

CENTER BRIEFS

Evaluation of Youth Violence Prevention Program

Funding for this project was received by Adolescent Health Center from the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority. The Center for Rural Health and Social Service Development evaluated the objectives and the effectiveness of the YVP program.

The Youth Violence Prevention (YVP) program was conducted by the Adolescent Health Center in eight schools within Franklin and Williamson Counties. The target population was first grade students. One school participated in the program as the control group. Overall, the program's goal was to teach pro-social nonviolent conflict resolution skills to young children at an early age.

The primary curriculum used for instructing the young subjects was "Kelso's Choice: Conflict Management for Children" and two videos, "I'm Telling a Tattler's Tale" and "I Get so Mad." The YVP model emphasized choices and making decisions about small problems within a curriculum framework. The videos demonstrated examples of tattling and positive alternatives to such actions and using useful strategies for dealing with negative tendencies which accompany feelings of anger.

The program was conducted from August 2001 through May 2002. Each school had two one-hour group assemblies and five forty-five minute classroom sessions. A total of 527 students took the pretest, and 545 took the posttest which included students in the school that participated as a control group.

A quasi-experimental, non-equivalent control group research design was used to evaluate the program. For the experimental group, univariate analyses of frequency counts and percentages on accurate response for each variable were run on the pre and post data. Additionally, t-tests were run by pairing the variables for respondents who took both the pretest and the posttest. The means of the variables were compared and the paired comparison *t* were used to identify if the means of the two measures differed significantly which could be attributed to the YVP program.

The evaluation results showed that the YVP program was generally successful in increasing knowledge and awareness about Kelso's conflict resolution options among students. On the pretest, scores received by the students (49.7%) were concentrated around three and four (the range of the test score was from 0 – 8). The posttest results showed

that more than half of the students (56.2%) received the scores of seven and eight. Furthermore, a subset of students from the experimental group was picked randomly by the computer program to compare their performance on the post-test with the group who were not exposed to the YVP program. The results clearly showed that the experimental group performed better on the posttest. The t-test results also indicated that there were significant differences in the mean scores on all variables in the pretest and the posttest. The mean scores were statistically significant at $p < .001$ to $p < .005$.

Several recommendations were suggested.

- Continue with same staff to facilitate stability in implementation of the program
- Conduct a planning meeting with principals, administrators, and teachers at the beginning of the school year to explain concepts and schedule requirements
- Explore other strategies and tools to measure students use of conflict resolution skills
- Improve the measurement instrument for parent/teacher observations of behavior change in students
- Review evaluation tools used by other programs across states who have implemented the "Kelso's Choice" model in their schools
- Explore the expansion of educational concepts for second graders and evaluate the retention of these concepts and behavioral change

This is a partial report based on pre and posttests taken by students.

For information about the evaluation report contact Aion N. Mizan or Tess D. Heiple at (618) 453-1262.

For information about the Youth Violence Prevention program contact Patricia Covey, Adolescent Health Center, at 618-351-1919.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community Outreach Partnership Center and Service Learning

The Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC) is a program which is funded through Housing and Urban Development. The purpose of the program is to establish partnerships with Southern Illinois University

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Carbondale (SIUC) and the local community to create a foundation to increase opportunities in economic development, affordable housing, healthcare, education, and neighborhood revitalization. The COPC program is located in the Eurma Hayes Center in Northeast Carbondale. The Eurma Hayes Center houses several agencies: Attucks Community Service, Inc., Abundant Health Resource Clinic, Eurma Hayes Daycare Center, and a satellite office of the Adolescent Health Center. Together these programs provide multiple services for the community which makes this an ideal location for the project.

The COPC program, like any other community-based program, depends on volunteerism and offers the opportunity for University students to get hands-on experience in their academic field of study. The COPC program can be to SIUC an “engaged institution,” i.e., a program that can heighten the University’s commitment to interact with the local community through the interaction between faculty, staff, students, and the community and simultaneously provide avenues to explore and discover local cultural lifestyles and enhance community-building by assisting in the development of programs for job training, identifying affordable housing, beautifying the neighborhood, and increasing knowledge of health and education issues.

The COPC program’s advisory committee, Partners Working Together (PWT), is a collaborative partnership with representatives from Attucks Community Service, Inc., City of Carbondale, the Citizens Advisory Council, and SIUC’s Office of Economic and Regional Development and Center for Rural Health and Social Service Development. This advisory committee meets monthly and is involved in the total process of the program. For more information on the COPC program and how you can become involved, contact Mark A. Bartlett, COPC Coordinator, at (618) 453-8455 or mbartlet@siu.edu.

Heart Smart for Teens

Heart Smart for Teens (HSFT) is a program which educates school-age girls on risk factors of cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis. The HSFT program is funded through a grant received from the Illinois Department of Public Health’s Office of Women’s Health. The West Frankfort School District, in partnership with the Carbondale Family Practice Residency Program, West Frankfort Family Practice Clinic, University of Illinois-Franklin County Extension, and the SIUC Center for Rural Health and Social Service Development (CRHSSD), has implemented the HSFT program in its 8th grade curriculum.

The educational sessions provide information and engage the teens in interactive physical activity and cooking demonstrations, so they can learn about developing a healthy life style. The teens gain knowledge about foods which are high in fat, calories, cholesterol, and sodium. In addition, they learn about incorporating physical activity in their daily routines which can help them become both physically and psychologically a healthy person.

Presenters include Dr. Marci Moore-Connelley, West Frankfort Family Practice physician, Yolanda Gunzel, counselor with the West Frankfort Family Practice and the Frankfort Community School District, Jennifer Newbury, University of Illinois Nutrition Educator, and various other specialists from the community.

The CRHSSD provides grant coordination for the school district and community partners. For more information on the Heart Smart for Teens program, contact Robynn Nawrot at (618) 453-5044 or rnawrot@siu.edu.