PREVENTION OF YOUTH HEALTH RISK BEHAVIORS: THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT

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OUTLINE

- Youth health risk behaviors
  - E.g., substance use, violence, obesogenic behaviors
- Positive youth development
  - E.g., social and emotional development, academic achievement
- Program evaluation
  - School-based interventions
  - Community-based interventions
PERSONAL, SOCIAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINANTS: THE THEORY OF TRIADIC INFLUENCE

Flay, Snyder, & Petraitis, Emerging Theories in Health Promotion Practice and Research, 2009
THE POSITIVE ACTION PROGRAM:
AN APPLICATION OF THEORY

Program Components: Family, Classroom, School, Community

- **BIOLOGY/PERSONALITY**
  - Self Concept
  - Sense of Self/Control
  - Social Competence
  - Self Determination
  - Skills: Social+General
  - Self-Efficacy

- **SOCIAL SITUATION**
  - Feeling Empathy
  - Interpersonal Bonding
  - Others’ Beh & Atts
  - Motivation to Comply
  - Perceived Norms
  - Social Normative Beliefs

- **CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT**
  - Interactions w/Social Insts
  - Information/Opportunities
  - Values/Evaluations
  - Knowledge/Expectancies
  - Attitudes Toward the Behavior

DECISSONS/INTENTIONS

BEHAVIOR
WHAT IS SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT?

• Prosocial education
  – Social and emotional learning
  – Character education
  – Moral education
  – Positive youth development
  – Prosocial behavior
  – Service learning
  – Intending to promote student development

• Purdue Athletes Life Success Program (PALS)

• Positive Action

*Snyder & Flay, Handbook of Prosocial Education, 2012*
"You feel good about yourself when you think and do positive actions, and there is always a positive way to do everything."
POSITIVE ACTION OVERVIEW

• Sets of program materials
  - Classroom curriculum
  - School-wide
  - Family kit
  - Community
POSITIVE ACTION STUDIES

• Randomized trials (Hawaii and Chicago)
  – Substance use
  – Violent behaviors
  – Sexual activity

• What else is needed?
METHODS

• Hawaii trial background
  – 2002-03 to 2005-06
  – 20 elementary schools
  – Random assignment of schools
    o Schools matched based on School Report Card index score

• Program schools received
  - 4 years of the program
  - Teacher training
To what extent does the program impact school context as measured by archival school-level data on school quality collected by the school district?
DATA

- Archival school-level data
  - Hawaii School Quality Survey
    - Teachers
    - Parents
    - Students
MEASURES

• School Quality Survey: Teacher, parent, and student data
• Indicator (% positive response)
  - Safety and well-being
  - Involvement
  - Satisfaction
  - Quality student support
  - Focused and sustained action
  - Responsiveness of the system
  - Standards-based learning
  - Professionalism and capacity of the system
  - Coordinated team work
• Composite Scores
Figure 1. School-Level Means for Teacher, Parent, and Student School-Quality Composite Scores Hawai‘i Randomized Trial Occurred 2002-2003 to 2005-2006.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Do changes in positive behavior (i.e., positive academic behavior) mediate the effects of the Positive Action intervention on substance use, violent behaviors, and sexual activity?
MEASURES: MEDIATOR

• Academic Behavior
  – Student self-reports and teacher reports of student behavior:
    o Work hard in school
    o Set goals
    o Manage time wisely
    o Try to be their best
    o Solve problems well
MEASURES: DEPENDENT VARIABLES

• Negative Behaviors
  o Substance use
  o Violent behaviors
  o Sexual activity

• Count of behaviors
ANALYSES: STUDENT AND TEACHER
STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELS

Snyder, Acock, Vuchinich et al., American Journal of Health Promotion, 2013
IMPLICATIONS & CONCLUSIONS

• How a program works
• Prevention science and positive youth development
• Archival school data
• Whole-school, contextual change
MURAL ARTS: PORCH LIGHT INITIATIVE
EVALUATION OF THE PORCH LIGHT INITIATIVE

○ Individual-level variables
  • Health
  • Personal and social stigma
  • Recovery, healing, and transformation
  • Social support and connectedness
  • Attitudes about help seeking
  • Service utilization and satisfaction
  • Neighborhood safety and aesthetic quality

○ Community-level variables
  • Physical decay
  • Physical disorder
  • Social disorder
  • Neighborhood safety
  • Exposure to violence
  • Neighborhood aesthetic quality
  • Walking environment
  • Collective efficacy

• Individual interviews
• Community interviews
• Systematic social observations
Stress as a mediator of the relationship between youth trauma and physical health among behavioral health service-seeking adults
Yale University School of Medicine
  • Jacob Kremer Tebes, Ph.D.
  o National Institute on Drug Abuse (T32 DA01946)
Oregon State University College of Public Health & Human Sciences
  • Brian Flay, D.Phil.
  • Alan Acock, Ph.D.
  • Samuel Vuchinich, Ph.D.
  o National Institute on Drug Abuse (R01DA13474); U.S. Department of Education (R305L030072)
  o Children, families, schools, and community partners that participated in all studies