



ENGAGED PARTICIPATION IN PREVENTION PROGRAMS

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Challenges to Participation

Guiding Question 1:

What are some barriers that prevent youth from participating in substance abuse prevention programs?

- Financial stress
- Family hardship
- Low social support
- Lack of relevance of prevention programming
- Demanding participation requirements
- Others?

Guiding Question 1:

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What are some barriers that prevent youth and parents from participating in individual focused substance abuse prevention programs? (Parenting Programs).



Outcomes Require Participation

- Low numbers of participants threatens the validity & fidelity of the research programs
- Low numbers (with high % of attrition) fail to reach the intended population.
- Retention rates of around 65% are considered typical, but...

We need to do better!

Increasing Participation

Guiding Question 2:

Researchers have found that targeting 3 audiences (youth, parents & schools) promotes active participation in prevention programs. What strategies for each audience may support participation for youth, parents, and schools?

- Make participation mandatory so the program reaches its program goals
- Encourage meaningful relationships with youth, parents, and schools based on respect & trust
- Discourage partial participation– everyone's either “all in” or not involved at all
- Create youth-friendly practices (such as providing food and dedicated work space) that allow youth to feel a sense of belonging & connection to each other & program
- Engage in “turf battles” with teachers, administrators, & parents about whose goals take priority/precedence

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Participation Targets: Youth, Parents, Schools

- Youth
 - Be patient, supportive, enthusiastic & “uncritical” (nonjudgmental)
- Parents
 - Focus on collaborative language with parents (that acknowledges “scheduling difficulties & life stress”) & individualized attention
- Schools
 - Develop a cooperative relationship based on mutual respect that acknowledges academic priorities

Case Study: Engaged Participation



- PAYS aimed to reduce drug use, aggression/depression & “school deviance.”
- CARE aimed to develop protective factors against risks of youth suicide.
- Both programs met or exceeded participation goals (over 70% agreed to participate; 90% completed intervention; & over 90% completed evaluation data collection)
- “Youth First” programs

Recruitment & Retention: Youth



- One-on-one personal invitations to youth, who act as “gatekeepers” to participation
- Humorous, highly trained recruiters reassured youth that their participation could improve high school experience (for themselves & future students)
- Program connection developed through collaboration in small group settings

Recruitment & Retention: Parents



- “Parent friendly” programs (childcare, meals, flexible scheduling) helped to lower barriers to participation
- Respect for parental expertise & knowledge demonstrated through language (“that is something a parent knows more than I do”) as well as empowering parents to build relationships with peers & develop skills

Recruitment & Retention: High Schools



- Research studies “place demands on [educational] systems that may be overtaxed & burdened” though these demands may create connection as well
- Study aligned with school priorities & communication was “two way”
- Program logistics planned well in advance & integrated into school culture with respect

Reflect on Participation Strategies

- Personal, caring relationships with participants helps to build trust & respect
- Parent friendly programs (including childcare, flexible meeting times, meals) take parents' needs seriously
- Working to align program goals with educational goals minimizes risk of program disruption in busy school environment

Guiding Question 3:

What strategies has *your* organization found to be successful with youth, parents, & schools?

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Engaged Participation Success Benchmarks

- High recruitment rates (roughly 70% for students & 75% for parents)
- Over 90% of participants attended some portion of intervention
- High retention rates (85%-90%)

Guiding Question 4:

What did you learn from today's session & how might that help you develop supportive participation strategies?



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Take-Away: Supporting Participation

- Ecological framework that acknowledged multiple audiences (youth, parents, schools) as required for successful program outcomes
- Attrition is understandable in longitudinal studies, especially with mobile population
 - Some participation is better than none
- Developing participants' sense of belonging & connection to program allows people to participate on their own terms

Citation

Hooven, C., Walsh, E., Willgerodt, M., & Salazar, A. (2011). Articles: Increasing Participation in Prevention Research: Strategies for Youths, Parents, and Schools. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*, 24(3), 137-149.

<http://ga-sps.org/content/resources/increasing-participation-in-prevention-programs/3-increasing-participation-in-prevention-research.pdf>

