



The Evaluation of the Teen Outreach Program (TOP) in Louisiana

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Intervention Name	Teen Outreach Program (TOP)
Intervention Description	<p>TOP is a youth development and service learning program for youth ages 12 to 17 designed to reduce teen pregnancy and increase school success by helping youth develop a positive self-image, life management skills, and realistic goals. The TOP program model consists of three components implemented in school, after school, or in community settings over nine months: (1) weekly curriculum sessions, (2) community service learning, and (3) positive adult guidance and support. The TOP Changing Scenes Curriculum is separated into four age-/stage-appropriate levels; Level 1 is typically for youth ages 12 or 13 and Level 4 is typically for 17-year-old youth. The curriculum focuses on the presence of a consistent, caring adult; a supportive peer group; skill development; sexual health; and sexual behavior choices. The intended program dosage for each participant is a minimum of 25 weekly sessions (one per week at 40 to 50 minutes each) and at least 20 hours of community service learning over nine months. One to two facilitators plan the order of sessions based on the needs and interest of youth and implemented TOP in a group of 10 to 25 youth.</p> <p>For this evaluation, the DHH/OPH/BFH Family Planning Program targets youth ages 12 to 17. Youth are placed in age-tiered clubs of 10 to 25 youth. Trained facilitators are implementing the age-appropriate level of the Changing Scenes Curriculum to youth in clubs in community-based settings in Louisiana parishes with the highest teen birth rates in the state.</p>
Counterfactual	Business as usual
Counterfactual Description	Youth in the counterfactual condition did not participate in any TOP Changing Scenes curriculum sessions or community service learning of the TOP program; however, they might have had access to other sexual health education or other youth development programs offered in their communities. For example, youth could have participated in any of a number of other teen pregnancy prevention programs offered in New Orleans, which was one area where the study was conducted.
Primary Research Question(s)	What is the impact of the offer to participate in TOP clubs on participants' reports of unprotected sex immediately after the end of the intervention?
Additional Outcomes	Recent pregnancy, knowledge of sexual risk, motivation to avoid sexual risk, and actual behavioral skills
Sample	A convenience sample of school-age adolescents was recruited into the study. Participants met three eligibility requirements: they were (1) ages 12 to 17, (2) residents of the recruitment target area, and (3) able to participate in activities and complete all study materials in English. All recruitment was performed by project staff from contracted local community-based organizations (CBOs). Participants were recruited from within-school settings, local community outreach, and existing CBO youth programs. The final sample was 4,984 youth (2,480 assigned to TOP and 2,504 assigned to control).

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Setting	<p>CBOs in seven of the nine Louisiana public health regions (I, II, IV, V, VI, VII, and VIII) were selected to participate due to the high teen pregnancy rates in these parishes and the organizations' previous experience serving youth. The seven CBOs that provided TOP offered programming after school or on weekends in centralized locations. Transportation was provided by some CBOs due to the geographic area they served. Community service learning opportunities were identified in the local community, in some cases by the host CBO, ensuring youth could easily participate.</p>
Research Design	<p>The study design was an individual randomized controlled trial with youth randomly assigned to either TOP or to the control group. CBO staff contacted and recruited all youth. After explaining the study and the intervention, they obtained written parental consent and youth assent from all participants before administration of the baseline survey and randomization. There were no differences in the manner in which control and TOP youth were recruited, surveyed, or consented. Recruitment and enrollment occurred over a three-year period. Six of seven agencies had similar enrollment goals: 300 youth in year 1 and 350 youth in years 2 and 3; a seventh agency enrolled a single cohort of 300 youth.</p> <p>CBOs recruited, enrolled, and documented consent and baseline surveys from youth before submitting groups of youth to the evaluation team for assignment. CBOs submitted groups of approximately 50 participants that coincided with their clubs' expected geographic and age unit. These groups were then randomized, resulting in a TOP club of 25 people, the recommended maximum size for clubs with one facilitator. The results of random assignment were uploaded by evaluation staff to an online data portal that was viewable by project staff.</p> <p>Data were collected at three critical time points: (1) pre-intervention (or baseline), (2) immediately after intervention, and (3) 12 months post-intervention. Baseline survey data were collected by project staff following consent and intake but before randomization. Because the recruitment methods differed across and within agencies, surveys were administered both individually to incoming participants and in larger group administration formats. All baseline data were collected within about one month before TOP club initiation. The immediate post-intervention and 12-month post-intervention surveys were administered in a group setting by trained evaluation staff. There were no differences in the manner in which control and TOP youth were surveyed.</p>
Impact Findings	To be determined when data collection and analysis are complete.
Implementation Findings	To be determined when data collection and analysis are complete.
Schedule/Timeline	<p>Programming was offered for three consecutive school years: 2011–2012, 2012–2013, and 2013–2014. Each year, the CBOs enrolled sample in the fall; enrollment ended in fall 2013. Immediate follow-up surveys were administered after the conclusion of the TOP program; data collection ended in September 2014. The 12-month follow-up is administered one year after each club ends. The final club ended July 2014 and the final 12-month follow-up data collection ends in September 2015. A final report, which focuses on immediate post intervention data, will be available to the Office of Adolescent Health in 2015-2016.</p>