

## **Evaluation Abstract: Ateyapi Identity Mentoring Program**

### **Grantee**

Rural America Initiatives

### **Evaluators**

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### **Intervention Name**

Ateyapi Identity Mentoring Program

### **Intervention Description**

The Ateyapi Identity Mentoring Program (Ateyapi Program) is a Tier 2 program designed to reduce participants' risk behaviors, including sexual activity, substance use, and antisocial activities. The Ateyapi Program, an adaption of *Project Adult Identity Mentoring (Project AIM)*, is composed of mentoring, classroom-based, after-school youth development lessons, and a variety of out-of-school activities focusing on learning and practice of the Lakota language, traditions, and games. The Ateyapi Program adapted Project AIM by adding 4 lessons on human sexuality, birth control methods, and sexually transmitted infection (STI)/ Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) prevention to the original 12 lessons curriculum, in addition to grounding the classroom lessons in Lakota culture and adding out-of-school time activities to reinforce the program model.

The after-school classroom instruction involves 16 Lakota cultural-based lessons designed to encourage young people to think about their desired future and how current risky behavior choices can adversely affect it. By envisioning future possible selves, youth can form an identity that could be threatened by risky behaviors, thereby motivating them to avoid risky behavioral choices. The Ateyapi Program provides additional lessons on human sexuality, birth control methods, and (STI)/HIV prevention. All of the lessons are integrated with Lakota practices, values, and traditions in helping adolescents make healthy choices. The classroom instruction is offered in groups of approximately 20 same-sex youth, with two groups running (one male and one female) in early fall, one in the winter, and one in the spring. Youth are assigned to the groups based on schedule availability. Youth can also make up missed workshops in the summer. The Ateyapi Program includes mentoring of the students during and after school. The mentors/facilitators, like the youth, are Lakota and serve as role models to the students during the after-school workshop and activity sessions. Students are committed to one year of active participation, with an additional year of mentor support.

### **Counterfactual**

Mentoring

### **Counterfactual Description**

The comparison group had access to the same mentors as the intervention group, but during the school day only. Currently, the Ateyapi Program is the only teenage pregnancy prevention program or youth development program being offered during or after school at the high school.

### **Primary Research Question(s)**

- (1) What is the impact of the Ateypai Program on recent sexual intercourse nine months after the offer of the program?
- (2) What is the impact of the Ateypai Program on the use of safe sex practices nine months after the offer of the program?

### **Sample**

At the beginning of each school year in one high school in South Dakota, American Indian students were recruited for the evaluation. The focus of the recruitment is 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders, but 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders were not excluded. Among the consented youth, half were randomly assigned to the intervention group and half to comparison group. Each year approximately 240 youth consented, yielding a randomized pooled sample of 722 youth (365 treatment, 357 control) over a three year period.

### **Setting**

The target population was American Indian students enrolled at a large high school in Rapid City, South Dakota. The high school has a total enrollment of 2,008 students composed of 70.3 percent white, 21.6 percent American Indian, and 8.1 percent other minority groups. The distribution of American Indian students from 9th to 12th grades ranges from 46.3 percent (9th grade) to 10.8 percent (12<sup>th</sup> grade). This distribution reflects the low retention and graduation rates of the American Indian students over the four years of high school.

### **Research Design**

This study is a randomized controlled trial (RCT), with assignment of individuals to the intervention or comparison groups.

### **Method**

Random assignment occurred in the fall of each year for three years, after completion of an active consent form signed by parents and completion of a pre-intervention survey (baseline). Participants were randomized equally between the intervention and comparison groups. Randomization was stratified by grade level and gender, to ensure equivalent distributions of those characteristics within the intervention and comparison groups.

Survey data were collected three times: pre-intervention (baseline), post-intervention (9 months post-random assignment), and a follow-up (15 months) post-random assignment. The surveys were administered online in the fall and spring of each year.

### **Impact Findings**

Not reported.

### **Implementation Findings**

Not reported.

### **Schedule/Timeline**

Sample enrollment and random assignment for the last cohort ended in September 2014. Post-intervention data collection ended in May 2014 and the follow-up data collection ended in December 2014.