Voices from the Field

Carlos Albizu University

Carlos Albizu University and its partners implement the Puerto Rico Optimal System ChAnge (PROSa) program, providing prevention curricula and comprehensive supportive services to youth, families, and community members in Puerto Rico.

In March 2022, PROSa launched a social media marketing account (@adoles.ciencia) and strategy. The objective of this social marketing platform is to inform youth on teen pregnancy prevention, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), interpersonal relations, and optimal health through Facebook and Instagram. These accounts also aim to increase brand awareness, followers and engagement. The effort consists of four different paid ad posts that run at the same time to perform A/B testing to see which post creates the highest engagement. One post invites youth ages 15 to 17 in Puerto Rico to ask questions about sexual health through Instagram direct messages (DM). To answer these questions PROSa partnered with experts on sexual health, STI testing and trans community services. PROSa created a standard operating procedure (SOP) and protocol to respond to these questions via Instagram DM. They created a team to guarantee that each question is answered with professionalism using evidence-based, and up-to-date information, but still with enough openness, familiarity, and empathy so their audience feels comfortable sharing personal information.

So far, the results have been exciting. Youth opened up and asked PROSa questions they may be reluctant to ask their parents, teachers, or doctors. The post has been viewed on Instagram more than 250,000 times, the reach on Instagram has increased by 105% and there has been an increase of 78% in the Instagram followers. PROSa has answered specific questions on sexual health, referred teens to specific services for trans persons, family planning clinics, and STI clinics. PROSA has shared evidence-based information with its targeted audiences on contraceptive methods and STI testing. PROSa has been able to fulfill its goal of “meeting youth exactly where they are,” specifically on social media platforms.

This story was written by Carlos Albizu University.

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