



The Evaluation of Web of Life in West-Central New Mexico

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Intervention Name	The Web of Life
Intervention Description	<p>The Web of Life (WOL) program is an adventure-based experiential intervention based on a positive youth development framework. It aims to foster resilience that will enable youth to resist risky behaviors, including those that lead to unwanted teen pregnancy. The focus is on social-emotional learning.</p> <p>The WOL program is delivered to 6th grade youth in school, community, and wilderness settings using experiential (versus didactic) strategies. WOL staff select community and wilderness settings, including those that have local cultural and spiritual significance, to meet the goals and objectives of the curriculum. Specially trained National Indian Youth Leadership Project staff deliver the WOL program, which includes classroom-based, weekly after-school, weekend, and multiday components.</p> <p>The classroom-based component has 26 sessions, which are delivered to all participants typically in health or physical education classes. The sessions are delivered experientially/interactively and are sequenced developmentally throughout the school year, increasing in challenge and skill level over time.</p> <p>Approximately one-fourth to one-third of youth elect to participate in the out-of-school-time components. The weekly after-school sessions at the school or nearby locations provide a higher level of challenge and skill acquisition than the other components.</p> <p>Ten daylong sessions are delivered on weekends and school holidays at off-site locations accessible within one day. These sessions provide additional skill-building challenges and include activities such as hiking, climbing/rappelling, and caving.</p> <p>Three multiday overnight sessions are delivered during major school holiday breaks and the summer. They include the highest level of challenge and skill development for participants. One of these sessions is Native American Horse Inspired Growth and Healing, during which participants interact with horses to deepen their understanding of healthy relationships, communication skills, and interpersonal awareness in a culturally meaningful setting. Other multiday events include canoeing or rafting on rivers in New Mexico and the Grand Canyon. Service learning projects are also integrated into the after-school, weekend, and multiday components.</p>
Counterfactual	Business as usual
Counterfactual Description	Students in the comparison schools receive no specific program and receive their standard school curricula. Students do not receive sexual education in schools until 8th grade, and it is not offered in all schools. Information on the availability of other similar programs and services to youth in the comparison schools is tracked annually and will be included in the final report.
Primary Research Question	At the end of treatment, what is the WOL program's impact relative to a no-treatment matched comparison group on youth ever having sexual intercourse?
Additional Outcomes	Internal assets, mental wellness (depression, anxiety), substance use, ethnic identity
Sample	During three schools years (2012–2013, 2013–2014, and 2014–2015), all 6th-grade youth from five middle schools (two treatment and three comparison schools) were eligible for participation in the study. The projected total sample size is approximately 700 to 750 youth. The final sample will include three cohorts of 6th graders.

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Setting	In classroom-based components are delivered in schools located in west-central New Mexico and enroll mostly American Indian students. One treatment school is a rural Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) grant-controlled school in a primarily Pueblo (American Indian) community; the other treatment school is a public school in a small, primarily Navajo (American Indian) community. To ensure adequate comparison sample size, two schools were selected as the comparison schools for the Pueblo treatment school based on school type and tribal group affiliation. One comparison school is a rural BIE school and the other is an urban public charter school that enrolls many youth from the same Pueblo community as the treatment group school. The school selected as the comparison for the Navajo treatment school is located in the same city as the treatment school and has a similar ethnic enrollment and school size. The out-of-school-time components are delivered either at the schools or nearby locations.
Research Design	<p>This evaluation uses a quasi-experimental research design to evaluate the impacts of the WOL intervention. Two intervention schools were identified based on their commitment and capacity to support the full implementation of WOL. The two treatment sites were selected first, followed by selection of suitable matched comparison sites. The final sample will include three cohorts of 6th-grade youth.</p> <p>Students' participation in the study required parental consent. Sixth-grade teachers distributed consent forms to students at all five schools. The consent process for treatment and comparison conditions was the same, except for a sentence in the forms indicating that treatment group students would receive WOL as their incentive and that comparison group students would receive \$10 for each returned consent form. In addition, each comparison group teacher received a \$200 gift card as an incentive for helping with the consent process.</p> <p>The WOL Outcome Survey included sexual behavior outcome measures and outcomes of local interest as specified in the WOL logic model, including internal and external assets, substance use, and mental health outcomes. The same survey was administered to all study participants at the beginning of 6th grade (before the treatment schools began implementing WOL), at the end of the school year (immediate post-test), and as a follow-up survey midway through the 7th-grade year (six-month post-test) for each of the three cohorts.</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	Enrollment ends in fall 2014. Baseline data collection ends in October 2014, the immediate post-test ends in May 2015, and the six-month post-test ends in December 2015. A final report, which focuses on immediate post-test data on three cohorts, will be available to the Office of Adolescent Health in 2015-2016.