Avatars Travel for Free: Decreasing Disparities in Community Access to Training and Capacity Building

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BRIDGING THE GAPS: ELIMINATING DISPARITIES IN TEEN PREGNANCY AND SEXUAL HEALTH
JUNE 4-6, 2014
This presentation was made possible under contract #1R21MH09572301A1 from the National Institute of Mental Health.

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Workshop Objectives

Objective 1. Participants will be able to critique the use of a virtual environment for learning how to implement an EBI with fidelity.

Objective 2. Participants will be able to identify specific strategies for adapting face-to-face training activities for use in a virtual environment.

Objective 3. Participants will be able to identify recommendations for ways in which training and capacity building in a MUVE could be useful in their pregnancy prevention efforts.
Agenda

• Introduction to Cuídate
• EBI training challenges
• Multi-user virtual environments (MUVEs)
• Second Life (SL)
• Community of Inquiry framework (COI)
• Adapting face-to-face training to SL
• Advantages and disadvantages of using MUVEs
• Using MUVEs in your own work
• Sexual risk reduction intervention for Latino youth
• Six-session, small group format
• RCT – long term outcomes
  – Increased condom use
  – Decreased sexual intercourse
  – Decrease in number of partners
• Community engaged approach
¡Cuídate! Facilitator Training

Training Objectives

• Identify the core elements and key characteristics

• Recognize how Latino culture supports safer sex decisions

• Respond appropriately to challenging questions or sensitive situations
¡Cuídate! Facilitator Training

Facilitator Training Format

• Experience modules of the curriculum
• Increases familiarity with curriculum
• Builds self-efficacy in conducting the program
• Receive direct feedback from expert trainers
Evidence-Based Interventions: Training and Technical Assistance

- EBIs can provide improved health outcomes if implemented correctly.

- EBI training often relies on resource intensive formats.

- Gaining access can be a major challenge to training.

- Alternate trainings formats may increase access.
EBI Training and Technical Assistance

• Small group discussion #1. Think about the EBIs that you implement in your work:

  • What training requirements are involved?
  • What are some of the training challenges that you face?
  • How difficult/easy is it to gain access to training?
  • How does difficult-to-access EBI training impact the communities you serve?

  • Do you receive ongoing technical assistance related to the EBIs that you implement?
  • How might ongoing technical assistance benefit your work with the community?
Multi-User Virtual Environments (MUVEs)

• Avatars – online manifestations of people

• Creates a sense of community

• Opportunities for social interaction

• MUVES have been used in training and education (Mitchell et al, 2011)
**Second Life**®

*Second Life* is a **free** 3D MUVE where users can socialize, connect, and create using voice and text chat (Linden Lab, 2014).
Community of Inquiry Framework (COI)

- Constructs:
  - Cognitive presence—extent to which learners are able to construct and confirm meaning through sustained reflection and discourse
  - Social presence—degree to which participants in computer-mediated communication feel affectively connected one to another
  - Teaching presence—the design, facilitation and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes

Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2001
Swan, Garrison, & Richardson, 2009
Activity-Two Truths And a Lie

• Find a partner!

• Each partner says 3 statements: two truths and one lie

• Try to determine which statement is false
Large Group Debrief: Two Truths and a Lie

• What strategies did you use to determine the truths and the lie?
• How important were facial expressions?
• Did you pay attention to gestures (e.g., hand movements, posture, shoulder shrugs)?
• Did you and your partner make eye contact throughout the activity?
• How important was eye contact to your guess of truth vs. lie?
¡Cuídate! Training in Second Life®

Training Participants

- Five training sessions occurred from July – October
- Total of 35 participants from NY to CA
¡Cuídate! Training Materials
Adaptation of ¡Cuídate!

Creating a Second Life Account & Avatar Building

To get started, you will need to create a Second Life account:

1. Type in the URL: https://www.secondlife.com
2. Find the orange button in the middle of the page that reads “Join Now” and click it.
3. You will now select the avatar of our choice using the scrolling arrows, and click “Choose This Avatar.”
   - This is how your appearance on the screen in the Second Life program will look.
   - You will have the opportunity to modify your appearance later.
4. Finally, click on “Create Account” at the bottom to finish creating your account.

Support

- Learning Resource Center
- Video Tutorials
- Chat Room
Preparing Participants for SL®

Communicating in Second Life

1. Text Chat
   - Using the "Chat" function by typing messages with your keyboard.
   - Click on the "Chat" button at the bottom of your screen, which will open a Chat box, allowing you to type in messages. Messages will appear for all nearby users to see on the screen.

2. Voice Chat
   - This feature requires the use of a headset, headphones with a microphone, and speakers that are compatible with your computer.
   - Once you have verified that your speakers and microphone are working, select the "Speak" button on the bottom menu in Second Life.
   - A green bar should appear above your avatar's head that will indicate when you speak into your microphone, verifying that it is indeed working.
¡Cuídate! Training in Second Life®
Cuídate Training F2f vs. Virtual
Debrief-Teachback

• **Large Group Discussion**
  – What were the differences in the F2F and SL versions of the teachback?
  – Would being an avatar impact your behavior in the activity?

Report out to larger group
Video of TA Session
Participant Facilitator Feedback

Interactive

Engaging
Fun
Information
Group
Hearing
Input
Learning
Comfortable

Sharing
Discussions
People
Feedback
Listening
Listening
Listening

Connect
Questions
Friendly
Helpful

Observing
Listening
Participant Facilitator Feedback

• Access
  – “The ability to interact without the cost of travel.”
  – “More people can be included and costs can be reduced.”
  – “I strongly prefer face-to-face training, but acknowledge the geographical advantages to the online environment.”
  – “The fact that it was easy for educators from across the country to attend without travel costs and disruptions to my work.”
Participant Facilitator Feedback

- Presence/Social interaction
  - “Most helpful to sit and listen to other people’s ideas.”
  - “[I] liked listening to others people’s experience”
  - “Great to hear ideas from people around the country.”
  - “Helpful to observe the other facilitators implement a lesson and listening to the feedback from the trainers.”
  - “Very interactive. Very engaging”
  - “Overall enjoyed the experience. I enjoyed the group work.”
Participant Facilitator Feedback

• The importance of body language
  – “I didn't care for Second Life...being in a actual real time classroom, being able to see everyone.
  – “The element of watching individual’s body language & facial expressions is priceless... “
  – “You can't see everyone and their body language which is important when facilitating trainings...”
  – “[It was] not as kinesthetic and visual as a face-to-face training, and it's weird trying to have conversations with a group of people you can't see.”
  – “Being in SL [I] realize how vital face to face communication is. Skills came across as reading the book and not actually practicing facilitating.”
Advantages of Training in a MUVE

- Disseminates EBIs more broadly
- Creates a sense of community
- Brings together diverse people (developers, front-line providers, students)
- Reduces cost associated with travel
- Leverages the promise of technology
- Shares expertise and experience
Challenges of Training in a MUVE

• Technology access
• Group discussions
• Facial expressions
• Eye contact
• Technology learning curve
Applications to Your Work

• **Small group discussion #2.** Think about the work you do:

  • Are there any training opportunities to incorporate something like this within your agency?
  
  • How would you and your staff begin implementation?
  
  • How do you think your agency would react to these changes?
  
  • What are some benefits and barriers to using something like Second Life in your work?
Thank you! Questions?


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