

Curve The Urge Shows Positive Outcomes for Minority Youth

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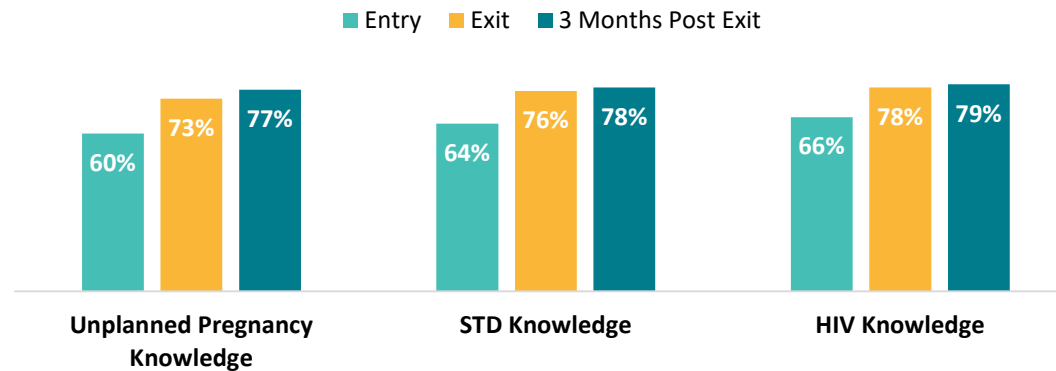
Introduction

- Sexual risk behaviors negatively influence the health and well-being of young people resulting in teen pregnancies and high sexually transmitted infections (STI) rates.
- Unintended pregnancies and STIs continue to be disproportionately high among youth of color.
- To reduce sexual risk behavior among minority youth in the St. Louis, MO metropolitan area, researchers at the Missouri Institute of Mental Health (MIMH) at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, designed and evaluated a sexual risk avoidance program, Curve the Urge.

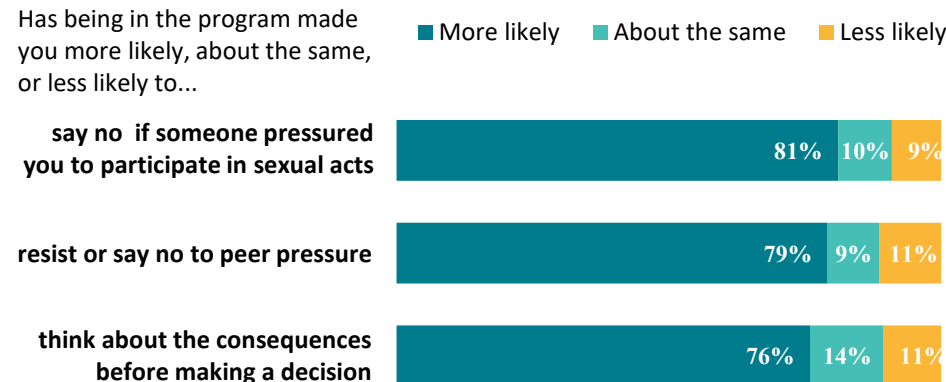
Method

- The program was implemented for 555 youth (93% African American) ages 12-17 in four settings—school, faith-based organizations, community-based cohort implemented at MIMH and youth serving community agencies.
- All youth were provided the eight-hour evidence-based Promoting Health Among Teens Abstinence Only curriculum (Jemmott, Jemmott & McCaffree, 2016).
- The pandemic pushed the implementation and evaluation teams to increase flexibility in how the program was delivered, with a mix of virtual and in-person approaches and use of online data collection.
- Participants answered knowledge questions about STD, HIV and pregnancy prevention at entry, exit, and 3-month follow-up. Additionally, they answered questions about their negotiation and refusal skills and sexual risk avoidance intentions at exit.

Knowledge about unplanned pregnancy, HIV and STDs increased from entry to exit. The increase was maintained at follow-up (n=309)



Most participants report that the program has increased their likelihood to use negotiation and refusal skills (n = 465)



Results & Conclusion

- Overall, evaluation findings were encouraging. Youth left the program with greater knowledge about consequences of adolescent sexual activity than when they started and maintained that knowledge 3 months after the end of the program.
 - Youth knowledge scores (percent correct on True/False “quiz”) increased over 3 time-points, $p < .001$; with significantly higher scores both at exit and 3-month vs entry.
- Additionally, many youth reported that being in the program made them more likely to use negotiation and refusal skills and increased their intentions to avoid sexual risk behaviors.
 - At least 75% of participants reported that the program increased their likelihood to use negotiation and refusal skills (see chart 2) and about 68% of participants reported that the program increased their likelihood to delay sex until after high school.

Acknowledgements

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