



CENTER *for*
ADOLESCENT
HEALTH

Health & Opportunity Partnership (HOPE) Project:
Enhancing Research Quality Through Collaborating with
Adolescents and Young Adults

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The Center for Adolescent Health

- Mission: To work in partnership with youth, people who work with youth, community residents, public policymakers and program administrators to help urban adolescents develop healthy adult lifestyles
- Founded 1994 as a CDC Prevention Research Center (PRC)

What is the HOPE Project?

- CDC Core Research Project
- Intervention to implement and evaluate *mental health promotion activities* into an employment and training setting
- Goal is to improve mental health status for out-of-school youth in a setting that does not typically address health needs

HOPE Project team

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Project Initiation:

How Was Mental Health Focus Chosen?

- Formation of Advisory Board
- Advisory Board reviewed analysis of survey and focus group data that asked youth members and staff about various health issues
- Advisory Board prioritized mental health as issue for focus of subsequent work

Intervention Components

1. Mental health screening
2. Training for YO! staff advocates
3. Assessment of community providers
4. More on-site mental health services
5. Support group network led by the Peer Leadership Group (PLG)

Development of PLG

- PLG members recruited by soliciting YO! staff suggestions of well-respected YO! participants
- Consists of seven male and female YO! members or alumni, ages 18-24
- PLG intended to establish a peer support group network that provides support on “emotions and feelings”
- Have met regularly since January 2006

Mission of the PLG

- Eliminate stigma surrounding mental health
- Provide education to peers
- Help to make peers more aware of their own mental health status
- Encourage peers to seek help for these problems



Need for PLG work

- Mental health problems common in East Baltimore community
- Young people experiencing life events including death, violence, abusive relationships
- Improved mental health can lead to better decision-making skills

Common mental health-related problems identified among YO! members

- Depression & stress
- Problems related to romantic relationships
- Challenges related to early/mis-timed pregnancy

Peer Support Group Intervention

- Will provide YO! Members with strategies for coping with problems
- PLG members will practice sessions with Youth Advisory Council (YAC) members
- PLG members “adding our own twist” on experiences we’ve encountered
- PLG members gaining mental health education

Peer Intervention Curriculum

- Efforts coordinated by GiShawn Mance and Tamar Mendelson, JHSPH
- Developing this curriculum has been challenging
- Informative even for members of the PLG
- PLG members are better equipped to develop coping skills

Peer Intervention Curriculum

- Criteria for intervention
- 12-week Peer-led Mental Health Education Curriculum
- Facilitated by PLG members and Clinical Psychologists
- Support from YO! Center Mental Health Professional

Peer Intervention Curriculum

- Foundation based on empirically validated treatments
 - relevant to adolescents exposed to chronic trauma
- Structured Psychotherapy for Adolescents Responding to Chronic Stress (SPARCS)
 - effective manner to address stress and coping issues
 - Integrates Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy for Adolescents, Trauma Adaptive Recovery – Group Education and Therapy (TARGET) and School-Based Trauma/Grief Psychotherapy Program

Peer Intervention Curriculum

- SPARCS
 - adapted 6 week intervention
- Additional 6 sessions developed within a collaborative effort by PLG and project Psychologists
 - Mental health disparities
 - Emotion expression in the African American community
 - Violence in East Baltimore
 - Dealing with Anger
 - Building and maintaining relationships
 - Goals/Future planning

Peer Intervention Curriculum

- PLG Facilitator's training
 - Knowledge of mental health
 - Group facilitation
 - Professional development
 - Crisis protocol
 - Mental health referrals

Peer Intervention Curriculum

- Outcomes
 - Increase coping skills
 - Decrease symptoms
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
 - Stress
 - Decrease stigma associated with mental health
 - Increase mental health service utilization