and 12-months post baseline surveys. Intervention quality and fidelity to the PALMS-TPP curriculum is measured through facilitator self-assessment forms completed after each session, and independent observation of 25 percent of randomly selected intervention sessions by a research assistant. Intervention condition participants complete satisfaction and engagement surveys after completing Session 4. Due to the shortened project period ending June 2018, 6-month post baseline follow up data collection will only be conducted with study participants enrolled in the study before December 2017. Additional funding is being sought to enable 6-month follow-up data to be collected from all sample members who enroll subsequently.

Schedule/Timeline

Enrollment and baseline data collection began in July 2016. The 6-month post-baseline follow-up survey data collection began in February 2017. Due to the shortened project period, baseline and 6-month post-baseline follow up data collection will end in June 2018, and 12-month post-baseline follow up data collection will not be conducted.

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