

Project Parenthood: Efficacy of Evidence-Based Parenting and Safer Sex Education Program in an At-Risk Adolescent Population



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Background

Adolescents make up a distinct segment of the population with key health issues unique to their age bracket. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) monitor six categories of "priority health-risk behaviors among youth and young adults" through The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), one of which is "sexual behaviors that contribute to unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection" (Eaton et al., 2012, p.1).

In a study conducted by the CDC regarding pregnancy and childbirth among adolescent females, Ventura, Hamilton, Mathews, and The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2013, p. 71) stated, "pregnancy and childbirth among females aged <20 years have been the subject of long-standing concern among the public, the public health community, and policy makers." Further, Martinez, Copen, and Abma (2011, p. 3) found that those between the ages of 15 and 24 represent about 25% of the "sexually experienced population" and they "acquire nearly one-half of all new STDs." The estimated direct medical costs of sexually transmitted diseases among those between the ages of 15 and 24 were "\$6.5 billion in 2000 alone" (Martinez et al., 2011, p. 3).

Objective

Project Parenthood was developed to support the growth of adolescent parenting education and to provide a resource for adolescent safer sex education and repeat pregnancy prevention. By providing the education and social support to succeed, Project Parenthood promotes confidence in parenting abilities and fosters positive parent-parent and parent-child relationships in order to help young parents break the cycle of abuse and grow into psychologically healthy adults and children. Furthermore, the program provides evidence-based safer sex education in an effort to prevent unplanned pregnancy and the adverse outcomes of risky sexual behavior.

Methods

Through the use of pre- and post-surveys, three key variables were measured: (1) knowledge, (2) perspective, and (3) skill. Survey questions were categorized as measuring one of the three variables (Table 1). Survey data was aggregated to create a pre-composite score and post-composite score for each question. The percentage of questions that resulted in an increase, decrease, or no change was calculated for each variable (Figures 1-3). A Paired t-Test analysis was run to evaluate whether or not there was a significant change in pre- and post-survey composite scores for each variable.

Table 1

Workshop Survey Variable Data

Variable	Definition	Workshop #	Survey Item #	Total # Survey Items
Knowledge	"Acquaintance with facts, truths, or principles, as from study or investigation"	1	1, 3, 4, 5	54
		2	1, 5, 8	
		3	3, 4, 8, 9	
		4	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9	
		5	1, 3	
		6	2, 7	
		7	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9	
		8	2, 4, 5, 8	
		9	1, 3, 4, 6, 7	
		10	2, 4, 6, 8	
		11	1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9	
		12	1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9	
Perspective	"The state of one's ideas, the facts known to one"	1	2, 6, 7, 8, 9	50
		2	2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9	
		3	1, 2, 5, 6, 7	
		4	1, 7, 8	
		5	2, 5, 7, 8	
		6	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9	
		7		
		8	1, 3, 6, 7, 9	
		9	2, 5, 8, 9	
		10	1, 3, 5, 7, 9	
		11	2, 5, 7	
		12	3, 5, 7	
Skill	"Competence, excellence in performance"	1	10	16
		2	10	
		3	10	
		4	10	
		5	4, 6, 9, 10	
		6	10	
		7	7, 10	
		8	10	
		9	10	
		10	10	
		11	10	
		12	10	
TOTAL				120

*Note. Definitions retrieved from Dictionary.com

Results

Thirty-seven adolescents between the ages of 14 and 22 years participated in the 12-week cycle of workshops. Twenty participants attended multiple workshops and thirteen participants were either expecting a child or currently parenting. At the p<0.05 level of significance, a significant difference between pre- and post-survey composite scores was seen for each variable correlating with an increase in knowledge (64%), a change from a faulty to an appropriate perspective (58%), and an increase in skill (80%).

Acknowledgments

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Change in Knowledge

■ Increase ■ Decrease ■ No Change

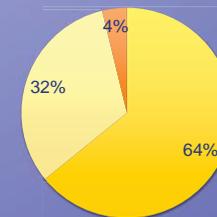


Figure 1. Percentage of knowledge-based survey questions showing an increase, decrease, or no change between pre- and post-survey composite scores.

Change in Perspective

■ Increase ■ Decrease ■ No Change

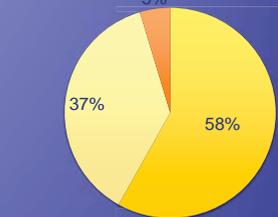


Figure 2. Percentage of perspective-based survey questions showing an increase, decrease, or no change between pre- and post-survey composite scores.

Change in Skill

■ Increase ■ Decrease ■ No Change

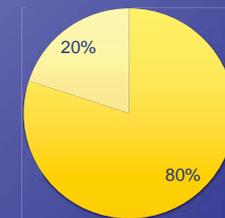


Figure 3. Percentage of skill-based survey questions showing an increase, decrease, or no change between pre- and post-survey composite scores.

Conclusions

Project Parenthood improved participants' knowledge, demonstrated improvement in faulty perspectives, and increased skill among participants. A recommendation from these data is to focus on developing new and expanding existing parenting and safer sex education programs for adolescents. This should be done in an effort to (1) reach an increased number of vulnerable adolescent populations, (2) decrease teen pregnancy rates, repeat pregnancy rates, and adverse effects of risky sexual behavior, (3) improve adolescent parenting skills, and (4) improve child welfare.

References

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