A Mixed Methods Evaluation of the Wise Guys Program

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Objectives

- Describe the challenges associated with research with teens.
- Identify the role of the Youth Advisory Group in conducting research.
- Analyze the findings of a mixed methods evaluation of a Wise guys teen health and sexual education program.

Specific Aims

1. Develop a valid, reliable, and teen-friendly web-based survey instrument, based on teen perceptions and informed by teen focus groups and a Youth Advisory Group, to measure changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors pre/post the Wise Guys intervention.
2. Evaluate the impact of the Wise Guys program using a mixed methods design including the study-developed web-based survey instrument, focus groups, and video journaling content analysis.
**Significance**

- Decreased teen birth and pregnancy rates, but significant disparities continue
- Few efforts focus on young males
- Men who are of special concern: those who live in poverty, ethnic/racial minorities, gay or bisexual, out of school, in juvenile justice, in foster care, & emerging adults (early 20’s)
- 42% of young males are sexually active tend to be sexually active earlier, more sexual partners, and initiators
- 14% of males have caused a pregnancy: 22% African American, 19% Hispanic, 10% non-Hispanics, whites; 6% are fathers 9% by age 20

**Why there are fewer male-oriented programs...**

- Lack of social and political advocacy for male reproductive services
- Limited contraceptive options for males
- Lack of routine sexual healthcare for males
- Healthcare focus on women’s health and positive birth outcomes
- Advocates for teens, in general, are women

**Wise Guys**

- Male-focused-11-18
- Promising/emerging program
- Developed by the Family Life Council, Greensboro, North Carolina
- Several robust evaluations since 2001
- 8-45-75 minute classes over 8-12 weeks
- Middle school, high school, The Next Level, and Spanish versions
**Wise Guys**

- Knowledge about sexual activity
- Attitudes toward women and relationships
- Safe sexual behaviors
- Themes:
  - Acceptance of responsibilities of sexual behavior and parenthood
  - Respect for women
  - Communication skills
  - Positive personal growth and self-esteem
  - The importance of values-based decision-making
  - Resistance skills
  - Identification of support systems

**Wise Guys Units**

- Myself
- Personal and family values
- Communication and masculinity
- Sexuality
- Dating violence
- Abstinence and contraception
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Goal-setting
- Decision-making
- Parenthood

**Evaluation of the Wise Guys Program**

**Study 1**
- N=70
- Assessed Attitudes—Thoughts on Teen Parenting Survey
- Pre/Post test design
- Some positive changes in attitudes
- (Herrman, Moore, & Sims, 2013)

**Study 2**
- N=159
- Assessed Attitudes—Thoughts on Teen Parenting Survey
- Assessed additional attitudes toward sex, relationships, and communication with parents
- Assessed Knowledge—general and STIs
- Assessed Behaviors
- Pre/Post test design
- Found positive changes in behaviors and communication with parents
- (Herrman, Moore, & Rahmer, 2016)
Study Issues
- Issues—surveying teens
- Neutral answers
- Leave blanks
- Lack of validity
- Fidelity to program (Wise Guys allows for free discussion)
- Large number of unusable data
- Lack of consents
- No pre or post test
- Educator did not implement tool
- Non-completion of program
- Anecdotal successes not captured in evaluation
- Assessing authentic and meaningful findings
- Community-based Participatory Research

Current Mixed Methods Study
- Design: Qual-Quant-QUAL
- Development of a Youth Advisory Group to inform evaluation—inform research process, themes, and tools
- Mixed methods approach
  - Qualitative evaluation
    - Focus groups
    - Video journaling project
      (Discussed in next session)
  - Quantitative survey
    - Developed with teens
    - Critiqued by teens
    - Administered via mobile phone or device

Research Components
- Created Youth Advisory Group
- Focus Group 1: Major themes of Wise Guys, led to—
- Focus Group 2: Generate survey items, led to—
- Development of survey, led to—
- Focus Group 3: Content validity indexing of items
- Adapted the survey for REDCap and delivered via mobile devices, led to—
- Pilot Survey as pre/post-test led to—
- Wise Guys Implementation and use of Survey
- Video Journaling Project
- Focus Group 4: Video Journaling Project
- Focus Group 5: Member Check of emergent themes
Major Constructs/Themes - Emerged from the focus groups-informed survey

1. Communication and Relationships
2. Sexual Health and Decision-making
3. Respect for Self and Others
4. Responsibilities, Values, and Goals
5. Thoughts on Self
6. General thoughts about Wise Guys

Emerging and Prominent Themes

Communication and relationships
- “I like learning about healthy relationships.”
- “I could relate to how a female is feeling.”

Sexual health and decision-making
- “I make better choices.”
- “Wise Guys teaches you about sexual health, how to prevent pregnancy and what’s the best way to do it, like puberty and stuff like that...all about your sexual health and stuff.”

Respect for self and others
- “I approach situations with more respect...for the people and their experiences.”
- “I respect women more.”

Responsibilities, Values, and Goals
- “We all have our own values. I have goals. Every day I wake up and work on them.”
- “It teaches you to take responsibility for yourself in everything you do.”

Thoughts on Self
- “Wise Guys changed my life, is that everything I learned made me become a man.”
- “Wise guys helped me with my anger, I still have trouble with my anger.”
General thoughts about Wise Guys

- "Wise Guys is a safe place to talk about things and to have discussions with other guys. To trust everybody."
- "We talk about health...there’s not a lot of places for men to do that."
- "There’s certain things I don’t say to others. That trusted leader? Well, I have somebody [the group facilitator] who I know will have my back and won’t say anything to others."
- "We laugh a lot...we are always laughing."
- "Talking about our experiences...it’s fun!"
- "You feel comfortable saying stuff you would say to anyone else."

Quantitative Data

- N = 115
- Mean age = 16; 65% African American; 57% sexually active, 62% live in single parent families
- Pre/post test design
- Issues with digital survey
  - Students not allowed cell phone
  - Students’ lack of access to internet
  - Schools’ poor access to internet

One-sample T-Tests of constructs and knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Pretest Mean</th>
<th>Post-test Mean</th>
<th>t-Statistic</th>
<th>Significance (p-value)</th>
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<tr>
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Triangulation of finding

- Qualitative analyses documented positive impacts
- Quantitative analyses validated significant changes in select constructs
- A larger sample (our target was 137) may have yielded more significant findings

Future Directions

- Ongoing work with Wise Guys and Teen Advisory Groups
- Encourage community participatory-based research methods
- Use Mixed Methods evaluation with other adolescent sexual and reproductive health programs
- Use teen perceptions to guide programs and policies