

NWX-OS-OGC-RKVL (US)

**Moderator: Allison Roper
September 24, 2012
1:00 pm CT**

Coordinator: Good afternoon and thank you all for standing by. All lines will be open throughout the duration of today's conference call. Today's call is being recorded. If anyone has any objections you may disconnect at this time. And now I'll turn the call over to your speaker, Ms. Allison Roper. Ma'am, you may begin.

Allison Roper: Thank you so much. Welcome everybody, to today's Teen Outreach Program call for TPP grantees. Today's call is hosted by OAH and the Wyman Center. So this is Allison Roper. I'm with the Office of Adolescent Health. I'm a Division Director here at the office, and I'd like for the folks from Wyman Center to introduce themselves as well.

Joe Miller: This is Joe Miller. I'm a General Manager and Senior Vice President for Wyman.

Claire Wyneken: And hi everybody, this is Claire Wyneken. I'm Senior Vice President and Director of Partner Services for Wyman.

Allison Roper: Okay, so I wanted to just let everybody know, during the June conference call we had everyone on listen-only status. In order to generate more sharing and discussion today, we have opted to have all of your lines open. Please be mindful of others and place your line on mute when the presentation is going on or when you're not speaking so that we don't have a lot of background noise.

We'll be recording this call, and we will post it on the OAH Web site next week if you need to reference it in the future. Okay, so let's get started. The purpose of our call, this is the second of our regular calls with the TOP TPP grantees. The idea for these calls was born out of the feedback we received directly from you at the annual conference.

Whenever possible we'll be sure to include both OAH and the Wyman Center on these calls so that we can have a more robust discussion, and I am very appreciative that Claire and Joe have both joined us for this call and the one we held in June. The purpose of the call is really to provide targeted guidance on topics of interest and share successes and challenges.

We'd like for each of you to share one success and one challenge regarding recruitment and retention after our short presentation today, in order to really get the conversation going, because we do believe that you can learn best from one another. So please take some time to think about what you can share that you and your colleagues may be able to benefit from.

We want you to use these calls as opportunities to respond directly to your needs and your questions. So we encourage you to send us any specific topics, questions, challenges or ideas that you would like to see discussed on these calls, and we will try to be as responsive as possible.

While we may have short presentations to share with the group on some occasions, this may not always be the case. We would like to use these calls to see them become a more facilitative discussion around particular topics that might be relevant to your work in Teen Outreach Program.

Today we have a couple of primary topics that we want to discuss. The first is the recommended OAH evaluation guidance that was sent out via email a few weeks ago to those who are implementing rigorous evaluations. And the second part of the discussion will focus on best practices related to recruitment and retention.

Okay. So for those of you who are implementing rigorous evaluations, you received this guidance, it's really in response to the Wyman's Teen Outreach Program Evaluation Guide from 2012 that was distributed this summer. The evaluation guide that Wyman sent out is a tremendous resource that's going to assist program sites in fulfilling the Wyman reporting requirements, and we are really pleased that it's got so much clarity in it.

For the OAH grantees with rigorous evaluations, there are additional considerations that need to be applied to the Wyman's evaluation requirements, in order to ensure that the evaluation continues to meet the HHS Evidence Review Standards. So while we won't go into great detail here, we do want to touch on a few of the main topic areas that you should make sure to consider.

And please make sure you review the guidance that we sent out to all of the Tier 1 Range CD and the Tier 2 grantees in early September for more detailed information. So the first is about consent, it's passive versus active consent. Please remember that you should be following the consent process that was approved by your IRB for this study.

The second is related to references to TOP on consent forms, or to Wyman Center on consent forms and survey introduction scripts. Please remember that with rigorous evaluations, not all youth will receive TOP. It's imperative that knowledge of treatment status is not communicated to youth and their parents, even through a consent form or a survey introduction script during consent and baseline data collection, as that knowledge could introduce bias into the study sample.

So timing of survey administration, Wyman allows for you to complete a pretest survey within four weeks of the club start and a post test within four weeks of club end, based on their evaluation guidance. And we just wanted to reiterate that if the TOP pre and post test are integrated with the evaluation baseline survey, just please remember that the pretest must be administered prior to beginning the program, and the post test should be administered as close to the end of the program implementation as possible.

With respect to method for survey administration, in a rigorous evaluation it's best practice to use trained data collectors for survey administration. And it's also critical that the treatment and control sites have the same method for data collection. So for example, if the treatment group uses a Web-based data collection method, the control group should use the same method.

And then the last piece that I wanted to just touch on is the intent to - the concept of intent to treat analysis. Because the TPP evaluations are using an intent to treat format, all youth in the study, regardless of their actual TOP participation should be administered a post test survey. These youth should - also need to be tracked through attendance records, even if they don't end up attending the club sessions.

And I think I hear a phone ringing. I don't know - can people hear me?

Woman: Yes.

Allison Roper: Okay. So people can hear me. So I'm not sure - if there's somebody who maybe doesn't have their phone on mute and they're calling somebody? Okay, it's gone. Okay, so with that I'm going to - we will kind of, we'll stop for questions and a bigger discussion afterwards, but let's go ahead and move on to the recruitment and retention piece. So I am going to turn it over to Claire and Joe.

Claire Wyneken: Well good afternoon, everybody. We are going to be talking about recruitment and retention, and so I'm just going to highlight some of the key points around recruitment first, and then retention, and then we would love to hear from you what's working and where are you challenged. So on this page, the first thing is to start engaging your local partners as early in the process as possible.

So often times if you're working with a community-based organization or a faith-based organization or a school district, it's really critical that they have as much notice around what your recruiting process is, how students are selected or engaged into the program, that they have as much detail as possible, because they often have their own protocols and their own requirements that have to interface with your TOP recruitment.

It's also important to engage people from different levels within your local providers and your local partnerships. It's great to have your classroom teachers or your guidance counselor on board if that's your key point person, but it's also important to move throughout the chain, make sure that the principals are on board, the superintendents are on board, so that there's no surprises down the line that might interfere with your recruitment.

And in many cases those other stakeholders can be assets in the recruitment process, because they can help communicate about the program to folks in the community. The second area that we think is very helpful is to have a presentation to the key partners in the community, to parents, to other folks that may be influencing young peoples' participation.

If you have a parent or a teen who participated last year, even in a pilot program, having them as a key speaker to describe the program and talk about its benefits to them, that can go a long way to influence the listeners to that presentation.

Third, always consider embedding TOP within an existing program. For example, you might have a Boys and Girls Club that meet five days a week, and TOP might be one or two days of that event. That often is the easiest way to quickly enroll young people into the program, because they just are participating in TOP out of the same routine that they're participating in their normal program.

And once you've got a year of this under your belt, you'll see that the teens who are really attracted to TOP will start coming on their own. This is certainly what we've found in our own case and in many other sites, that once the teens are able to talk about the program with one another, it begins to sell itself, because their enthusiasm and excitement about it is really spread by word of mouth.

And then the next idea is to have some pre-TOP activities. Now of course, those of you that are in rigorous evaluation, you know that there's some restrictions around doing too many activities prior to the survey point and to beginning the program. However, if it's an option to you to offer some

icebreakers, some team building activities, maybe even a taste of service as a way to introduce teens to what TOP is, that just brings clarity.

Young people participate in a lot of different programs, and they may have ideas about what TOP is, and so what you want to do is crystallize for them what it really is. And you also want to make sure it's very authentic. If it's just an icebreaker and there's no mention of the service or the life skills that are developed, it might feel a little bit like a bait and switch when they start to participate.

So you want to make sure that in any pre-activities that you offer, it really is a representative sampling of how TOP actually would work, so that they're making an informed choice. And then the last point on this page is obviously this word of mouth, which I already mentioned around the TOP youth, but there's also word of mouth around other stakeholders, people who may be influencing young people's participation.

That could be their guidance counselor, their coach, their youth minister. The more those folks know really what TOP is about, what that experience will be like for teens, and what they, how they might benefit from participating in it, they can also help talk to young people about their participation.

So moving on, the next page we are looking at recruitment.

Woman: Retention.

Claire Wyneken: Excuse me, retention. And some of these will strike as rather obvious, but they are tried and true. Having a consistent location, setting and time for your club obviously makes it easier for young people to plan their lives around

participating. Having the service learning, active involvement and service learning as early in the year as possible, is very beneficial.

It's one of the things that really draws people, young people to do their participation and builds enthusiasm for the program, because it is often a new experience for a lot of teens, particularly the type of community service learning that TOP offers. So you want to get them involved in that as early as possible. That's kind of the bait.

Keep the service learning going on throughout the year. Don't let it just be a one-shot deal at the beginning of the year or the middle of the year. The more you can have experiences either ongoing or multiple experiences throughout the year, the more you can keep enthusiasm - young people will be looking forward to those kinds of experiences, and hopefully that will help draw them in.

Building strong relationships between the facilitator and the young people and within the peer group is very important. One reason that young people leave any kind of program is if they don't feel like they belong, or they don't feel safe, or they don't feel known. So all of those are areas that TOP has structures to foster, and they're very important to pay attention to, particularly in the early days of the program.

Another area that's very important, and it's grounded in our logic model is really getting that teen voice heard. So when you're looking at each program, each time you have a session, leave a couple of minutes to get some feedback to the young people about how that program was for them. Did they see a benefit for themselves? Did they like that activity?

Was there - are there things that they also want to talk about so that you're really making sure that you're hearing, on an ongoing basis, what their feedback is about the program. There may be some things that you can adjust based on that feedback. There may be things that you can't adjust but you can have a conversation about that.

The next area is incentives. And this is obviously an area that every partner will have to decide for themselves what's appropriate there, but it's - incentives can be very simple. They can be acknowledgement. They can be certificates.

They can be the opportunity to participate in maybe something a little bit additional. It doesn't always have to have a monetary value. And we have some additional guidance about incentives that we can share with anybody who would like to talk about that.

Contacting young people who miss club, and I'm not sure - I think there's a couple partners who have some structures in place. I don't know if anybody from Clayton County is on the call, but if you are I'd love for you to share when we get to the sharing part about your structure for reaching out to young people who miss a session of TOP. If they're not on the call, I will fill in.

And then also, again, always focusing on being centered around the youth, having them pay attention to, you know, really what the youth are calling for, the issues that are of importance to them, and particularly when it comes to service opportunities that they're really excited about participating in and they feel are making a difference for them.

Allison Roper: Okay. Fantastic, thank you Claire. Now we want to hear from you. We would really like to be able to take a few minutes for each of you, if you're

comfortable and you want to, to share with others on the call of what your experiences are, your challenges, questions, successes, anything that you think is important related to recruitment and retention.

Or if there's something else on your mind that's TOP related, you can certainly bring those ideas up too. We're going to give this a shot. There's about 30 people on the call. Everybody's line is live, so it's not an operator-driven question and answer, but we really wanted to see if we could make this happen, with everybody having the opportunity to speak at once.

So with that I'm going to open it up to see if anybody wants to share, successes, challenges, questions.

(Jenny): Well this is (Jenny), from Phoenix, Arizona, and I am more than willing to share, but I'd kind of like to know how many other people are going to so that I don't take up too much time, and that I get everybody else's ideas around that.

Allison Roper: Okay. Well if you want to share anything, since you've go the mic right now.

(Jenny): Okay. All right, well, I've been doing this program for a couple of years now, and we found the recruitment and retention incredibly challenging at first, especially before anybody knew about us. However, the word's starting to get out and people are coming a lot more.

But once you get them there, retaining them has always been a challenge, because you're competing with after school sports and babysitting and jobs and all sorts of things. So I think that our retention is the biggest struggle, you know, that we're working on. So what we did was we created an individual recruitment plan and retention, another individual retention plan for each site.

Because some of the sites had different, you know, different issues. Some of them could meet during lunch for community service learning activity. Some of them could meet after school. So every site has their own recruitment and retention plan. However some of the - they all have some similarities.

And the more personal we made it, we found that the better the relationships developed, and quicker. For example, we have - make sure that we have everybody's birthdays mapped out, and our administrative assistant sends a card to the facilitators each month at the beginning of the month for all the kids whose birthday is during that month.

They simply fill it out and make sure that the kids get it. And that has been incredibly popular. So that kind of thing, you know, just as individualized as we can possibly make it with that many kids, has been the greatest support for us in our retention. That's it.

Allison Roper: Thanks (Jenny). That's very helpful.

Rich Kreipe: This is Rich Kreipe from Rochester, the Thrive program in Rochester.

Allison Roper: Hi.

Rich Kreipe: And I just have a question about the, you know, the comment regarding - I'm on the evaluation - the rigorous independent evaluation team for the University of Rochester. And the two questions, you know, having ambassadors who's done it in the past, you know, to kind of help with recruitment. But the issue was how was one avoid having kids who are going to be talking about TOP.

Because you also mentioned that, you know, in any pre-activities you want to talk about how much, how TOP would actually work but kind of avoiding a bait and switch. And, you know, so to the degree to which, obviously we don't have the word TOP or anything about it on the consent form. We just talk about the kind of services that would be, both the service learning and the curriculum.

But, so just any suggestions about how the kids who are helping with recruitment by being ambassadors and talking about their experience, how to not make it seem like when they don't get randomized to TOP, they get randomized to the other condition, the control condition, that they don't feel like, well, we were kind of set up to expect this and we didn't get that.

So I'll go on mute now. I'd just like to hear people's comments about that.
Thank you.

Allison Roper: So does anybody out there who's actually doing this on the ground with the rigorous evaluation have anything they want to share on that?

(Joseph): This is (Joseph), am I - can you hear me?

Allison Roper: Yes, we can hear you.

(Joseph): Okay, so that's a really good question. And what we've done at Kansas City is separated the information in the introduction to the TOP program from the study itself. And so when we go in the classroom we actually have a separate - and this is through our IRB and everything as well, right.

So we've gone and just told the kids that, you know, this part of a program that may be coming to your school but, you know, this, you know, survey just

we're asking - it's an opinion survey, and so we ask them to complete the survey and provide them incentives and everything, and talk about the program sort of tertiarily, but not directly that they may get it or they may not.

So they know ahead of time when they go in to fill it out. So yes, it's an issue. It's a concern that we have, too is whether or not they're going to feel left out or not. But it's not something we have a lot of control over, because the fact that, you know, we have to have a random sample.

So, I don't know, for us it's worked out so far. It's been fine. We haven't really - we've just now started our first wave of this, and so we've done the data collection the past few weeks and we are getting the program started. And so we haven't heard any push back from kids that aren't getting it yet, because they haven't really been in the classroom yet so much to find out.

But it, at least the introduction on how we discuss it, we just explain to the kids that this is a survey, you know, it's just a survey about opinions and behaviors and attitude and so forth. And then, you know, it may be related to this other thing or not. So I don't know if that helps or not, but that's kind of how we set it up so that they don't expect up front that they're going to get the program.

And we've made that very clear on the consent forms that we sent home to the parents as well, so the parents aren't going to be wanting that program either, so.

Rich Kreipe: That's helpful, thank you.

(Joseph): I don't know if that...

Rich Kreipe: I guess my concern is that if we were to have ambassadors, and have kids talk about, you know, what they would, how it would actually work in the pre-activities, the degree to which we talk about TOP - so what we've done is we've talked about - our program is called Thrive.

And the two arms are, TOP is one arm, and then the other arm is a work readiness, a pretty watered down work readiness experience. And, but we've framed it in terms of, this is a youth development program, overall. And rather than talking specifically about what they would get at TOP, to avoid that, but that's very helpful. Thank you.

(Joseph): Yes, and (Karen), the program manager at (Life Correct) just had a wonderful term that I like, she used it, it's called the lottery. So even if kids do ask about it, you just let them know that it's kind of a lottery. That helps to - because a lot of people don't understand what a random assignment is, but if you use that term lottery, they seem to get it, you know.

Claire Wyneken: This is Claire. One thought, Richard, is also to consider if it causes too many difficulties to have a teen who's already participated in that space, you could collect quotes from teens from the previous year or ask them to write down some description of their experience that you could then share with the audience but without mentioning TOP.

So I wonder if they could still describe some of the activities that they were doing, and then you could go through and select those that don't, you don't think are going to interfere with the messaging.

Rich Kreipe: That's very helpful. That's a good idea. We will be doing that. We just also started data collection and - so that's a good idea. This is kind of in anticipation of what happens if, so thank you very much.

(Charlie): This is (Charlie), also from Rochester. Hi Rich, how are you?

Rich Kreipe: Hi (Charlie).

(Charlie): I have a question, and maybe someone could help me with this, on consistency in setting the time for the clubs. We're doing it in recreation centers, which are competing with sports. And sports, sometimes interfere with the retention of the youth. So when we start out with the times that we think we're going to have, then volleyball, which ends in October - and our program starts in October and then the kids can come.

If you have any suggestions for how to compete with sports and, which creates that - you have to have that flexibility in time. Also when it comes to the youth having to baby-sit their younger brothers and sisters, anyone have any suggestions on how do you retain those youth, or keep the attrition down from, you know, for attendance?

(Jenny): Hi (Charlie). This is (Jenny) in Phoenix.

(Charlie): Hi (Jenny), how are you?

(Jenny): Hi. I'm great, thank you. One of the things that someone in our Web site, our web of friends developed, was like a little flow chart. And it starts, you know, are you eligible to be a TOP teen? And it starts, and it goes, are you actively involved sports that meet at the same time or practice the same time? If yes, go this way, if no, go that way, type of thing.

And everybody has really loved it. So I'd be happy to send that to Allison or to you both, and anybody who would look at it and see if it would be helpful.

Because that way it kind of gives you an idea with the kids, is it a good fit for them from the beginning. And then the other thing is, is that if they are involved in a sport or something, is it something that their coach will give them room to be out every Monday or so?

We don't change to fit the sports. They have to - the kid has to, you know, be workable with us to do that, so that's kind of how we do it.

(Charlie): Okay, great. Thank you.

(Jenny): You bet you.

(Amber): Hi, this is (Amber) in Denver at Denver Health, and we implement TOP at eight metro area Boys and Girls Clubs. The sports issue, we actually, last year at some of our sites did need to flex some of our scheduling to accommodate sports, because we did have a lot of youth who are participating in Boys and Girls Club sponsored athletics. What we found to be a little bit more successful this year is that one of our former TOP facilitators is actually now an athletics director.

So we've infiltrated that group of staff. So we're finding that having conversations up front with the athletics director about TOP scheduling, and now that TOP is, has more name recognition in the club, is positioning us to be able to work in partnership with the athletics director, as compared to sports always being a competing interest depending upon the time of the year and the scheduling and how it conflicts with TOP.

So if at all possible to have conversations with those that are creating the sports scheduling up front, and see how you can collaborate on schedules that work to allow you to participate in both, I think that's the best approach.

Allison Roper: Okay, thank you.

Claire Wyneken: And this is Claire again. I just want to piggyback on what (Amber) and (Jenny) shared. I think those are both terrific. And because I think the coaches and the TOP facilitators often have the same goal, and so the more the coach knows about how TOP can really support what they're trying to develop in their young people, they have a real incentive for perhaps, you know, one day a week practice starting at a slightly different time, or somehow collaborating.

So I just think they really - we really are all after the same thing. And I think the more they see that the more they do cooperate. So it's really great to hear that that's working in Denver, and (Jenny) how you're working as well. Thank you.

Allison Roper: Do we have anybody else who wants to share or ask any questions of the group about recruitment and retention or anything else for that matter? Okay. Well I do appreciate everybody taking the time today. I mean, I think that this is a much better way to handle these calls, where everybody has the opportunity to speak. I hope that we can use them to really have some bigger discussions as we keep going. We'll continue to have these calls quarterly.

I did want to make an announcement and let everybody know that I, of course am the - this is Allison, and I am the TOP liaison right now in our office as the program model lead. But this is actually my last week with the Office of Adolescent Health, so I've got some very sad, mixed feelings about leaving, excited about the future but very sad to be leaving.

And in my place, Sabrina Chapple will be the new TOP liaison. So Joe and Claire will be working with her very closely, and she will, obviously, be working with all of your project officers to learn, you know, to help you answer any questions about TOP and get you the guidance that you need.

But I do appreciate everybody, your willingness to ask questions and accept answers as we've gotten implementation under the way over the last couple of years. Okay, well have a...

Man: Thank you, Allison, for all your help.

Allison Roper: Absolutely, my pleasure. We'll have this call recorded. Well, it's been recorded. We'll have it up on the Web site within the next week or so.

Man: Great.

(Jenny): Well Allison, I just - this is (Jenny). I just want to thank you because you've been so helpful and supportive. And I'm a little bit sad, but I'm sure it's a good thing for you.

Allison Roper: Thank you. Thank you.

(Joy): And this is (Joy) in Chicago, Allison. Thanks again for all your help as well, too, and good luck to you wherever you're going after this.

Allison Roper: Thank you. I appreciate it. I will be at the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, so I won't be far from you all. Don't worry.

(Chesney): And this is (Chesney) from Chicago Public Schools. We'll miss you Allison.

Allison Roper: I know. I'll miss you all too. I've been watching you with baited breath these last few weeks, so excited you're moving forward.

(Jenny): Claire, I have a question for you. This is (Jenny).

Claire Wyneken: Sure.

(Jenny): I don't get time to get on the Web net very much, but are people sending in ideas about the recruitment and retention plan? Because I notice that every week we're coming up with something new. And like on my recruitment plan I have 16 different things right now that we can do, you know, to recruit. And same on the retention plan.

And we just keep adding. And I was wondering if you guys are kind of keeping track of that to help each other out.

Claire Wyneken: We are keeping track of those things, (Jenny), and we collect any ideas that people have that are working for them. And it - we always are soliciting those, and we're pulling them into guidance documents that we can share with folks.

(Jenny): Okay.

Claire Wyneken: But your question just raises a great idea. I think what we'll do is maybe we'll put an active request for that information in our next e-news, so that we can sort of spark everybody's memory to send those things in. And then we'll send out, the following month, everything that we collect from the TOP community.

(Jenny): That would be really helpful. Because I know, you know, it's taken me a while to actually get the birthday cards out. I mean, it was a great idea, but I was very surprised at the strong impact that it's really having. And so I think if people were able to start with that sooner, it would probably be more helpful.

Claire Wyneken: Yes. And just as a quick note, the folks in - I think that's really great, (Jenny), the - I think, again, that's, it just personalizes that experience for the young people. And the - Clayton County is actually sending - they've set up a structure where if a teen misses a session, another teen in the group sends them a postcard or a text or a call.

And then if they miss another meeting, the facilitator also sends a postcard, a text or a call. And then if they miss another meeting, everybody sends a postcard. So these teens are just getting bombarded with people saying hey, we miss you, you know, we really need your input. We want you to be here with us. And so it really kinds of builds those relationships.

So that's just another technique. But yes, I will definitely get on soliciting notes from all of you, because there's a lot of good stuff happening out there.

Allison Roper: All right. Thank you everybody.

Woman: Okay, thank you.

Allison Roper: Have a great afternoon.

Man: Thank you. Bye bye.

Allison Roper: Bye bye.

Woman: Great. Bye bye.

Woman: Ready (Joann)?

Woman: Bye bye.

Woman: Hello?

Woman: Hello.

Woman: Oh, I'm sorry. Thanks. Bye bye.

Woman: Bye bye.

END