Sustainability from Square One: Building a Long-Term Pregnancy Prevention Plan

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WHAT IS PASS?

Promoting Adolescent Sexual Health and Safety (PASS) is an aspirational adolescent pregnancy prevention program that empowers youth and their caretakers to challenge gendered and societal norms, build healthy relationships, and connect them to local health services. PASS is delivered in a community-based setting to 1) reach youth who are disengaged with school, 2) make content relevant, and 3) ensure content is delivered by trusted adults who can reinforce messages outside of program hours.

THREE CURRICULA

Sisters Rising: is an evidence-based program for parents and guardians of youth that aims to give parents the knowledge, skills, comfort, and confidence to communicate with their children about sexuality and sexual risk reduction.

Parents Matter: is an evidence-based program for parents and youth that aims to give parents the knowledge, skills, comfort, and confidence to communicate with their children about sexuality and sexual risk reduction.

TARGETS YOUTH AND ADULTS

Target population includes black youth ages 13-19 and their adult care-givers in and near D.C. Housing Authority (DCHA) sites.

INTERACTIVE SESSIONS

• Sisters Rising and Brothers Rising: Ten consecutive weeks of 2-hour sessions.
• Small group discussions, role playing, take-home exercises, sisterhood, brotherhood, and bonding, skill building, and a field trip, to a local health clinic (Community Health Center).
• Parents Matter Program: Five weekly 2.5-3 hour sessions among groups of 12-18 parents/caretakers.

The Parents Matter Program is a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) evidence-based program.

The PASS Program’s Vision of Sustainability

The goal is a network of community members—co-facilitators, caretakers, and youth groups—that share a common framework of what healthy and safe sex and relationships are, where the educators are embedded in the community, and the knowledge from PASS programming is sustained beyond the duration of the programs. We believe this can be achieved by starting to think about sustainability early on, during the planning phase, and by including a saturation model—where a majority of community members are exposed to programming—as a key feature of sustaining the program and its intended outcomes.

BUILDING LASTING, STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The first step towards sustainability was building relationships with key partners who 1) maintain and spread the knowledge from PASS programming and 2) are capable of sustaining the effort financially. Key partners include:

• D.C. Housing and Community Development Administration on Children, Youth, and Families (ACYF), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).
• The Urban Institute and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).
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CREATING A SATURATION MODEL

PASS builds sustainability using a saturation model within each of 4 housing developments. Programming should reach the majority of kids AND a meaningful portion of the trusted adults (either as co-facilitators or through Parents Matter).

• 4 cohorts of 30 youth in Brothers/Sisters Rising per site, in order to reach most youth aged 13-19 in the community.

IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH A COMMUNITY-ENGAGED PARTNER

Programming is administered by the community co-facilitators along with a service provider partner. Beyond hiring and training the co-facilitators, the service provider engages with the community to build long-term relationships that can extend beyond the grant period.

• Participating in community life and events, such as holiday parties, Halloween festivities, and Thanksgiving basket giveaways.

IN OUR WORDS: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

• Hosting family game nights and open houses.

• Providing resources as part of community education and resource fairs.

Some reported sharing the information learned in PASS with others in their community, for example: “I told boys in school about STDs because they are really sexually active.” – Female youth participant

• “I told a girlfriend about the birth control thing... I was telling her about the different kinds of pills.” – Male youth participant.

Youth shared that they joined the program when they were encouraged to by adults in their community with whom they had pre-existing relationships. For example: “A community leader always has activities for us around the community” and “I always join groups when she asks me too”.

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

1. Building these relationships can be challenging; it’s important to plan in advance to solidify the roles and staff prior to programming.

2. Resident co-facilitators, resident council presidents, and other engaged adults from the community have key roles in recruitment, retention, and parental engagement/permission.

3. Partners agree that building trust is crucial but takes time; youth participants confirm their comfortability with facilitators who came from- or made an effort to connect with - their communities.

4. Information from PASS programming spreads beyond the involved cohorts; youth told friends and family about things they learned.

The Urban Institute is an Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (APP) Grantee, Grant Number: 90MD02685-01-00. PASS is currently under evaluation thanks to support of the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) and the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families (ACYF), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).