

Adolescent Females High Risk Behaviors: Early Intervention Measures for Healthy Outcomes

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Purpose

The purpose of this investigation was to explore the lived experiences of middle school aged, female adolescents in relation to healthy lifestyle choices.

Subjects

Twelve adolescent females, ages 12 - 16, participated in this investigation. Participants attended a suburban middle school in the Southeastern portion of the United States. Five participants were African American. Four participants were Caucasian. Three participants were Latina.

Intervention

Participants attended 4 sessions offered after school at their middle school. Focus of the interventions included journaling, making (and consuming) healthy snacks, group discussion and experiential activities. Key elements were addressed weekly. Activities had a theme, such as getting a hula hoop around a group without letting go of hands as a way to show individual cooperation and group outcome, getting out of a human knot to show strategies for conflict resolution.

Key Elements

- Self Image
- Nutrition
- Exercise
- Appropriate Self Expression
- Today's Behavior, Tomorrow's Foundation
- Relationships - Friendships and Other
- Family
- School
- Community
- Personal Responsibility

Theoretic and Research Foundation

Using Betty Neuman's Model and Grounded Theory, participants were offered a means to discuss in group the stresses found in their lives.

Core Concepts

- ❖ Hopelessness
- ❖ External Locus of Control
- ❖ Lack of Positive Role Models

Findings

Pre-Post Attitudinal Changes toward external supports - 86%

Knowledge Base Regarding Healthy Life Choices - 37%

Commentary Written About the Intervention

12 y/o participant: This program was off the hook. We learned how to make things that really tasted good, and they let us eat it after we made it. I help make dinner at home now one night a week, and I make sure it is healthy.

16 y/o participant: This was one place where we could tell our secrets, and we knew it was not going anywhere. If somebody told, they got kicked out, and we all wanted to stay in the program, and it was so much fun.

14 y/o participant: I didn't know that women could be a doctor. ... Being part of this program made me feel special.

13 y/o participant: I no longer worry about coming to school. We have each others backs outside of the group too.

12 y/o participant: Even though I don't always make the best choices, they let me know that I am still a good person. It made me cry.



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