JSACP

Journal for Social Action in Counseling and Psychology

Volume 13 | No. 1 | Summer 2021

JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL ACTION IN COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGY (JSACP)

openjournals.bsu.edu/jsacp

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ISSN 2159-8142

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Description and Pilot Evaluation of a Dreamer Ally Training for Higher Education Staff and Faculty

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Abstract

We describe a Dreamer Ally training provided to staff and faculty on a university campus and present results of a pilot evaluation of this training. The Dreamer Ally training was designed to (a) increase university faculty and staff awareness, understanding, and self-efficacy for working with Dreamer students and (b) stimulate action to make the campus more responsive to the challenges and contributions of Dreamer students. For the purpose of this study we define Dreamer students as inclusive of undocumented students, students with the temporary protection of DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), students who qualify for the state's tuition equity program, and students from mixed legal status families. Study goals were to describe the training, gather pilot data on participant learning goals, post-training satisfaction and self-efficacy for supporting Dreamer students, and generate participant feedback about utility of training components and their plans for subsequent action. Participants completed questionnaires before and after the training. Responses to open-ended questions indicated that most participants attended in order to learn how to better support Dreamer students. Paired samples (pre and post) t-tests indicated significantly higher self-efficacy for supporting Dreamer students at posttest. Participant satisfaction with the training was high and they found the information session content and working through different Dreamer student scenarios most useful. Action plans included changing program or unit websites to be more inclusive of Dreamers. Limitations include the absence of a control group. Findings can inform institutional efforts to raise faculty and staff awareness of and responsiveness to the challenges facing Dreamer students.

Keywords: Dreamer; undocumented students; ally training; self-efficacy.

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Approximately 98,000 undocumented students graduate from U.S. high schools each year (Zong & Batalova, 2019). Only about 26% matriculate into higher education (Warren & Warren, 2013) and even fewer complete their degrees. Barriers and stressors that undocumented college students encounter include lack of funds, limited legal work options, discrimination, transportation (ineligibility for drivers' licenses in some states, inability to leave the country for educational or familial reasons), and mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety, and fear associated with potential discovery of their status or that of their family members, arrest, and deportation to a country that is not home (Abrego & Gonzalez, 2010; Suárez-Orozco, et al., 2015).

Compounding the issues faced by undocumented college students is a rise in national anti-immigrant rhetoric that is disparaging and punitive of people who are in the country without authorization (Gemignani & Hernandez-Albujar, 2015; Pierce et al., 2018). Even students with the temporary protection of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) program experience significant fear and anxiety (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015), particularly since the 2017 attempt to rescind this program (Pierce et al., 2018; Pierce & Selee, 2017) and continuing uncertainty about its future (Department of Homeland Security [DHS], 2020). DACA offers a temporary legal status to qualified applicants such that they can work and/or to attend college for a two-year period, though it is not a pathway to citizenship. Applying for DACA requires providing personal information that could be used to find and deport the applicant or their family members. The attempt to end DACA has been accompanied by other policy changes hostile toward immigrants, such as efforts to eliminate Temporary Protected Status (TPS; U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services, n.d.) protection for refugees from Honduras and El Salvador, failure to enact comprehensive immigration reform, and the indefinite holding of asylum-seeking, unaccompanied children and families in detention centers across the U.S. (Dash, 2020; Muñoz et al., 2018; Pierce, 2019). Such rhetoric and policies adversely affect undocumented, refugee, and immigrant students and their parents, for example, raising financial barriers, diminishing hopes of attending college, severely constricting opportunities, reducing available support resources, and creating barriers to belonging and integration (Gurrola et al., 2016; McHugh, 2018; Roche et al., 2018).

Many college and university campuses are engaged in actions to attract, support, and retain undocumented college students. College-based initiatives are key to the immediate and longer-term academic success and well-being of undocumented students (Caicedo, 2019; Gonzales, 2016). To succeed, these efforts must attend to the many contextual constraints such students encounter, including high rates of unfair or negative treatment by faculty and staff (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). Suárez-Orozco, Katsiafikas et al. (2015) described an ecological model of "undocu-friendly" campuses, characterized by efforts to: 1) understand undocumented students' experiences and challenges and educate service providers on campus, 2) provide support—academic advising, mental health counseling, guidance about financial aid, and offering safe spaces, and 3) public and official endorsement of undocumented students.

A growing number of studies have focused on the experiences of undocumented college students and provided suggestions for how to support them (see review by Bjorkland, 2018; Yasuike, 2019). In addition, there is evidence that universities can enact policies and practices that improve the experience of undocumented students (e.g., Enriquez et al., 2019; Valenzuela et al., 2015). Effective transformation of campus climates to "undocu-friendly" sites requires a clear stance from university leadership as well as developing, "…a cadre of allies to work toward transforming passive indifference or regressive attitudes so that long-term widespread support for undocumented students' educational access and attainment is realized" (p. 3, Barnhardt et al., 2017). In spite of calls to enhance university faculty and staff responsiveness to the concerns of undocumented students, there is scant empirical research on interventions aiming to do so.

In what follows, we review the literature on training allies of undocumented college students. We describe the context in which we developed a training intervention designed to create such a 'cadre of allies' among staff and faculty, the conceptual model framing our efforts, and the targets of our intervention. We describe the

training itself and an evaluation of the training. Our specific study aims are to describe the development and components of the training, and to present feedback from participants that sheds light on their goals for seeking the training, elements they found most helpful, and their plans for subsequent action to support undocumented students. We also present data on participants' self-efficacy for supporting Dreamer students before and after the training. First, we clarify terminology.

For the purpose of this study, we use the operational definition of "Dreamer" students that we have employed on our campus, which is inclusive of undocumented students, students with the temporary protection of DACA ("DACAmented"), students who qualify for the state's tuition equity program (which grants in-state tuition to undocumented students who meet specific criteria), and students from mixed legal status families. Such students share many challenges related to immigration-related stressors, anxiety, and uncertainty, albeit with differential access to resources based on immigration status (Abrego, 2019). It is important to note that our encompassing use of the term 'Dreamer' was derived from conversations with undocumented and DACAmented students on our campus, but this term is not universally preferred or employed consistently in the literature. By allies, we refer to individuals who work from positions of relative power, privilege, and resources vis-à-vis the impacted community (in this case, Dreamer students) to provide empathy and concrete supports to facilitate that community's success and well-being (Broido, 2000).

Training Dreamer Allies

Numerous university campuses implement trainings to foster allyship with undocumented students, as evidenced by the links to campus events across the country that we generated in a cursory search for "undocumented student ally training." The effect of such trainings remains an open question, however, because empirical studies of such interventions remain scarce. We used varied combinations of the keywords "undocumented" "college student" "ally" "training" and "workshop" to search for peer reviewed journal articles in the following databases: Proquest Education Data Base, Social Science Database, and Psychology Behavioral Science Collection. We also searched using Google Scholar. Our search yielded one study describing the development of the "DREAMzone" workshop (Cisneros & Lopez, 2016) and four studies that assessed outcomes of trainings designed to increase campus support for undocumented students.

Three of the intervention studies evaluated outcomes associated with the Arizona-based DREAMzone ally training. First, Cadenas and colleagues used an experimental research design to test the effectiveness of DREAMzone and an alternative intervention on changing faculty, staff and student attitudes towards undocumented immigrants at a university campus (Cadenas et al., 2016). Participants were assigned to a control group, to the four-hour DREAMzone training that includes a panel of undocumented university students and activities for enhancing supports, or to a 30-minute documentary film featuring the stories of five undocumented students. Participants in both intervention groups demonstrated increased empathy and reductions in prejudice and anxiety toward undocumented immigrants, relative to the control group, with greater changes in empathy and prejudice reduction among DREAMzone workshop participants relative to participants viewing the film (Cadenas et al., 2016). In a subsequent study, Cisneros and Cadenas (2017) demonstrated that participation in a DREAMzone training resulted in greater faculty and staff knowledge and self-efficacy for working with undocumented students. Most recently, a longitudinal qualitative study assessed higher education professionals' awareness, knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy for responding to the concerns of undocumented students after participating in the DREAMzone intervention (Cisneros & Lopez, 2020). Findings from analysis of 2-month and 8-month post-intervention responses suggested that participants felt greater empathy for undocumented students, as well as confidence in their ability to support and advocate for them. Combined, these studies suggest that the DREAMzone ally training has the potential to change attitudes, knowledge, and agency for supporting undocumented students.

In the fourth study, Chen and Rhoads (2016) explored possibilities for a university ally training program to lead to institutional changes. Using semi-structured interviews, the authors assessed the impact of an undocu-ally training on faculty and staff 'critical consciousness', which they defined as awareness of undocumented students' realities. Further, the authors explored participants' abilities to engage in "transformative resistance," fostering more inclusive policies and practices at the institutional (university) level towards undocumented students (Chen & Rhoads, 2016). Themes generated from the interviews were: one, student activism is important to raising allies' awareness and empathy towards student needs and struggles; two, the university context itself produced contradictions vis-à-vis undocumented students—offering support but within a constrained climate; three, working alongside students, allies were able to successfully institutionalize supports (such as tuition assistance and student advising); and four, developing community networks expands the resources available for undocumented students.

Findings from these four empirical studies suggest that brief interventions can enhance empathy and faculty and staff confidence in their ability to support undocumented students. Further, these findings suggest that collaborative efforts by allies and undocumented students can foster more supportive and inclusive campus, community, and political institutional climates. This is promising, but it is clear that additional research is needed to explore a broader set of ally interventions, particularly given variation in institutional and regional dynamics, policies, and administrative stances (Mwangi et al., 2019). Cisneros and Lopez (2020) called for evaluations of ally trainings developed in various state, local, and institution-specific climates in order to shed light on the development and impact of interventions within particular ecologies, and create a stronger evidence base for what works. For this reason, we next provide brief information about the particular context of our training intervention.

Contextual Considerations

The effects of national policies on local attitudes toward immigrants varies across state and institutional contexts, in part as a function of demographic, sociohistorical, economic, and political characteristics (McHugh, 2018; Nájera, 2020). State dynamics in turn shape and constrain public university supports for undocumented students. Some characteristics of the context in which our intervention was developed include that this is a predominantly White institution (85% of staff, 86% of faculty, and 59% of students) in a predominantly White state (75%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019), with a rapidly growing Latinx population. In 2016, 22% of K-12 students in the state were Latinx/Latino/a (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017), and an estimated 7.5% of K-12 students had at least one undocumented parent (Capps, Fix, & Jong, 2016). Of undocumented immigrants in the state, 82% are of Mexican or Central American origin. The state legislature has sought to increase access to higher education for undocumented students, for example, by offering in-state tuition for undocumented high school graduates who meet qualifying criteria, passage of a 2018 bill extending in-state tuition for students with non-renewed DACA permits, and the extension of tuition equity to qualifying graduate students in 2019. Nearly 10,000 people in the state have applied for DACA status since 2012 (Center for American Progress, 2019). Overall our context can be described in terms of immigrant-inclusive state policies, and low levels of ethnic diversity among students, faculty, and staff at our institution. Generally, Dreamer students on our campus keep a low profile and have chosen not to be as collectively-visible as Dreamer students at university campuses in California or Texas, for instance.

Conceptual Framework and Intervention Targets

The broad conceptual framework for this study is an ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which has been employed by other scholars to capture the varied levels at which transformative change is important in supporting undocumented college students (Nájera, 2020; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). Examples of changes beneficial to Dreamer students at different levels of a campus ecology could include reducing microaggressions

ISSN 2159-8142

and increasing empathy from peers, staff, and faculty (microsystem), increasing availability of institutional web-based resources for the families of Dreamers to better navigate higher education (mesosystem), removing citizenship criteria from scholarships (exosystem), and consistent, visible messages of support and inclusion from the administration (macrosystem).

Consistent with this conceptual model, and in line with efforts and recommendations by Cisneros and colleagues, we sought to enhance staff and faculty awareness and empathy regarding the challenges faced by Dreamer students, and increase their knowledge and skills for supporting Dreamers, in terms of helpful (and unhelpful) responses and behaviors, as well as through learning about available resources. The definition of an ally of undocumented students used by one national organization (TheDream.US, n.d.) includes knowledge, awareness, and skills along with committed action that addresses multiple facets of the campus (e.g., barriers, resources, practices). Committed actions may target individual, departmental, and institutional levels of change. But knowledge, awareness, and skills are not always sufficient to support behavior change. In order to support the translation of knowledge and awareness into committed action, we also aimed to enhance staff and faculty self-efficacy for supporting Dreamer students.

Self-efficacy expectations are beliefs about one's ability to carry out domain-specific tasks (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy expectations influence an individual's likelihood of attempting a behavior, and persistence in that behavior in the face of difficulties (Bandura, 1986). For example, a person with *greater* self-efficacy for supporting Dreamer students will be *more* likely to take action to support students (e.g., identify themselves as an Ally, refer the student to campus resources, advocate for systemic change) and to persist in the face of challenges (e.g., resistance to support for Dreamers, limited resources for supporting students). Faculty and staff failure to engage with and support undocumented students has been attributed to a lack of self-efficacy for doing so (Canedo Sanchez & So, 2015). Consistent with Cisneros and colleagues (Cisneros & Cadenas, 2017; Cisneros & Lopez, 2020), therefore, we sought to raise self-efficacy for supporting Dreamer students, in order to increase the likelihood that staff and faculty would take committed action.

Study Purpose and Research Questions

The first goal of this study was to describe the development and nature of our Dreamer Ally training for faculty and staff (including graduate students with instructor, teaching assistant, counselor, and advisor roles). We did not include undergraduate students in the ally training in order to focus more specifically on ally behavior in roles with authority relative to undocumented students. In addition, we sought to answer the following questions: 1) What were participants' goals for the training? 2) Did participant self-efficacy for supporting Dreamer students increase after participation in the Dreamer Ally training (hereafter, Ally training)? 3) How satisfied were participants with the Ally training? 4) What did participants find most useful, and what suggestions did they have for improvement of the training? Finally, 5) What actions did participants commit to taking in order to support Dreamer students on campus? We hypothesized that participants completing the Ally training would have higher self-efficacy for understanding challenges and barriers faced by Dreamer students, referring Dreamers to appropriate resources, knowing how to respond if ICE comes to campus, and for carrying out their Ally action plans, relative to their pre-training self-efficacy. The remaining aims are descriptive and as such have no associated hypotheses.

Methods

Participants

The Dreamer Ally training was held at a large public university. A total of 253 participants completed the pre-training survey and 173 completed the post training survey. Demographic descriptors are reported for those completing the post-test, as not all of those completing the pretest attended the training. Participants self-

reported their roles as university staff (61%), faculty (26%), graduate student employees (e.g., instructors, TAs, or student services providers, 7.5%) and other (5.2%). Staff members were from units across the university such as the university counseling center, academic advising, the career center, financial aid, admissions, and academic departments (e.g., program assistants and student services coordinators); as such, staff members held a wide variety of roles and responsibilities with students. Participants tended to be newer employees; 56% had worked at the university for 0-5 years, 20% from 6 -10 years, and 24% for more than 10 years. Reported age ranges were 21-29 (19.2%), 30-45 (52.3%), and 46 or older (28.5%). Of these 173, pre and post surveys could be matched for 133 participants. No other demographic data was collected.

Procedures

Four Ally trainings were implemented in AY 2017-18, three of which were campus-wide and one that was restricted to the college of arts and sciences. Notice of each training was distributed over university email via college, department, and student service unit listservs. Participation in the training was voluntary, with faculty and staff completing the training as part of their (paid) work time. Participants pre-registered to reserve a spot in the training, and all four trainings filled within days of being announced. For each training, there were a handful of last-minute cancellations. Those registered received an email approximately one week prior to the training requesting that they complete the pre-training survey. Upon check-in the day of the training, participants who had not completed the survey were invited to do so on their phones using a tinyurl. After the workshop was completed, within 24 hours participants received a link to the follow-up survey. A follow up email requesting survey completion was sent 3 times over the next 10 days.

Participants responded to a series of questions in order to generate a unique ID code that was used to match pre and post surveys (e.g., first letter of your mother's name or the person most like a mother to you, last digit of your cell phone number). No demographic or other personally-identifiable information was collected beyond that reported in the participant section, in order to meet the standard for exempt status, which was granted by our University IRB.

University support for the trainings was provided from multiple sources including the institution's offices for diversity and equity, international affairs, and the office of the president. This support covered costs such as a box lunch for each participant, campus space in which to hold the trainings, supplies (e.g., handouts, Ally placards) and administrative support.

Development and Content of the Ally Training Intervention

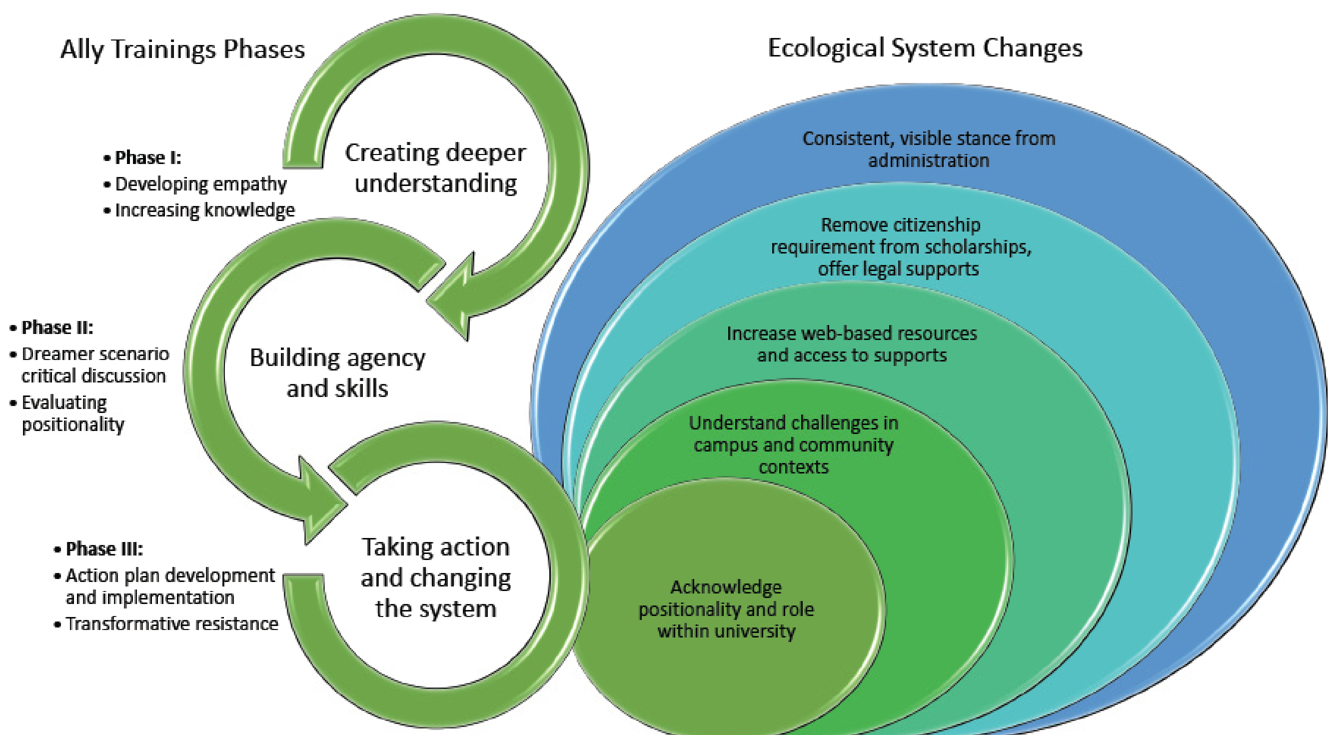
The Dreamers Working Group (DWG) at our institution formed in 2014 in response to growing numbers of Dreamer students and the desire to ensure the retention, academic success, and overall wellbeing of these students. The DWG consists of faculty, staff, and Dreamer students who come together on a voluntary basis to make our institution more "undocu-friendly" by raising awareness of the challenges and realities of Dreamer students, increasing support services for Dreamer students, and using institutional resources to advocate for policy changes to improve the lives of Dreamer students (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015; United We Dream, n.d.). Members of the DWG include the authors, and are from a range of units (e.g., faculty and student affiliations include international studies, education, counseling psychology, political science, and anthropology; staff affiliations include the multicultural center, admissions, division of equity and inclusion, student advising, and the counseling and career centers). Consistent with our mission, in the fall of 2014 the first author developed a presentation on undocumented college students for the campus career center. This became the basis for the one-hour DWG "information session" that we continue to offer to campus and community units upon request. The information sessions contribute to campus knowledge and awareness, but we did not view these as sufficient to foster the skills, self-efficacy, and committed action that define allies.

ISSN 2159-8142

In 2015-16 the DWG developed the ally training evaluated in the present study. The four-hour intervention was modeled in part on similar undocu-ally training programs implemented at several California State University and University of California campuses (e.g., http://web.csulb.edu/divisions/students/dream/ advocacy/ally.html), which had in turn been based on queer ally trainings implemented on college and university campuses in the 1990s (e.g., Evans & Wall, 1991). The contents of the intervention were also informed by the literature on undocumented students and by interviews conducted with undocumented, DACAmented, and mixed status students on campuses in our region by a student member of the DWG for her MA thesis (Cebreros, 2016). The training is delivered by members of the DWG, typically with 5 or 6 members actively delivering content, and an additional DWG member sitting at each table in the room to facilitate small group conversations. All three authors were involved in the development and implementation of the training, including the third author, a formerly undocumented immigrant from Central America, DREAM activist, and doctoral student.

Contents of the Ally Training include, in chronological order, introductions and aims of the DWG, empathy building, an information session, presentation of legal information, Dreamer scenarios, and developing action plans. See Figure 1 for a visual summary of the training components. The empathy building section opens with either a short video of a first-person narrative of a Dreamer's transition to college or an in-person account of a Dreamer student on our campus. Participants then read short paragraphs that describe typical Dreamers' experiences and engage in small group discussion. For example, one paragraph described a young person becoming aware of their undocumented status when attempting to obtain a driver's license. We encouraged participants to reflect on these situations from an emotional standpoint, asking them to consider "How would that make you feel?" The opportunity to learn about such stressors and connect emotionally with these experiences, developing social empathy, may increase the likelihood of committed actions in support of Dreamer students (Segal & Wagaman, 2017).

Figure 1. Dreamer Ally Training



The information session developed in 2014 and continuously updated by the DWG is the next part of the Ally Training. Delivered by power point, this portion of the intervention reviews terminology (e.g., mixed status, DACAmented, and undocumented), relevant federal legislation such as the DREAM Act and DACA, state tuition equity legislation and sanctuary policies, and existing university resources for Dreamer students, such as financial aid, scholarships, mental health supports, and academic advising.

The legal information section is presented by the university General Counsel. This ten-minute session focuses on legal rights and recommended steps to take should faculty or staff encounter ICE on campus. The empathy-building and information sharing sessions comprise Phase I of the Ally Training, as indicated in Figure 1.

The scenario component of the training consists of a small group discussion in which participants work at their tables to engage with a real-world situation faced by a Dreamer student, and discuss and evaluate possible faculty or staff responses. In order to enhance the discussion and application of training content, table seating is arranged in advance and organized by participant unit or department (e.g., career center staff, or faculty and staff in the same department). The scenarios were derived from actual experiences of Dreamer students on our campus and similar campuses (Cebreros, 2016). For example, in one scenario a student learns from a staff member that the major they enrolled in requires legal documentation; in another scenario, a faculty member encourages all students to study abroad, alienating an undocumented student who is unable to do so. For 15 minutes, participants share responses to, "What was the intention of the faculty/staff?" and then "How could the faculty / staff have done this differently?" Next, each small group reports their responses to the large group. Then the DWG presents best practices in fostering undocu-friendly college and university campuses, using resources derived from scholarly literature (e.g., Suárez-Orozco, Katsiafikas et al., 2015) and a number of national organizations (e.g., Educators for Fair Consideration, now called "Immigrants Rising: Transforming Lives through Education", and United We Dream). Example practices include displaying support for Dreamer students and expanding access to scholarships and financial aid. These activities, Phase II of the training, aim to build skills and self-efficacy.

In the final section of the training (Phase III), over a working lunch, participants develop action plans for supporting Dreamers and discuss the plans with those at their table. Participants are invited to sign Ally contracts expressing their commitment to support Dreamer students. In this way, the training seeks to translate individual-level changes in self-efficacy into unit- and institutional-level changes that make the university more supportive and inclusive of Dreamer students ("undocu-friendly"). Participants turn in their Ally action plans to DWG members at the conclusion of the training, which are scanned and returned, along with DREAMER ALLY placards and buttons, via campus mail. Note that because action plans were not de-identified, the scanned pledges were not included as data for this study. Instead, we analyzed participant action plan descriptions, provided via the anonymous follow up survey.

Measures

Demographic questions. Participants selected from a menu of options to indicate their age range, role at the university (faculty, staff, or graduate assistant), and number of years (range) at the university.

Self-efficacy for supporting Dreamer students. Competencies for working with undocumented students include awareness of undocumented student needs and assets, knowledge of academic, legal, and personal experiences facing Dreamers, and ability to connect Dreamers with appropriate resources and advocate with and for Dreamer students (Cisneros & Cadenas, 2017; Neinhusser & Espino, 2018). Based on such competencies and the content of our training, the first author developed five items to assess participants' perceived capability in their awareness, knowledge, or skills related to working with Dreamer students (e.g.,

know what to do if ICE comes to campus). We followed Bandura's (2001) recommendations for developing self-efficacy items. Likert-type response options ranged from 1 (Not at all Confident) to 5 (Very Confident). Items were analyzed separately.

Satisfaction with training. Five items were developed for the purpose of this study assessing satisfaction with the training with respect to content, clarity of information, pace, helpfulness, and structure, using a scale ranging from 1 (Not at all Satisfied) to 4 (Very Satisfied).

Open ended questions. Prior to the training, participants responded to "What do you hope to get out of this training?" At post-test, participants responded the following questions: "What part of the Ally Training did you find most helpful?", "Are there any suggestions for improvement you'd like to share?", and "Please briefly describe your pledge or action plan."

Data Analysis

Thematic content analysis was used to analyze responses to the four open-ended questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We made the assumption that the data reflects the realities of participants and analyzed the data at the explicit level. Our goal was to provide a thorough description that captured the breadth of participant responses rather than to minimize the number of themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The first and second authors conducted the qualitative data analysis. Prior to analyses we discussed potential influences and biases associated with our positionality as White female academics engaged in scholarship, teaching, and service focused on Latinx communities, and as members of the DWG. Following the same process for each open-ended question, we first independently read responses, attending to patterns and generating an initial list of codes. Next, we came to mutual agreement on an initial list of codes and independently coded the responses for 20 entries. We then discussed our coding of this initial subset of questions and remedied any discrepancies by clarifying the scope of each code or creating more inclusive definitions. After agreeing upon a master list of codes for each question, we then independently coded the remaining participant responses. Each response could receive more than one code. Next, we compared coding results, identified discrepancies, and came to consensus on final coding. Finally, we organized the codes into themes. Given our aim to describe the breadth of participant responses, we did not limit themes by prevalence of content. We repeated this process for each question sequentially.

Results

"What do you hope to get out of this training?"

As indicated in Table 1, the most frequent of the three themes was to support students. For example, one participant wrote, "I hope to be able to stand for Dreamers and to help them achieve their goals. I want to remove barriers that hinder their progress and their growth." Another offered: "I both teach and serve as my department's undergraduate advisor. I seek an understanding of the challenges facing students who face the risk of possible deportation for themselves, friends, or family." The second theme, "Gain Knowledge" is illustrated by the following: "To gain a better understanding of the current issues and challenges facing Dreamer students, … [and] tools and resources to be a strong ally." Finally, a smaller set of responses were coded as "To Learn the (university) position towards undocumented students", such as "To understand what my legal responsibilities are if ICE comes to campus and how to respond."

Table 1. Themes Derived from Open-Ended Questions

	n	*% within question*
Question 1: What do you want to get out of this training? 206 participants respond, 1-3 Themes assigned per respondent, *M*=1.9 *sd*=.61		
Theme 1: Better Support Students (gain confidence, be better at supporting students, be better prepared, be an advocate for students) Example: *"I hope to gain a lot of information about the challenges and barriers that Dreamer students face and how to best support them."* (coded as 2 also) Example: *"How I can support Dreamers achieve their academic and career goals"*	**186**	**48.2**
Theme 2: Gain Knowledge (information, resources, understanding of issues) Example: *"I seek an understanding of the challenges facing students who face the risk of possible deportation for themselves, friends, or family."* Example: *"I also would love to have more clarity on financial challenges that Dreamers face and specific financial resources and scholarships available to Dreamer students."*	**163**	**42.2**
Theme 3: Know University Stance (understand university stance, legal issues, what to do if ICE comes to campus, to be able to act within bounds of work responsibilities) Example: "*A deeper understanding of what the (school) is doing, and what individual units can do, to support Dreamer students.*" Example: *"Would like to know campus resources as well as overall support DREAMers might expect from official campus representatives."*	**37**	**10.0**
Question 2 (post-intervention): What suggestions do you have for us to improve the training? 101 participants respond, 1-2 Themes assigned per respondent, *M*=1.2 *sd*=.37		
Theme 1: Specific suggestions regarding details of training Example: *"When presenter X was presenting, it was hard to follow because what she was saying was not on the slides."*	**36**	**31**
Theme 2: No change, no suggestions, only compliments Example: *"I have nothing but positive things to say. Thank you."*	**29**	**25**
Theme 3: More time (Move more slowly through material, more networking time, time for action plans) Example: *"It would be great if we had more time to network with people outside our department and not just in our own department."* Example: *"I felt rushed and didn't have enough time to develop and share my plan."*	**21**	**17.9**

Theme 4: More attention to resources on and off campus (for both students and their families) Example: "*Printed information that we could give students who need answers quickly.*"	**10**	**8.5**
Theme 5: Changes to light, audio, technology Example: "*The main speaker was too loud into the microphone.*"	**8**	**6.8**
Theme 6: More UO Dreamer student voices Example: "*One or more additional student examples via video and follow-up discussion on real-life experiences would be great*"	**7**	**6.0**
Theme 7: Less time Example: "*Too much time was spent on the scenarios*"	**6**	**5.1**
Question 3: What part of the Ally Training did you find most helpful? 145 participants respond, 1-4 Themes assigned per respondent, *M*= 1.8 *sd*=.85)		
Theme 1: Information Session (includes any specific information shared during this portion of training) Example: "*The information session was very helpful.*" Example: "*The information dump section after the initial discussion about the emotional impact of Dreamer status was incredibly helpful context.*"	**54**	**21**
Theme 2: Scenario portion of training; ways to handle "situations" Example: "*The small group work around scenarios.*"	**36**	**14**
Theme 3: The process and/or structure of how the training was conducted Example: "*It was a nice balance of objective facts and time to consider the affective result of policies.*" Example: "*It was one of the best trainings I've been to on campus – well thought out and informative.*"	**29**	**11.2**
Theme 4: Small Group Work (includes discussing topics and issues in small groups at tables, developing responses) Example: "*I appreciated the table discussions and hearing the other tables ideas. This was a much better way to focus on the information*"	**28**	**10.9**
Theme 5: General Counsel (includes how to respond if ICE comes to campus) Example: "*It was very helpful to hear from the GC as well. I think it was essential that he made an appearance.*"	**28**	**10.9**
Theme 6: Learning about University and community resources and supports Example: "*Learning about resources on campus.*"	**24**	**9.3**
Theme 7: Empathy Exercises Example: "*I found the exercises which helped me understand the emotional impact on the students very informative.*"	**15**	**5.8**

Theme 8: Action Planning (brainstorming actions, developing pledges) Example: *"Most helpful was understanding the actions I can take. Now I feel like I can do something."*	**13**	**5**
Theme 9: Learning (overall statements of "everything", or general statement about "learning" at training.) Example: *"I'd really have to say 'all of it'!"*	**10**	**3.9**
Theme 10: Hearing Dreamer student voices (this includes "videos"; hearing from Dreamer students within or outside of our institution) Example: *"The video of a Berkeley DREAMer student and hearing stories from DREAMer students to better understand their experiences and challenges."*	**10**	**3.9**
Theme 11 Networking (statements about meeting or connecting with campus colleagues) Example: "*What I liked about this training was coming together with others around how to support DREAMer students.*"	**7**	**2.7**
Theme 12: Handouts (refers to any handout other than informational session slides, which are coded in Theme 1) Example: *"The DACA Fact Sheet"*	**4**	**1.6**
Question 4: Please describe your pledge or action plan 116 participants respond, 1-5 Themes assigned per respondent, *M*= 1.8 *sd*=.71		
Theme 1: Share information with colleagues Example: "*I am going to encourage colleagues to participate in training.*" Example: "*Share the resources from this workshop at an upcoming staff meeting*."	**59**	**28.1**
Theme 2: Remove barriers to inclusion for Dreamers in my unit/ program (including admission to program, website and syllabus language, and via diversity committees and unit diversity action plans). Example: *"I will speak with my department about adjusting background checks to not include social security numbers or making adjustments that would allow for undocumented students to work in the department."* Example: *"My pledge is to use my role in our unit Diversity Action Committee to support DREAMer students."*	**57**	**27.1**
Theme 3: Display ally status publicly Example: *"I will use ally-focused language in my email signature and syllabus."*	**48**	**22.9**
Theme 4: Remove barriers in scholarships/financial aid Example: *"Reviewing our scholarships and thinking about universal design in how we address students and the information we provide."* Example: *"Make sure scholarships are as accessible as possible to students who can't fill out the FAFSA."*	**20**	**9.5**

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Theme 5: Learn more about related issues and resources Example: *"I pledge to continue to educate myself on the politics surrounding this situation and keep up to date with resources available for Dreamers."*	**10**	**4.8**
Theme 6: Share General Counsel information Example: "*To support the training of our staff teams about their role if an ICE officer were to come to their building.*"	**8**	**3.8**
Theme 7: Join DWG Example: "*I pledge to join the Dreamer Working Group.*"	**8**	**3.8**

Notes. *n* = number of responses with coded with this theme, rather than the number of participants who had a response with specific theme. % = percentage within the specific theme; due to multiple possible codes these do not add to 100%. Each participant response was coded with 1-5 themes, see details within each question.

Self-Efficacy

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. Means and standard deviations of the five self-efficacy (pre and post training) items for the 133 participant responses that could be matched are provided in Table 2. Results of paired samples t-tests show that participants rated their self-efficacy significantly higher at post-training on all five items. We also conducted two one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) to compare, first, pre-test confidence between those who *did* and *did not* have matched confidence scores, and second, post-test self-efficacy for those who *did* and *did not* have matched scores. There were no significant differences (p<.10).

Table 2. Paired Samples Test Pre and Post Training Self Efficacy (N = 133)

Item: How confident are you that:	Pre-Training		Post-Training		Paired Differences					*t*	*df*	*p*
								95% CI				
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	SEM	Lower	Upper			
…you understand the challenges and barriers facing Dreamers students?	2.40	.98	3.87	.67	-1.50	.80	.07	-1.64	-1.37	-21.58	132	.000
…you could refer a Dreamer student who approaches you for support to appropriate resources on campus?	2.22	1.15	4.16	.77	-1.87	1.20	.11	-2.08	-1.66	-17.86	130	.000
…you would know what to do if immigration enforcement (ICE) officials came to campus?	1.67	.96	4.17	.74	-2.53	.93	.08	-2.70	-2.37	-31.17	130	.000

Table 2 cont'd

Item: How confident are you that:	Pre-Training		Post-Training		Paired Differences					t	df	p
								95% CI				
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	SEM	Lower	Upper			
…you could carry out an action plan to support Dreamers students in your department or unit?	2.38	1.27	3.81	.78	-1.46	1.23	.11	-1.67	-1.25	-13.57	130	.000
…you can find accurate resources to learn more about Dreamer students?	2.89	1.16	4.18	.80	-1.32	1.19	.10	-1.53	-1.12	-12.69	130	.000

Note. Range for all items is 1-5.

Satisfaction with Training

Responses (n=173) to the satisfaction with training items were relatively high across each assessed aspect (range 1-4): training content (M=3.50, SD=.64), clarity of information (M=3.43, SD=.68), pace of the training (M=3.39, SD=.79), helpfulness of training (M=3.57, SD=.62), and structure of training (M=3.45, SD=.73). This indicates that those who completed the post-training survey were generally quite satisfied with each domain of the training.

"What did you find most helpful about this training?"

Twelve themes were derived from responses to this question. Responses varied significantly as evidenced in Table 1. The most frequent responses were about the helpfulness of the factual information provided in the information session, and working through the Dreamer student scenarios.

"Are there any suggestions for improvement you'd like to share?"

Seven themes were derived from responses to this question. Most often, participants provided very specific suggestions that did not lend themselves to subcategorization (e.g., speed up the check-in process). Another frequent theme was satisfaction with and praise for the training without any recommendations for change. The latter is exemplified by one participant's comment that they "really would not change a thing... very helpful, and one of the very most thoughtful university trainings in which I have participated." The third most frequent theme was focused on having more time for specific components of the training, such as time for networking with colleagues or for small group discussions of their action plans. Three of these recommendations argued for extending the four-hour time frame of the training.

"Please briefly describe your pledge or action plan."

Seven themes were derived from responses to this prompt. Many participants pledged to review their unit or department's eligibility criteria for financial aid and scholarships, to determine whether these could be more inclusive of Dreamer students. For example, one participant wrote: "I pledged to review university scholarships for eligibility and to create an info packet I can use to direct students to support should they share that they need it." A number of participants pledged to share information about what to do if ICE comes to campus with their colleagues; others planned to simply add the university's General Counsel contact

information into their phones. Other participants pledged to make their unit or department website and other information more accessible and inclusive of Dreamer students, for instance, one participant reported their pledge to "review program website content to be sure its DREAMER friendly". Many participants pledged to post their Ally placard, once received, prominently in their office space, or to include a statement of support for Dreamer students in their email signatures. Finally, many participants pledged to inform their colleagues about future Ally trainings.

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to describe and evaluate a Dreamer Ally training for faculty and staff at a large, public, research university. Our findings indicate that most participants sought the training in order to better support Dreamer students on campus. After the training, participants reported significantly higher self-efficacy related to supporting Dreamer students. Specifically, they were more confident in their understanding of Dreamer student challenges and barriers, in their knowledge of what to do if ICE officials came to campus, and in their abilities to refer Dreamer students to appropriate resources, to find accurate resources to continue learning about Dreamers, and to carry out action plans for supporting Dreamers. Participants also reported high levels of satisfaction with the training, with suggestions for improvement focused on minor shifts to content and format. Furthermore, participants completing the Ally training pledged to take a range of actions in order to support Dreamer students, including, most commonly: 1) reviewing eligibility criteria for unit- and university-level scholarships and financial aid to make these more inclusive of Dreamers; 2) visibly displaying support for Dreamer students using email signatures, syllabus language, and stickers and placards; and 3) committing to stay informed about the challenges facing Dreamer students and the resources available to support Dreamers on campus.

Responses to post-training surveys suggest broad variation in the portion of the training that participants found most helpful, with the didactic information session most frequently highlighted. Further, there were no clear trends in suggestions for improvement that would lead to making pedagogical changes in the intervention. We suspect that incorporating a variety of activities in the training– from lecture-style delivery of information, to empathy-building small group discussions, to hands-on problem-solving during the scenario portion of the training—was important to participants' high levels of satisfaction with the training.

Implications

Our Ally training intervention drew from similar efforts developed to raise awareness of challenges facing Dreamer students and build support systems on university and college campuses to ensure their success. Dreamer Ally trainings initiated in the 2010s have become more important as Federal policy changes have called in to question the future of DACA, and made other supports for immigrant students uncertain and precarious (DHS, 2020; Muñoz et al., 2018; Pierce, 2019). The present findings contribute to the small body of literature documenting the potential role of Dreamer Ally trainings in making U.S. university and college campuses more undocu-friendly, that is, supportive of the academic and success and wellbeing of Dreamer students (Cadenas et al., 2016; Chen & Rhoads, 2016; Cisneros & Cadenas, 2017; Cisneros & Lopez, 2020; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015).

Ally training participants in the present study expressed much higher levels of self-efficacy related to their ability to support Dreamer students after the training intervention. Given the relationship between self-efficacy and behavior (Bandura, 1986), these findings are promising for using Dreamer Ally interventions targeting faculty and staff as a means of working towards broader institutional-level changes on university campuses.

Faculty and staff who provide critical information and resources to undocumented students have been described as "institutional empowerment agents" (Southern, 2016, p. 308). Those allies who work within their institutions to challenge inequities and promote critical changes that enhance the wellbeing of undocumented students may engage in "transformative resistance" (Chen & Rhoads, 2016, p. 520). Our intervention aimed to increase the number of institutional empowerment agents on campus, stimulate transformative resistance by translating participants' newfound knowledge and self-efficacy into action plans, and make the university campus more undocu-friendly (Abrego, 2006; Suárez-Orozco, Katsiafikas et al., 2015). Although our study design did not include follow up with participants regarding implementation of their action plans, as members of the DWG and of the campus community, we have observed and heard of many programmatic and department-level changes made by Ally training participants. For instance, participants have spearheaded efforts to review scholarship eligibility criteria and have removed citizenship requirements wherever possible. Across campus, and especially in the University financial aid and admissions offices, it appears that staff participation in the Ally training has resulted in greater awareness of resources for Dreamers, and information about these resources is more prominently displayed on unit websites. More anecdotally, the Dreamer Ally placards given to participants upon completion of the training are now prominently displayed across many campus departments and offices, offering visible signs of support and inclusion.

In addition to these changes fostered by participants, the coordination of successful and highly-attended (including university administrators) Ally trainings has added impetus to the University administration to dedicate greater resources to Dreamer students. For instance, with institutional support, the DWG was able to initiate a Dreamer scholarship for the first time in the 2018-19 academic year. Additionally, the University administration made additional resource commitments to fund a Dreamer student support coordinator and a part-time administrative support position for the DWG. Concurrently, the campus mental health center added two Latinx specialist positions, including one dedicated to undocumented students. These changes cannot be attributed to the Ally trainings, but it is clear that the trainings raised the profile of the DWG on campus, and enhanced institutional impetus for supporting Dreamer students.

As part of our ongoing work, the DWG continues to promote activities other than the Ally trainings in order to foster an undocu-friendly campus climate at the institutional level. For example, many faculty and staff members want members of their unit to have more information about Dreamers, but do not believe their peers can or will commit to a four-hour training. As such, DWG members continue to voluntarily offer the information session as a one-hour presentation to campus units, departments, and within courses. Hundreds of faculty, staff and students have participated in these "Information Sessions," including academic departments, the graduate school, the office of admissions, the career center, and the mental health center. A Dreamer student advisory board has been formed, and facilitates communication of Dreamer student concerns and goals and aid in coordinating resources to promote Dreamer health and wellbeing (Burdette et al., 2019). All of these steps have contributed to making our campus more undocu-friendly (Suárez-Orozco, Katsiafikas et al., 2015). That said, continuing to work with Dreamer students and prioritize and visibilize their needs on campus, including financial and legal assistance, academic advising, and mental health supports, remains a priority.

There are many transformations that need to take place in order to make university campuses such as ours more undocu-friendly. Access to legal assistance and financial support, institutional statements affirming the belonging and inclusion of Dreamer students, and plans for supporting and protecting students in the event of the elimination of DACA, TPS protection, and other policy changes adverse to their academic success and overall wellbeing, are also critical. Along these lines, the DWG has encouraged our University Administration to participate in national-level advocacy work around the continuation of DACA and access to higher education for undocumented students more broadly. Our DWG also engages with the University's state legislative liaison, encouraging policies such as the continuation and expansion of the state's tuition equity program. University

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administrators can implement equity practices, such as more inclusive admissions or financial aid policies, even in the absence of longer term federal or state policy changes (Barnhardt et al. 2017; Mwangi et al., 2019).

Limitations

The use of a one group pre-post test design precludes making causal assumptions about the effects of this intervention. The addition of a control group, and a longitudinal design with follow up assessments of self-efficacy and implementation of action plans, would provide a stronger test of the intervention. Assessing participant impressions of the training after a longer time interval might yield more suggestions for improving its utility and effectiveness. In addition, although participants were provided with multiple reminders to complete the pre and post survey, many opted not to do so. This limits generalizability of the findings. Our follow up analyses indicated that those who completed *only* a pre or a post survey did not differ in pre or post test self-efficacy, respectively, from those who completed *both* pre and post measures. This increases our confidence in the findings for self-efficacy. It is possible, however, that participants who were very dissatisfied with the training simply did not respond to the follow up survey.

Another limitation to generalizability is that participants self-selected into the training, suggesting they were motivated to support Dreamer students. While there was no overt resistance to the content of the training evidenced in participants' survey responses, the voluntary nature of the training means our findings are not generalizable to all university faculty and staff. Along these lines, one of our study participants advocated for more overt focus on mandatory employee involvement in such efforts, noting:

> "It would have been helpful to have more of an opportunity to discuss how/ why supporting dreamers is in line with our job responsibilities/ mission/ vision/ values. Maybe there just seemed to be an assumption that everyone in attendance was 'on board' with supporting dreamer students. I think some reminders, or discussion about how our support of dreamer students is not purely a personal political decision, but may indeed be a responsibility as an employee of [institution]."

It seems likely that faculty and staff with attitudes counter to the support and inclusion of Dreamer students would not participate in a voluntary training. If trainings were to be institutionalized and required of all or new employees, it would be important to incorporate more explicit attention to employee roles, rights, and responsibilities relative to Dreamer students. Further, it may be important to address more explicitly the larger historical and legislative factors that guarantee the continued presence of undocumented students, as well as how attitudes may be shaped by racial and citizenship privilege (Abrego, 2019; Patler, 2018).

Finally, a broader limitation of this study is that Ally trainings of this sort do not address the ecological levels of federal policy and the larger climate that combine to limit students' opportunities for adjusting their status (becoming LPRs or citizens). So long as there remain a large group of undocumented students in our colleges and universities, as staff and faculty committed to serving all students, we will need to continue to find ways to support these students, within existing political limitations. As staff and faculty at a public university, we have had to be very careful not to endorse particular political party platforms, and focus instead on services and resources effecting students. This is sometimes a fine tightrope to walk, as students express concern about specific political decisions (e.g. the DACA rescission) and the impact of these on their academic security and future success.

Summary and conclusion

We described and evaluated a voluntary four-hour Dreamer Ally training to faculty and staff at our large public university. The training was positively received by the faculty and staff who responded to our follow up survey. Participants were satisfied with the content, clarity, pace, helpfulness, and structure of the training, and suggestions for improvement did not yield any problematic aspects of the training. The most helpful

components of the training were the information session and the scenarios. Participants committed to a variety of actions to improve inclusion and support of Dreamer students, and anecdotal evidence suggests that many of these actions have been taken. The need for Dreamer Ally trainings may grow substantially in the coming years in light of both large numbers of undocumented and Dreamer university and college students, and continuing policy uncertainties surrounding their possibilities for permanent authorized status and/or U.S. citizenship.

Authors Note:
The authors wish to acknowledge all members of the Dreamers Working Group for their collective commitment to developing and implementing the ally trainings, and all ally training participants for their commitments to supporting Dreamer students.

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Supporting Crossover Students in an Urban School District: A Participatory Project

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Abstract

This participatory action research (PAR) project describes crossover students' college and career readiness needs in a major west coast urban school district. The paper provided insights from administrator researchers, participants, facilitator, and recommendations for school counselors, educators, and organizations who are thinking of creating more counseling support and educational opportunities for crossover students. The results include the reflections and recommendations of crossover youths (e.g., encourage us, we are worth the rigor). The discussion includes strategies for supporting the academic, career, emotional, and social needs of crossover students.

Keywords: Crossover students; school-community partnership; urban schools; college and career readiness.

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Supporting Crossover Students in an Urban School District: A Participatory Project

Nationally, the interest in and concern about opportunity gaps of crossover students has inspired a range of mental health and educational supports (Wells et al., 2015). Crossover youth is a parasol term used to describe youth who are involved with both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems either parallel or non-parallel. Understanding crossover youth and their movement or pathways between systems is important for educators, policymakers, and mental health practitioners. By recognizing trends among this population, it is possible to better serve crossover youth and work to prevent situations in which youth are chronically involved in multiple systems and, as a result, exhibit negative life effects (New York City Office of the Mayor, 2015). The majority of work on crossover youth has been done, more specifically, with youth who are *simultaneously* involved in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. These "dually involved" or "crossover" youths are at higher risk for exposure to violence and/or abuse, familial dysfunction, substance use, congregate or group home placement, school dropout, poor grades, truancy, mental health and/or substance use problems, and adult criminality (Ryan et al., 2013). They are also at risk to incur more juvenile, adult, and violent arrests and to be perceived as high risk by system personnel. It is not surprising, therefore, that they are highly represented at deep levels of the juvenile justice system (e.g., comprising out-of-home placement cases), and they tend to receive harsher sanctions or congregate care placement more often than non-dually involved youth (Young et al., 2015). Though they are not a cultural group, they are a subgroup that is maligned, stigmatized and subjected to unfair treatment by education and juvenile justice systems.

Responding to crossover youths' juvenile justice, child welfare, educational, and counseling needs, while balancing accountability and risk reduction, can present a host of problems for those who serve them. Yet, learning how to advocate, collaborate, and share important information between the systems in order to better respond to crossover youth is rarely emphasized, largely because there are few policies and lack of programming in place that require systems to work together (Herz et al., 2012; Wylie, 2014). Advocacy involves educators and counselors challenging or removing systematic barriers that obstruct students' personal, social, academic, and career aspirations (Lee, 1998, 2007). This is complicated by the fact that many actors in these agencies hold different perspectives of youths' needs, with those in the juvenile justice system (JJS) often seeing the youth as a perpetrator in need of rehabilitative services, while child welfare actors (CWA) may view the youth as a victim in need of care and protection and educators seeing the importance of academics as a way to more opportunities (Lutz et al., 2010).

Ultimately, the lack of coordination, communication, and information sharing between the JJS, CWA, and educators has implications not only for these systems, but also for the staff and the crossover youth (and their families) as well. From a systems perspective, three distinct systems responding to a crossover youth with the same or similar services duplicates efforts, which increases costs and distrust among those receiving services and support (Ryan et al., 2013). The duplication of services also means that system personnel are used inefficiently (i.e., their services are duplicated as well), wasting scant resources and increasing costs. Given the different perspectives each system brings to crossover youth (rehabilitation vs. protection vs. education), they might provide different treatments to the youth and family, causing confusion and frustration for the youth and family, as well as expending additional resources. Crossover youth are not necessarily at higher risk for misbehavior, but have more unmet "needs" (perhaps stemming from significant environmental issues), which makes them vulnerable to criminogenic outcomes (Ryan et al., 2013); in these cases, diversion or increased advocacy services—but not punishment—is needed, and doing otherwise may again waste scant system resources. Moreover, responding to a youth who has a multitude of unique needs that have resulted in both child welfare and juvenile justice involvement with a single-systems approach is limited in scope and likely fails to address the core problems that resulted in dual involvement in the first place. Relative to youth who are

not involved with both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, crossover youth receive less in the way of programmatic support and resources.

As a way to reduce the disparities and inequalities for crossover youth (e.g., harsher sanctions from the justice system, greater likelihood of referrals to residential treatment centers), a unique partnership and program was created to address these issues and enhance service delivery and/or diversion for these youth. Through development of a crossover youth advocacy model (CYAM), we identified the goals of the program including identifying these crossover youth, coordinating, and informing decisions made by CWA, juvenile justice administrators (JJA) and unified school district (USD) regarding the youth and delivering enhanced, evidenced-based services to them in order to meet their unique educational and counseling needs. To achieve these goals, we adopted elements of the American Counseling Association's Advocacy Competencies Model (ACA-ACM) which has two dimensions: (1) the advocacy domain consisting of three levels (i.e., individual, client or student; school, community or organization; public arena) and (2) the "extent of client involvement" consisting of two levels (i.e., advocacy performed for recipient(s) within a domain, and advocacy performed in collaboration with recipient(s) (Lewis et al., 2003). In implementing the current CYAM we provided both forms of involvement and used advocacy interventions within all three domains. Further, the CYAM addresses systemic barriers and issues facing students by student and agency involvement and level of advocacy intervention between all three agencies which provides techniques to inform decision-making across agencies in order to better serve crossover youth (Lewis et al., 2003). As a "practice model", it provides a conceptual map and organizational ideology regarding how staff can collaborate and advocate on behalf of crossover youth while providing effective services to these youth, while tailoring educational and counseling services to help reduce recidivism through a specialized program.

In this participatory action research (PAR) project, we equally partnered with four administrators across the USD, CWA, and JJS that developed a project to respond to the academic, career, and social/emotional disparities that crossover students encounter. In this project, administrators belonging to a major USD on the west coast, CWA, and JJA developed a Camps-to-College Program (CCP) to enhance the postsecondary opportunities of crossover high school students. The researchers chose PAR because this research approach increases the number of perspectives included in the program deExtravelopment process (Fishman, 2014). By including the perspectives of multiple participants (e.g., crossover youth, school leaders, counselors), we increased the likelihood that the program will be useful in the actual setting (Fishman, 2014). Further, PAR is particularly compatible with the ACA-ACM (Lewis et al., 2003) and with the development of "pragmatic strategies of action and social justice" (Balkin & Kleist, 2017, p. 235) that will be implemented in the participants' communities that in turn can lead to collective action among community members.

The combination of PAR with the ACA-ACM model is representative of community-based studies that seek to break down barriers and build strong connections. Historically, many communities of color felt exploited by action research studies. This was due, in part, to the lack of a "partnership in participation" approach to the work. Community members felt dismissed and were not taken into consideration in terms of their potential contributions to the research process (Hacker, 2013). Today, community-based PAR involves viewing community members as partners to achieve community benefits for all. Hacker (2013) explains that PAR is most beneficial "when the research was conducted with them not at them." Community members have to be engaged in a collaborative process to uncover, understand, and resolve the issues that harm their communities (McIntyre, 2008). The participants are the main characters in the research. By using collaborative and self-reflective research processes, they take action in improving their condition (McIntyre, 2008). Traditional methods of research are not feasible for this specific type of study due to the necessity of forming a relationship between the researcher and the participants (McIntyre, 2008).

Like PAR, ACA-ACM is a framework based on the principle that "people who face those problems every day are the ones who hold the key to advocate and come up with creative ways to identify and answer those problems" (McIntyre, 2007, p. 15). Using ACA-ACM approaches can include many overlapping methods that align with PAR, including interviews with community members and emphasizing their importance in building empathy for the target population (i.e., crossover youth and administrators of color). Ethnic minority administrators and marginalized communities (i.e., crossover youth) are rarely included at the research table when evaluating educational, social/emotional, career needs, designing prevention and intervention programs, and assessing barriers and facilitators of care. One reason may be that traditional research approaches can unintentionally silence, rather than foster, individual participants' voices. Consequently, researchers lose the opportunity to capitalize on the unique contributions, experiences, perspectives, and knowledge that community members can provide, informing the development of culturally competent, effective community intervention and prevention efforts. Numerous subgroups of crossover youths exist, pointing to the importance of including all voices at the table to incorporate within-group diversity and advocacy.

The Current Study

Background: Camps-to-College Program

In this large urban school district, over 15,000 students come in contact with the county's juvenile justice system. These students are disproportionately Black and Latinx, with 69% identifying as Latinx, 28% as Black/African American, and 3% as Other. There are 1,508 students between 12 and 20+ years old within the program, with 42% re-enrolling in Senior High School, 34% in Continuation High School, 20% in Community Day School, and 6.1% in Other. The vast majority of these students have experienced school and home instability, poor school attendance, and academic deficits that result in credit deficiency, putting them at high risk for school failure, pushout, and dropout. Every year, thousands of these students are detained in one of three juvenile halls and approximately 1,400 are currently detained in juvenile camps. Upon release, these students face additional challenges with acceptance and reintegration into their home school.

For the 2016/2017 academic school year, USD, CWA, and JJA created an innovative pilot program named Camp to College High School Program (CCP) to impact the lives of crossover students returning to high school after juvenile detention. The CCP was created to support and enhance student success (i.e., attendance and academic achievement, credit accrual toward a high school diploma or equivalent, high school completion, and college and/or career readiness). The program provided several services including: multi-disciplinary team meetings; school enrollment and assessments; conducting educational assessment and transition plans; attendance/records review; communicating with parents, school, or community staff; coordinating resources and referrals; vocational or college activity; tutoring referral. An evaluation study found that as a result of their sustained programming, participants of CCP had improved attendance, graduation rates, participation in postsecondary education pathways, sense of belonging, and connection to their counselor than those who did not participate. The evaluation also found that because of CCPs sustained programming support to students, community and organization partnerships between USD, CWAs, and JJAs had substantially strengthened the mechanisms for system level advocacy (Toporek & Daniels, 2018).

Purpose and Research Questions

Through PAR, this study aims to attend to the voices of crossover students considering that these students' perceptions of college and career (CC) needs have been given limited attention (Nurse, 2013; Osborn & Belle, 2018) – and to empower students, administrators, and counselors to address the CC needs of participants of the CCP through PAR. This method involves a participative and democratic process among the research participants, administrator researchers, and facilitator researcher that leads to practical outcomes through

acting towards social change (Balkin & Kleist, 2017; Reason & Bradbury, 2012). Through the lens of the ACA-ACM (Lewis et al., 2003), PAR can address the "power inequities in society" by empowering and giving a voice to crossover students and for those that serve their educational and counseling needs (Reason & Bradbury, 2012; Toporek & Daniels, 2018). In this study, we present the experiences of a group of crossover students and administrators who either developed or experienced being in the CCP in hopes that educators and counselors will pause, listen, and be open to new ways of providing opportunities to crossover students as well as thought leaders who had the courage to find a way of supporting these unique students in a major urban school district on the west coast.

Primarily, our study describes opportunity gaps related to educational support systems (i.e., community/school/organization) and how these educational support systems (i.e., USD, CWA, and JJA) partnered to develop a Camps-to-College program for crossover high school students (i.e., individual/student/client domain). We also describe these efforts (i.e., collective actions at the community/school/organization domain), provide insights from the participants and administrators, as well as provide recommendations for other providers (i.e., public arena domain) looking to support crossover high school students utilizing the Camps-to-College Program.

The administrator research team generated its own World Café style questions, but the research questions listed here are designed to evaluate the overall procedure. The research questions are as follows:

1. How can PAR be used to improve the Camps-to-College Program?
2. How does the inclusion of administrators influence the research process?
3. How does the research process influence crossover youth?
4. How does the inclusion of crossover youth change or improve administrator's responsiveness in enhancing the Camps-to-College Program?

Methods

A hermeneutic phenomenological paradigm guided the research method. Hermeneutic phenomenology attempts to find, describe, and understand the individual's subjective experience by methodically determining the common and unchanging components, or 'essences' of a particular phenomenon, [e.g., being a crossover youth navigating a CCP or being an administrator responsible for the program] (Balkin & Kleist, 2017; Van Manen, 1990). Essence stands for those characteristics without which an object would not be what it is. To determine the essence of the phenomenon (or object), the researcher employs the process of free imaginative variation. This process entails the varying of examples and elimination of those elements that are not considered essential to the existence of a particular phenomenon. Although hermeneutic phenomenological research seeks the essence of the experience, there is the realization that the interpretation of that experience is socially constructed by the participants themselves and also co-constructed with the researcher(s). 'Truth' therefore is always inherently tentative and relative to the context of the research. Hence, qualitative methods are well suited for investigating concepts such as views and motivations within the education and counseling community to help explain the processes at work in the uptake of new programming and decision making around crossover youth. The researchers adopted a naturalistic design to explore complexity in this field, adapting from a participatory action-research approach comprising a specialized World (Conversation) Café form of focus group (Alfred, 2011; Guba & Lincoln, 2004). The Café approach creates a relaxed, informal and imaginative conversational environment, facilitating constructive engagement around complex issues and critical questions.

Participants

A total of five adults (administrator researchers and facilitator; females, N = 3; male, N = 2) and sixteen crossover youths (female, N = 9; male, N = 7; younger than 18 years) participated in four small group rounds through World Café format. The World Café approach (Brown et al., 2008) is inspired by the principles of

participatory research and designed to promote informal/imaginative discussion. It is based on seven key principles: setting a suitable context, creating hospitable space, exploring important questions, encouraging contributions from all, cross-pollinating and connecting diverse perspectives, listening together for insights, and harvesting and sharing discoveries (Brown et al., 2008). The administrator researchers' group was made of four Chicanx/Latinx adults that developed the CCP. All administrator researchers were first generation daughters and sons of immigrant parents and all were bilingual. The administrator researchers were recruited because they had experience in education, child welfare agencies, and the Juvenile Justice System and were interested in learning more about their CCP project and participants to better serve crossover youth. All administrators lived in or went to work in this major urban metropolis, one of the most diverse states in the country. The administrator facilitator (the first author) who has many years of working in the local community was able to recruit from the CCP in the district in partnership with the leadership team, who allowed recruitment. The principal also allowed the administrator research group to use office space in buildings to conduct the research and supported the group in obtaining informed consent and assent from the students and parents. Research participants were all crossovers and ranged in age from 15 to 17 ($M = 16.2$, $SD = .79$). The specific heritage of the participants varied as follows: Latinx (9), Black (5), Asian (1), and White (1). The sample was representative of the crossover population throughout the district. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant team for data reporting in the present study.

Procedure

Data Collection

After approval from the primary researcher's institutional review board and from the school district was acquired, local school personnel helped locate students for participation in the present study based on their participation in the CCP. The prospective participants' parents/guardians and students were then contacted and provided with informed consent information. When parents approved, their students were provided with assent requests which they signed to confirm their willingness to participate in the present study. The participants who assented and their parents then received copies of the interview questions approximately one week in advance of the semi-structured interviews with the administrator researchers to allow them time to recollect their experiences and reflect on the content of the interview questions related to the CCP. The questions were written in both English and Spanish.

The PAR team (administrators and facilitator) met on a weekly basis for planning and consultation purposes both before and after World Café style interviews. During the initial meeting, I provided a brief presentation on the literature relating to Spanish-speaking family involvement and the purpose of the study. A nonhierarchical, public sphere was created (Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2013) with the purpose of allowing all members to share responsibility for proposing ideas, collecting data, and interpreting results.

In partnership with the first author (facilitator researcher), the CCP administrator researchers developed a research project on supporting crossover students through the CCP. They were involved in choosing the methodology (World Café style interviews), developing the questions, facilitating the interview questions and providing reflections on solutions for crossover students who enter their CCP. The team met weekly for 1–2 hours on Fridays for approximately 14 weeks via video conference calls and a week-long meeting at one of the camps. Attendance was consistent throughout the entire 14 weeks. For the first few weeks of the project, the administrator researchers learned about educational outcomes in the juvenile justice system through reading academic journals, researching the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) website (2016), learning relevant terminology (e.g., crossover youth and school to prison pipeline) and listening to presentations from experts in the field on topics, such as the rates of minorities in juvenile justice, risk factors for juvenile justice involvement, and the impact on mental health for youth involved in juvenile justice.

Subsequent weeks included reviewing research related topics, such as introducing various methods through experiential activities, consent procedures, protection of human subjects, and so forth. The final few weeks included choosing their methodology, developing questions and focus group guides, and practicing conducting focus groups through World Cafe format (i.e., the group of participants are split up into small groups and do small group rounds of 20– 30 minutes each rotating through several tables and answering a different set of questions at each round). After the project was implemented, the administrator researchers met to debrief about the findings and develop recommendations for policy and program changes regarding crossover students at the CCP.

The day of the research session, the administrator researchers and facilitator researcher arrived early, to set up and practice for the research project. As the event started the administrator researchers led the event and began the process with obtaining informed assent from each participant. They decided to open the event like they had experienced for themselves every week in their own research group. They began the event by asking everyone to introduce themselves and briefly check-in on how they were feeling in the moment and if the group could do anything to support them. Then research participants were divided into four groups, each of which rotated around four stations. Each station in the rotation focused on a specific subtopic on crossover experiences in the educational and juvenile justice system to guide the research participants in discussion. Each topic was selected so that students could directly address barriers, inequities and other problems at the organization or systems level (Lewis et al., 2003; Toporek & Daniels, 2018). The first topic of discussion at station one was on the perceived impact of race and gender on treatment within education, CWA, and JJA. Research participants at this station were asked to reflect on how gender, stereotype, and culture may influence treatment within all three systems (i.e., Do you feel that because you are a crossover student you are treated different?; Do you feel like crossover students are treated different in school, CWA, and JJA in comparison to someone of a different culture?; Do you feel that crossover students are getting the postsecondary support they need to be successful and what would you suggest?). The second topic, at station two, was about youths' personal experiences with teachers, counselors, probation officers, detention or other aspects of the system. The third station topic included information on academic support and the role of counselors helping them prepare for life during and after high school. At the fourth station, students made recommendations for how the educational, CWA, and JJA could be more helpful in preparing crossover students to access, afford, and transition into postsecondary pathways.

Analysis

In the data analysis, codes were first assigned and then clustered based on a holistic and line-by-line reading of all transcripts as well as across-case comparisons. Codes were grouped to develop second order constructs that were then organized into clusters, which were given names as provisional themes. Essential themes were determined using the process of imaginative variation (Giorgi, 1997). Imaginative variation is a process whereby the researcher takes concrete examples of a thing or phenomenon, and imaginatively subtracts one feature, then another, from the examples to determine the core or essence of the phenomenon across cases, discovering in the process which features are essential and which are not. In the data, for example, a provisional theme labeled 'flexibility' was considered as a possible essence of subjects' experience. When this theme was checked against the data in the transcripts for validation, 'flexibility' was not uniformly present in all subjects' lived experience. Consequently, it did not meet the criteria for consideration as an invariant component of what it is like to be a crossover youth navigating the CCP. Subtracting this provisional theme, however, illuminated a variant that was essential to the phenomenon that was labeled 'encourage us' and referred to the quality of counseling crossover youth deemed essential. Not only was this essential theme found in the crossover youth experience for all subjects, it embodied the sense of belief and accompaniment that had been ascertained when the provisional theme labeled 'flexibility' was under consideration. Once the essential themes were determined,

each transcript was recoded using the computer software MaxQDA 12. The researchers used this procedure in order to go through the transcripts again and pull out the relevant quotes to support each theme.

Because qualitative research uses the researcher as the instrument of data collection and the center of the analytic process (Balkin & Kleist, 2017), it is necessary to establish mechanisms that hold the researcher accountable for the disciplined use of her/his subjectivity. Armour (2002) recommended that the researcher should be internally reflexive and forthcoming about their process. Accordingly, the researchers kept an audit trail of raw data as well as a log of experiences, emotions, insights, and questions by the interviewers. In addition, Ph.D. students and district representatives and an expert in hermeneutics monitored the influence of subjectivity on the data. The Ph.D. students and district representatives 'shadowed' and challenged the research process by independently listening to the audio taped interviews, writing reflections on the interviews, substantiating the determination of the essential themes, and reviewing the findings against the associated quotes from the transcripts. The expert in hermeneutic phenomenological research reviewed methodological procedures, the essential themes, and descriptions of the themes.

Results

Crossover Youth Reflections

Building Relationships on Radical Authentic Caring

If high schools and specialized programs such as the CCP are truly invested in ensuring that these students graduate high school, and are college and career ready, then counselors need not only focus on academic rigor and college resources, but also on taking the time to develop radical authentic relationships with crossover youth. Radical authentic relationships require the ability to be truthful and honest with as well as accepting of all crossover students' unique academic, social and emotional, and career and college needs. Several crossover youths shared similar suggestions on how counselors could particularly improve their efforts in working with them and other students like them. For instance, a common theme of students at station one indicated:

> They think it would be better if counselors would actually sit and talk to them and to help them create a plan for jobs, college, and military because a lot of us don't know…even though we are different we still believe – but let's be honest with each other. We all know we are difficult but be honest and let's plan regardless of what's going down in our lives. Counselors and teachers need to work together and figure out how to get us ready for that next level [i.e., college, military, career, parent]. This program we are in gives us that extra stuff and the counselors…principal are really cool and upfront with us and our parents – but in a caring way. They make us feel like we belong even with our baggage.

Station two participants highlighted conversations with school counselors and/or teachers. Sometimes the conversations were more direct, technical, and task oriented and at other times they leaned more towards personal advice. For instance, station two participants noticed:

> Teachers are a big part of their success and support system. They don't play around and are upfront with you…if we had a 'serio (serious) question, they don't sugar it up. They tell it like it is. On the other hand, counselors give more technical conversations, but are honest too. They are like, 'do this and this will happen' – no fooling around…straight talk about life and life after high school. It makes us feel listened to and that we all belong. If we had questions or situations; we would ask if you were in my situation what you would do and the teachers were straightforward while counselors were more strategic and cautious…good balance between them – we appreciate it.

Station three participants also highlighted conversations with counselors: "Like choosing a school and getting the information part, that was important for a career and taking those extra courses at the community college." Station three participants also noted that counselors provided one-on-one points of contact and pamphlets about college and military applications – but also talked about truths and brought real military people in to talk about the military tests (ASVAB) and what your score means and the jobs you can get…but also the things recruiters do to convince you to join…we all liked that."

Station four participants shared examples of memorable conversations that they had with counselors and teachers over the course of the CCP:

> Our teachers. They were the ones convincing us, like, go (to college); It's the way to go. Like higher education. Our counselors, everybody was like, you need to go to college. And then we also thought back to our younger grades (i.e., middle school)…they always told us to stay in school because it's always good for us. So just kind of like remembering our past and those that we thought were real, telling us to go stay in school. That was like the big thing that we all remember.

Radical authentic healing through one's culture was a consensus theme across all four stations. This theme entailed the belief that crossover youth are stronger if they are secure within their identity and culture. A station one participant stated, "knowing your culture is powerful, it helps you know your strengths…when counselors and teachers know your culture…we know you care." A Station three youth recognized they (crossover youth) are "healing and learning together in the CCP." A station two youth stated, "our mob (group) is telling their story to counselors and teachers and it makes us feel good and cared for…we are all survivors of the system and our community, sharing our love for food, music, and struggles…learning from others is important and having those counselors and teachers who really care make a difference." A station four youth indicated connecting with community and with family and the importance of intergenerational passing down of "stories, struggles, and cultural knowledge" and having the "power to pass on our stories to others in the CCP":

> We all think it is important we tell our stories to future kids like us…look we have parents that are struggling, dead, or in jail…we don't have to keep it a secret with our counselor and teachers, they are down with listening…they (counselors) give us the skills to radically accept our struggle and acknowledge the strengths of them – we learn how to regulate when we are dysregulated…shit, we learned some good stuff here…we noticed our PO (probation officer) asking us how to do some of those skills our counselors are teaching us.

We Are Worth The Rigor

"We are worth the rigor" emerged as a theme related to crossover youths' perceived belonging within the CCP and future postsecondary pathways. Because all school personnel are often overwhelmed by their individual duties as counselors, ensuring that more crossover youth are career and college ready will require a collaborative effort that could be realized through the integration of college level coursework and college resources in all classrooms, not just advanced placement (AP) or dual enrollment courses. Students were particularly aware of this lack of integration, despite counselors' being generally supportive of students' college aspirations. As one station three participant stated, "I felt it should be the responsibility of counselors to, definitely talk to us more about college and career help. Because, like we said before, you have to go search it. They [teachers] just don't come to you. You have to go find them. We realized that in this program they all come to you." A station two participant also mentioned how "counselors should be a little bit more informative and telling their students how, how this [applying to jobs and college] is done. All of us are very confused on how I should apply. We are lucky we get this extra help."

ISSN 2159-8142

All stations' participants indicated, "that if school counselors and teachers keep pushing learning and those hard courses – they would feel like they are worth it." A station one youth indicated, they all like to learn the 'good stuff…real life stuff' – connect it to our life no matter how hard the class is." A station three youth indicated, "school counselors need to make sure they know how students learn and their aspirations to help with their individual learning plans." Transformation of all participants stemmed from counselors and teachers strategically celebrating and encouraging each student to do their best in the program. A station four youth recognized this from counselors through "conversations about courses, adapting and surviving in the community, and breaking through the educational barriers and challenges." A station two youth indicated:

> Peoples doubt about us keep us going. The fact that we are doubted, that kind of motivates us to take more harder courses; that lights a fire under us. We are usually forgotten about…this is our way of saying we are worth it and we are going to prove it. We are all going to that next level (i.e., college); we are going to college no matter who supports us or not…we want to be the first.

A station four youth also stated, "they think it kind of goes back to resiliency; just being resilient through everything that's happened. That's pretty much what will get us to college … being resilient, persevering through everything and knowing what's happening right now is not going to be forever." A station three youth also indicated the importance of pushing through:

> The hardest thing for us was knowing our experiences [were] not who we are, like that doesn't define who we are, so just trying to really take that and move forward with that and know that even though we went through all of this, we can still do it. We all struggled with knowing that okay even though we are in a system that doesn't mean that we can't do it.

Encourage Us

The third theme, "encourage us" was a powerful and consistent theme across all stations. Throughout many of the participants' stories, the theme of caring adults outside of the home had a significant impact on participants' motivation and desire to change. For most of the participants this support came from community members, counselors, teachers, and administrators. Conceptually, when participants were encouraged, they were able to access their inner strengths that helped them get through the day, weeks, and months of staying in the CCP, out of trouble with the law, and away from poor peer influences. A station one participant stated, "they never knew from one moment to the next what was coming around the corner…we are confronted with life and death…once we walk into this place (CCP) we are immediately encouraged and acknowledged." The concept of perceived strength to survive was apparent for many of the participant stations, and it led many of them to remain hopeful that an opportunity and chance was possible.

Many participants agreed that they had received years of direct and indirect encouragement by OGs (original gangsters) and Big Homies (older friends in the community) and by cellmates to function as if they were in combat at all times and these adverse circumstances had surprisingly contributed to building strength. For station four, "counselors…like OGs and homies, helped us pull out those strengths and to reframe them for good and not bad." Station three also reflected this sentiment, "counselors and teachers taught us how to 'flow' (i.e., code blend), 'be able to flow in and out of spaces and places using our strengths – not put them down or embrace them." Many participants acknowledged the complexities they faced in life as well as the limited resources to correct the transgressions that accompanied their lifestyles. Others stated that street culture is responsible for the strength evidenced in the way they behave in school. The participants' ability to adapt to ever-changing environments was a direct result of the inner strength that was formed throughout their life experiences.

Another means that students suggested of remedying inequities in career and college access and readiness was to simply inform them of opportunities that prepared them for college or allowed them to "earn college credit" (per station four). When asked what advice they would give other crossover students to prepare for college, station four participants reflected on what they wished they would have known regarding rigorous courses (i.e., AP and dual enrollment) courses when starting high school:

> Like if they would've told us, ohh, like if you don't want to not waste that much money start taking harder classes from here on out, this is how many hours and this is how much money you're gonna save – encourage us and not keep us out of those classes. We can see other students in science class doing cool stuff we like cool stuff too…just give us a chance we are smart we just have other issues. We know we can act out from time to time, just be real with us – work it out with us.

Administrator Researchers Reflection

The four administrator researchers (all identifying as Latinx) were representative of the various systems serving crossover youth including one CWA administrator, one school-based Director of counseling services, and two JJA administrators, including one JJA who was the Director of education services for crossover students. Since conducting this research project, all four administrator researchers have played a role in facilitating other projects to help understand their district and department's needs. Below are personal reflections by all four of the administrator researchers showing the professional impact the project had on them. To protect the identities of administrator researchers, we will call them Admin1 through Admin 4.

Admin1 is a 19-year veteran of the district and student support services director. "I was chosen to be in the project by the lead author (facilitator). I met the facilitator when I was supervising him when he was a district counselor for our district. I was responsible for the development of a couple [of] specialized programs for the district. Reflecting on the process for the CCP it was very different, I looked at school level data but [had] never been in a space that allowed me to process and reflect on what we could do to really target a group of kids with JJA – to really focus. At the beginning I was a bit apprehensive…not about the work, but the time I would have to give up scared me – but I was game as well as the other administrators. During the beginning, it was hard to think about what questions we wanted to ask and what the project would become. [The] facilitator just wanted us to think about how we came together to put the CCP together as well as what were some gaps and areas of success. We started off by sharing our vision and missions and how we came together. Historically this population, when they [society, schools] have problems with them they end up getting "pushed out," sent to camp, (or) going to continuation school. And these centers have not been structured as … learning academies, it starts off with the name itself [detention centers]. Schools for kids … that the system have failed. These are learning academies, which is a different approach, a different mindset. You have quality teachers there, rich programming there, and you combine that with the fact that the kids are in a real caring environment; I've seen the difference in the kids in the few times I've been in the centers speaking with them. The kids feel safe, they feel like they can learn there, so they're really not structured like the continuation schools where kids go because they got kicked out, and that's where they end up. … The small learning environments, they're designed with a very specific target population in mind, but they're there to be given all the resources possible to be successful. Not like a continuation school, [where] you're there because you got in trouble necessarily. We all thought the same things – we wanted to make an impact in our community. We worked hard every weekend to make our project really happen. I think by being a part of this project it has given me different points of views on things that crossover students go through on a day-to-day basis. It's given me opportunity and a sense of even more focus….direction for us as leaders. Most importantly is this project has taught me how to speak up for

crossovers and educate other administrators, educators, teachers, and counselors across the district…as well as other agencies and partners (personal communication April 12, 2017)."

Admin 2 is a 22-year veteran of CWA who discusses the importance of open and collaborative cultures during this process. "I believe creating the change necessary to provide the resources and services for crossovers takes a team and requires leaders to create a culture that is vulnerable, open, and honest with each other. These leaders work to encourage and develop other leaders who will then develop more leaders; overtime coherence is achieved across several iterations of the innovation (CCP). Leadership is really important, and the teachers have been hand-selected to be a part of this program. (They) actually like working with students, and they have the passion for working with this population of students. They're very patient and they're not judgmental. And because the adults always create the barriers for students, the people that we've hand-selected are welcoming, and it's a safe learning environment. The kids feel comfortable, they don't feel judged and some of the students we've interviewed for videos that we've put together to try to promote the work we're doing, they'll tell you 'my counselor told me that I could graduate'. There was a student that said that she thought that her counselor was calling her parents to complain about her and the fact that she wasn't in school, and she was surprised that the counselor wanted to help her and wanted to support her, and that's why she came back to school. It's a lot about leadership and the fact that they believe in these kids (personal communication, April 12, 2017)."

Admin 3 is a 12-year veteran of the school district and director of counseling services. "Historically, schools have struggled to keep students interested in the topics the schools are teaching. By deepening learning, the students are not just being fed information from the teachers but are learning to learn or thinking about the way they think and make decisions. The students are engaged in their work and feel connected not only to each other but also the community as a whole. The focus and collaboration within JJA has been directed towards the improvement of the learning-teaching process. USD has found that the general education communities have not been working towards engaging crossovers in the district. We believe we have a model that we feel is working and we've been collecting student academic data, and we're seeing that there's improvement in reengagement, so kids are enrolling and staying in. We've looked at their attendance and they're staying in school, and we've also looked at credit approval and what we realized is when we compare credit accrual and students who are enrolled in a small learning environment, they're accruing more credits in the small learning environment, as opposed to the students enrolled in a large comprehensive high school. What we're thinking is that they're receiving comprehensive support, but it's more of a personalized small learning environment (personal communication, April 12, 2017)."

Admin 4 is a 16-year veteran of JJA and director of educational services for crossover students. "Coming together professionally, as well as personally, provides a level of comfort when needing to reach out to various team members. Even though many of us met for the first time through this partnership, we now feel comfortable reaching out to one another. When it comes to… cutting red tape or overcoming a roadblock, it's that personal relationship that allows us to be able to pick up the phone and feel comfortable calling anybody; any one of the team members to say 'you know what? There's a problem; how do we fix it?'. And it's actually gone beyond what started out as pretty simple 'how do we help get our kids into school' now it's grown to a bigger picture and really involving the entire system. The top of our organization to the folks on the ground that are actually doing the work, it's really getting not just the system leaders involved but we have the meet-and-greets that is to personalize the process. It isn't, 'here's this list; call this person when you run into a problem'. It becomes, 'these are real people, that are professionals like you and our goals are all the same, we share a common goal so we get to know each other because these are the folks that you're going to turn to when you come across an obstacle. It helps to keep people accountable because the accountability comes from being familiar with one another. It's one thing to disappoint someone you don't know, very different from disappointing someone that you know

and have built a relationship with. When it comes to being responsive to them and everything else it allows individuals to be that much more responsive knowing the face behind the name of the emails that they frequent (personal communication, April 12, 2017)."

Discussion

This PAR study explored the experiences of crossover youth and administrators engaging in a CCP in a major west coast urban school district and the support systems needed in order to advocate for such programming. This article provides insights from administrator researchers, participants, and the authors as well as provides recommendations for school leadership, counselors, and organizations who are thinking of creating more support and educational opportunities for crossover students through an advocacy lens.

Through this article, the authors aim to share the findings of this study to address the impact of educational barriers that impede the collaborative process between students and counselors in supporting the CC needs of crossover students. Identifying the promotive and protective recourses of these youth early can influence a student's postsecondary pathway regardless of their status. We strongly recommend interagency collaboration and advocacy to improve programming, counseling services, and responsiveness to crossover youth. However, the identification and focus on crossover or dually involved youth across multiple agencies is a relatively new frontier. Community collaboration across these three systems is difficult to accomplish for a variety of reasons, including differing infrastructures, information privacy policies, and competing priorities (Herz et al., 2012), and as such, is not often accomplished. Very few studies have investigated these interagency collaborations, but these results suggest that there may be positive outcomes such as better identification of crossover youth, more efficient counseling service delivery, and improved collective collaboration as a part of CCP efforts (Haight et al., 2014). Consistent with the ACA-ACM (Lewis et al., 2003; Toporek & Daniels, 2018) the current study demonstrates the effectiveness of employing a multifaceted approach that enlists participation from students, counselors and administrators for eliciting practical solutions for overcoming environmental barriers to student achievement. The solutions were elicited through a participatory strength-based research process that emphasized the value added by collaborating with community partners and crossover youth.

These recommendations, while supported by literature examining the schooling experiences of crossover youth, are also reflective of similar needs of students-of-color (Franquiz & Salazar, 2004). Thus, it would seem obvious to recommend hiring more staff, particularly at schools that serve crossover youth. However, many schools face financial constraints that often deem counselors as discretionary personnel (McDonough, 2005). Increasing the number of counselors on high school campuses, however, does not ensure counselors understand and meet the needs of the diverse students they serve. To strengthen systems level advocacy, counselors must be held accountable and purposefully build trusting, authentic, and radical relationships with crossover youth. This recommendation is consistent with the National Education Association (NEA), American Association of School Administrators (AASA), and American Counseling Association's (ACA) multicultural competencies (Ratts et al., 2015) that indicate counselors and administrators must be knowledgeable about students they work with, the cultural assets of these students and their families, and specifically be cognizant of the heterogeneity that exists within racial/ethnic groups so as to not assume or attach stereotypes to students based on any demographic characteristics. Along these same lines, administrators recommended that counselors and teachers provide crossover students with personalized support for each student. The administrators also held themselves accountable for strengthening the quality of their relationships with teachers and counselors referred to as "boots on the ground." This seemed to reflect their belief that authentic personalized relationships (e.g., learning the names of personnel, participating in meet-and-greets) could potentially enhance the quality of collaborative services provided by administrators and school personnel.

Facilitator Reflection

As noted above, CCP project was facilitated by the first author who had supported this group of four veteran administrators with multiple years of experience. I was asked to facilitate this project due to my deep understanding of the population, district, and issues of the community working with high school crossover students transitioning back into school settings. These are my reflections and suggestions for other facilitators who are embedded in schools and interested in CCPs and supporting crossover student preparation and readiness for postsecondary pathways and life after high school.

Facilitator Suggestions

CCP project provided an environment where administrator researchers could not only engage in the process of informing system change for crossover youths around the district and community but also actively engage in their own collective and individual professional development. As a school counselor educator and the facilitator of this process, I was able to facilitate the development of new ideas and strategies to support the academic, career, and social/emotional needs of crossover students preparing for life after high school. Here, I provide suggestions for other counselors who are interested in serving as facilitators who might be delving into CCP type work for the first time and who are interested in supporting crossover students' postsecondary pathways.

Simulate college and career classes. Participants displayed strengths including assertiveness, curiosity, and confidence in themselves. Participants were particularly interested in understanding the content, format, and styles of a college class. Crossover youths in the CCP have the aspirations and desire(s) of attending postsecondary pathways and recognized the CCP could simulate the way a college course would be delivered. Participants also wanted to visit college classrooms and learn what a day in the life of a college student feels like. Participants wanted to make sure that counselors, teachers, and administrators understand that, "even though they may be behind, they still want to be exposed." Also, don't be afraid of being "real" with them about the road ahead of them. Talk to crossover youths about multiple pathways (i.e., trade and vocational schools at the community college and military options).

Actively involve crossover youth in the decision-making process. Driving decision-making based on (a) engaging crossover students and their families based on their developmental stages and with respect to their culture and (b) prioritizing crossover and family voices and experiences were key takeaways from participants and administrator researchers. The facilitator assisted the students in identifying environmental barriers to their development and recommending solutions for overcoming these barriers. An expanded definition of family is necessary in order to identify and include the appropriate people who can support crossover success. This group of supportive individuals may include nontraditional positive adult influences who are able to contact and visit the youth in multiple settings (i.e., school, court, and camps). Families should be included in educational case planning and treatment and have a meaningful say in the goals and case plans. Counselors, teachers, and administrators should engage students and their families/caretakers as early and as often in college and career planning. Educational support and professional development should be provided for teachers, administrators, and counselors as well as individualized by their professional needs. Counselors should make sure student and family educational rights are known and respected. Developing and circulating/posting a student and family bill of rights would show that the school counseling team is open and willing to take care of the student as well as their family.

Finally, multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) for crossover students can drive case planning and are structured to facilitate collaboration across multiple agencies. In order for this to be successful, all staff across all agencies must be trained in the therapeutic/educational model (including kitchen staff, maintenance, teachers, probation officers, etc.). This necessitates cross-training that recognizes there is no separation of staff roles in supporting program goals. All direct care providers (i.e., counselors) will be trained to support the education,

therapeutic, and rehabilitative components of the CCP project and are expected to actively participate in the program. In order to successfully incorporate all programming elements in a holistic and integrated manner, staffing patterns and schedules will need to accommodate regular (weekly) multidisciplinary team meetings, and allow sufficient time for planning and debriefing activities.

Provide strengths-based engaged programming. Programming for crossover students should be meaningful for students and staff with a focus on skill-building, mental health, academic, and college and career growth. Programming should always build on students' current strengths and resources and identify opportunities and linkages in the community (i.e., program or employment opportunities) to support the students' self-identified strengths and goals while in the CCP program and upon reentry into a comprehensive high school. Programming must include community-based organizations with direct contacts in the communities which students will return to and support during and after high school. Participants recommended skills training using mindfulness practices, learning how to balance their emotions, and establishing positive relationships. Administrator researchers recognized the importance of cognitive-behavioral and dialectical skills training for students as well as making sure all staff were trained in creating trauma-informed/sensitive programming. Participants also suggested that counselors would benefit from learning how to run groups in the classroom that gave them skills to interview for jobs, complete a college and financial aid (FAFSA) application, and enhance their confidence and agency to attend college and be career ready through programming. With regard to their learner role, participants recommended that counselors help them to understand the components of how to engage in positive academic and metacognitive strategies, connect the utility of what is being taught and relate course content with future work, and commit to helping them develop interpersonal skills to navigate dysregulation.

Recognize and address the racial and ethnic disparities related to the access of services. Participants all indicated that it would benefit counselors to be trained on implicit bias and best practices in reducing racial and ethnic disparities. Ensuring that gender responsive services are available to all students and that there is a coordinated effort between agencies to work with community organizations to bridge this gap. Administrator researchers realized that they needed to assess the level of availability of services by taking an inventory of services in each domain (academic, career, and social/emotional). As well as document the availability of services relative to the needs of families and students to determine if there is an adequate "fit" in the students and schools' goals and what needs are currently unmet. Finally, they will also evaluate the services available to assess which services are beneficial to helping families and youth and which ones should be abandoned in favor of more effective programming.

Emphasize academic achievement and engagement. Academic achievement and engagement are critical to each youth's program, and input from education providers is a fundamental element of case and reentry planning. A rigorous and relevant education program is viewed as the locus of personal development for every student at the CCP campus and is understood to be at the core of the program. Administrator researchers recognized the importance of their counselors with regard to supporting students' perceptions of self and promoting their confidence and desire to change their life trajectory through education and rediscovery of passion and purpose. CCP school counselors should provide college and career readiness training to help crossover students navigate the educational system through hands-on techniques and skills. School counselors should use motivational interviewing to help students build on positive interpersonal interactions with others. School counselors and teachers will continue to use restorative practices and pathways to facilitate a process of healing and establishing positive family relationships that are nurturing. School counselors and teachers will support and assist students in enrolling in an appropriate secondary education environment as well as a postsecondary program that leads to career and job success during and after high school. School counselors and

teachers will work on Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs) and provide core curriculum lessons on college and career readiness planning.

The education program of the CCP is rooted in social-emotional connections to content. The core education program would benefit from tiered intervention (e.g., simultaneously providing individual, school, and community-based interventions) to allow students to make major educational improvements, and complete credit recovery courses. CCP employs a behavior intervention system to encourage positive behavior that allows students to improve their educational scores. School counselors are able to come together to develop their core curriculum lessons in a professional learning community. Students could benefit from moving through a thematic, interdisciplinary, and project-based framework with themes that focus on self-esteem, empowerment, hope, transformation, and new beginnings, which in turn, collectively support the social and emotional needs of students. At the end of each thematic unit, an exhibition can be held where students present to other students, staff, and the community, providing them the opportunity to gain leadership skills and have ownership over their learning. Every student will leave with a portfolio of their credits, workshops, and certificates. Also, inviting community partners to serve as experts in order to enhance the curriculum would make the experience more realistic for students. Creating a pathway for higher education through the curriculum, with the goal of postsecondary preparation in mind, is at the forefront of each topic and conversation with students. Eligible students who are either enrolled in high school or have already graduated from high school are offered online college courses and career technical education. The goal is for each student to be ready for a job, the military, or higher education once they are back in their own community. School counselors and counselors must function as leaders that guide the vision of the school. They will provide instructional guidance, based on cultural needs, classroom support, coaching, and professional development, to teachers and administrators. Finally, counselors will integrate visual and performing arts of all kinds into all counseling programming and academic learning time as well as out-of-class time via partnerships with artists and arts educators.

Limitations

The first limitation of this study centered on not having enough time to capture the complete lived experiences of the participants. The CCP leaders who participated for this investigation lead two major programs for the district and county, limiting the time to two months. As a result, this two-month time frame limited the exposure or time needed to see how the CCP program impacted crossover youth participants on a daily-basis as well as how much time we had with all involved parties for the study. According to Van Manen (1990), the experience of time, the reflection on past time, and anticipated time to come are essential components of a hermeneutic phenomenological study. The reflection, anticipation, and experience of time are essential because the insight into the essence of a phenomenon involves a process of reflecting, clarifying, and making clear meaning of the lived experience (Van Manen, 1990). In other words, additional time or a more extended investigation would have helped the participants explicitly unveil their lifeworld as they would usually experience (Kafle, 2011; Van Manen, 1990). However, to mitigate this limitation, the participants were asked to reflect upon their roles as participants in the CCP based on the prior 10-month school year in their journals, providing further insight into the phenomenon under study.

An ongoing challenge faced by hermeneutic phenomenological researchers is to reduce the bias they bring to an investigation (Cohen et al., 2000). This issue can present a challenge for hermeneutic phenomenological researchers because the study's structure mandates that data must be reported and documented precisely as it happens rather than based on their opinions (Cohen et al., 2000). To mitigate this limitation, the researcher utilized two evidence-based techniques during the hermeneutic phenomenological study: bracketing and a research audit trail.

Bracketing is a methodological device of phenomenological inquiry that requires researchers to disregard their tenets, knowledge, and insight into the phenomenon they have under investigation (Chan et al., 2013). Equally as important, bracketing can demonstrate the validity of the data collection and analysis process

(Chan et al., 2013). Chan et al. (2013) suggest that bracketing begins before the literature review because the literature review, data collection, and the analysis are sequentially related. Accordingly, the researcher kept an interactive journal about assumptions and beliefs on the phenomenon before the start of the investigation. Therefore, reducing bias during the investigation and demonstrating the validity of the data collection and analysis process.

A research audit trail refers to the hermeneutic phenomenological researcher documenting all decisions regarding the strategies utilized to conduct the investigation as well as his or her thought processes during the data analysis stage (Cohen et al., 2000). For this investigation, the researchers maintained two audit trails: a physical research audit trail and an intellectual research audit trail. The physical audit trail documented the stages of the research study and reflected on the implementation of crucial research methodology decisions. The intellectual research audit trail helped the researcher to reflect on how his or her thinking evolved throughout the qualitative study. Furthermore, the two audit trails (1) increased research transparency, (2) presented a useful strategy for determining the trustworthiness of a hermeneutic phenomenological study, and (3) confirmed the research findings (Carcary, 2009). Consequently, the two audit trails will eliminate any potential threats to validity.

Conclusion

As the educational disparities between crossover and mainstream youth become more apparent both through attention from scholars and from mainstream media, teachers, counselor and administrators will become more sensitive to their needs and thus more apt to find ways to assist them in reaching their highest potential. The often quoted saying, "It takes a whole village to raise a child" means it takes a communal effort to advocate and support the growth of these youth. This saying is especially true for crossover youth who must successfully navigate their way to adult self-sufficiency. This will not be possible without help from a strong support network and tools that will ensure both their personal and educational success. As counselors and teachers become more educated on the unique needs of crossover youth, they can play a lead role in these support networks that can help to meet their needs through unique programming models such as the CCP.

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ISSN 2159-8142

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Visions of Health: The GirlPower Photovoice Project

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Abstract

The perceptions of 12 middle school girls regarding the health promoting and inhibiting aspects of their community were explored using the innovative methodology known as Photovoice that was situated in a youth-participatory-action research (YPAR) methodology. The photographs and resulting focus group discussions revealed overarching themes of Community Health and Safety, Food, Relationships, Socioeconomic Status (SES), Moral Development, and Physical Activity. The themes offer a way to organize the multiple realities of adolescent girls and how they interpret their personal health and the health of their communities, while the outcomes associated with participating in the project provide evidence of gains in self-esteem, collective efficacy, and leadership and advocacy skills.

Keywords: Youth participatory action research; Photovoice, adolescence; girls; health

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While many social workers and counselors within education, direct service provision, and child welfare have been driven by a desire to provide the most relevant and impactful services for youth in an effort to support healthy transition to adulthood, community social workers have often emphasized the importance of fostering inclusion, empowerment, leadership, and social action among young people (Checkoway, 2009; Delgado, 2015). As such, youth participation encompasses many different areas of literature that promotes the empowerment and action of young people as organizers, leaders, activists, and researchers in their communities.

Youth Participation

The literature defines youth participation as a shift in perspective from viewing young people as subjects, problems, and children to be mentored and taught by adults to being active participants and leaders in community and society (Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2004). Youth participation promotes the concept of 'adult allies' who recognize the importance of youth created and led spaces and provide mentorship to young people seeking to bring about social change in their schools, communities, and contexts (Checkoway, 2009). Youth participation is directly rooted in empowerment and liberation theories that emphasize individual self-esteem, collective efficacy, consciousness raising, and social action to reform and improve upon existing systems (Delgado, 2015). Although many approaches to youth participation exist, several have demonstrated consistent positive outcomes for young people and communities.

For example, Checkoway (2009) and Ginwright, Cammarota, and Noguera (2005), identified empowerment gains and positive outcomes related to youth facilitation of intergroup dialogues in a diverse urban context. Additionally, Anyon, Bender, Kennedy, & Dechants (2018) in a systematic review of the literature, identified the outcomes of increased leadership and agency to be the most common outcomes of youth led actions. Other scholars have emphasized the role of the arts in youth participation initiatives as a mechanism to convey youth identified needs and youth directed actions related to health and wellness (Madrigal, Salvatore, Casillas, Vera, Eskenazi, and Minkler, 2014). Youth participation is thus an excellent approach and intervention for practitioners wanting to involve young people in community change.

Youth Participatory Action Research

Youth participatory action research (YPAR) brings together action research and youth participation for the purpose of involving young people in the development of knowledge and in the reform of societal systems, institutions, and communities. YPAR is situated in an action research paradigm, which was pioneered by Lewin (1946) to emphasize research, community action, collective efficacy, and praxis (critical reflection on practice). YPAR involves young people in institutional and community-based research projects that they then help to shape, implement, and disseminate to stakeholders, community members, and decision makers (Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2004). The use of arts-based methods in YPAR provide young people with accessible tools for advocacy and change, thus Photovoice is often utilized in YPAR interventions.

YPAR and the Empowerment of Adolescent Women

While YPAR and Photovoice are particularly useful mechanisms for involving a variety of young people facing marginalization in society, it may be especially useful as an empowering tool for teen girls. Teen girls often face challenges to inclusion and empowerment due to the promotion of socialized gender norms in schools, families, and communities, and adolescent Women of Color face deep rooted intersectional challenges with relation to institutional racism, misogyny, and other forms of oppression (Gutiérrez and Lewis, 1994).

Teen girls are thus a population that remains underserved on both a national and statewide level. This turbulent time in life can have a strong impact on the health and well-being of girls. Findings from several studies have indicated that girls' self-esteem drops dramatically during adolescence (Baldwin & Hoffman, 2002; Kling, Hyde, Showers, & Buswell, 1999). Declines in self-esteem among teen girls have also been demonstrated to coincide with decreased levels of ambition in terms of academic achievement and career choice (Correll,

2001). Poor self-perception and body image are also largely correlated with girls' declining self-esteem (Clay et al., 2005). Race and ethnicity as well as socio-cultural factors such as unrealistic portrayals of female beauty in the media have also been linked to body dissatisfaction and eating disorders among teen girls (Clay et al., 2005).

Women and Girls in Oklahoma

Women and girls in Oklahoma face many challenges. In 2017, Oklahoma was ranked 43rd out of the 50 states on a general health index, (United Health Foundation, 2017). Likewise, Oklahoma's rate of food insecurity is higher than the national rate with one in four children struggling with hunger (Regional Food Bank, 2018). Oklahoma also has the 11th highest obesity rate for ages 10-17 (CDC, 2018).

In addition to food insecurity and obesity, women and girls in Oklahoma experience numerous other barriers to health and well-being. For instance, Oklahoma has the highest number of women incarcerated per capita in the United States, a statistic associated with many unfavorable outcomes for children of this population (State of Oklahoma Department of Corrections, 2016). To make matters worse, Oklahoma was ranked second nationally for teen birth rates in 2018 (Associated Press, 2018), and in 2018, the state ranked 48th for the number of women in politics (Center for Women in Politics, 2018). Finally, the rate of forcible and attempted rape against women in Oklahoma was also 38% higher than the national average (OSDH, 2018).

Current Study

The purpose of this study was to learn more about the perceptions of teen girls regarding the health promoting and inhibiting aspects of their communities while also empowering them to share their voice with local community leaders. It is intended that these data can inform programming aimed at Oklahoma girls in order to bolster their health and well-being in the face of adversity and challenges.

Photovoice Methodology

Photovoice is a powerful participatory method that can effectively capture the perspectives of groups traditionally underrepresented by research (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang, 1999). Individuals use photography to visually document the realities of their lives, promote critical dialogue amongst participants about community issues, and reach policymakers and the larger community through the use of photographic exhibitions (1999).

Participating in a Photovoice project can be especially empowering for participants (Foster-Fishman et al., 2005). This method illuminates previously overlooked areas of inquiry and explores the significance of context to participants' experiences (a potential that is heightened by the use of photography; Camic, Rhodes, & Yardley, 2003; Suzuki, Prendes-Lintel, Wertlieb, & Stallings, 1999). Photovoice contributes to the goals of YPAR and youth participation. Finally, the exhibits of participants' photography may be a catalyst for social action. As such, these exhibits bring key social issues to the attention of policy makers and other important stakeholders.

Photovoice and Teen Girls

One of Photovoice's unique strengths is its ability to amplify the voices of traditionally disenfranchised groups. As such, it has been successfully implemented with many different groups including teen girls both within the United States and internationally. For instance, Washington State University used Photovoice to explore the realities of housing conditions for migrant workers in their community by placing cameras in the hands of mostly high school age, female "health promoters" who volunteered at a local clinic. These girls reached out to families served by the clinic to document their experience and to help influence public sentiment and policy-making (Postma & Peterson, 2010). Photovoice is thus well-suited to use with teen girls and was the ideal method of choice for this investigation.

Overview of GirlPower

The GirlPower Photovoice project utilized Photovoice methodology to elucidate the ways in which teen girls' health can be strengthened in spite of the significant health disparities and negative social and health outcomes that women and girls of low-socioeconomic status traditionally face. This innovative participatory methodology allowed for a participant-led exploration of teen girls' perceptions of their own physical, social, and emotional health as well as the health promoting and inhibiting elements of their communities and schools. The participants and *Visions of Health* team developed an exhibit showcasing the participants' photography and select findings following the completion of focus groups. Two separate events were held to share the exhibit with the local community, one at the state university where the researchers work and another at a local art cooperative. The university exhibit drew about fifty guests from the campus, local school district, city leaders, partner agency, and community members. The exhibit was featured in the city paper both before and after the event. A few of the participants chose to speak at the university exhibit, and all participants were honored with a reception, awards, and a speech by the City's Mayor. After the exhibit, the girls completed process papers to explore the impact of the Photovoice experience on their confidence, relationships, and well-being.

Sample

A total of 12 middle school girls residing in a moderate sized city in central Oklahoma were recruited to participate in the GirlPower Photovoice project. The participants were in seventh or eighth grade and ranged in age from 12-14 years old. They were recruited from an after-school program for girls sponsored by a local child abuse and neglect treatment and prevention agency. The participants were all enrolled in the same middle school. Three of the participants were African American, two were Hispanic, and seven were Caucasian.

Data Collection

The research team worked closely with agency staff on data collection procedures. Data collection methods were developed in a way that protected the girls and the integrity and purpose of the agency while serving the purpose of the research study (authors, 2015). The project had Human Subjects IRB approval from the researcher's university. It was decided that all focus groups would be facilitated by members of the research team (one faculty member and one graduate student), however, a member of the agency would be present for the girls' comfort and to ensure agency oversight. All members of the research team who were to engage in data collection received training in conducting focus groups with youth. Following this process, girls were recruited to participate in the investigation.

First, researchers and agency staff described the study design and explained the Human Subjects Committee to participants and families during an after-school dinner hosted by the project. Participants in the agency's after school program were invited to attend with their parents. Both parental consent and child assent forms were collected at this time. Following this event, GirlPower Photovoice participants were supplied with digital cameras and engaged in two days of training covering the topics of safety issues and photography. The photography training session took place during after school programming provided by the agency and included instruction on safety, the use of digital cameras, and time with local photography professionals to learn tips on taking photographs.

Once trained, participants were asked to spend a month representing their community and personal lives by taking photographs, discussing them together, and developing narratives to go with their photographs. Each week, girls were asked to take photographs that represented health, or lack thereof, within their communities. They were asked to document health promotion and inhibiting characteristics of their environments. The girls would then convene at the partner organization's office space for reflection sessions.

The Photovoice sessions started with snacks and social time while the research team downloaded photos and the girls took turns selecting their favorite photos for sharing with their larger focus group. The participants were then asked to participate in a focus group in which they discussed the photographs.

Based upon their knowledge of the girls, agency staff assisted with the process of assigning the girls into focus groups. The girls were divided into two groups, each of which was led by members of the research team. During the sessions, each girl was given an opportunity to share her selected photographs with the larger group. She was asked to explain the significance of her photographs, and the facilitators then encouraged discussion of these pictures amongst the group. The facilitators worked to elicit the girls' thoughts on the meaning of the photographs and their significance to the girls' perceptions of health in their individual lives, families, and communities. The meetings were recorded. Along with the photographs, the transcripts of these sessions served as sources of data for the investigation.

As the project continued, we realized that we needed to modify the implementation of the research project to better fit the needs of adolescent girls. We observed that the girls were having a difficult time answering the open-ended questions (i.e. Describe your community; What is the healthiest place in your community?) posed during the focus group sessions and struggled with their attention spans in a large group. Accordingly, we decided to develop more specific questions to be asked during the sessions and split them into two smaller focus groups.

The photo assignments given each week were as follows: *Describe your community; What is the healthiest and unhealthiest place in your community?; What helps you be healthy? And What keeps you from being healthy?; Take a picture of the contents of your fridge; Take a picture of your favorite snack;* and *Take a picture of what you had for dinner.*

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted by two faculty, two graduate students, and agency staff. Thematic analysis was conducted using the framework provided by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and was rooted in naturalistic inquiry and social constructivism. The analysis emphasized the meaning making of participants and themes that provide a larger level framework for understanding the connections and more abstract meaning of collective data. In this case, adolescent girls met in a series of focus groups over several weeks to discuss the meaning of their pictures within the health and wellness focus of the Photovoice project. In total, each participant took part in four different group conversations about the pictures they took and the meaning that they ascribed to them.

Focus group audio files were transcribed, and initial transcripts were reviewed and coded by each member of the research team in order to develop trustworthiness in the coding process. Research team members met regularly to discuss emergent themes in order to develop a coding framework. This beginning level coding revealed a broad conceptual framework consisting of the following themes: community health and safety, relationships, food, body image, socioeconomic status, moral development, and physical activity. In this analysis, items were allowed to be cross coded across thematic categories. Photographs were reviewed based on the coding framework that emerged from focus groups with participants and displayed in a thematic presentation photo exhibit at a community event where youth presented to local leaders, school officials, decision makers, parents, and community members.

Trustworthiness and Rigor

Trustworthiness refers to the transparency, consistency, and accuracy of the data analysis process (Rodwell, 1998). In this study, trustworthiness was promoted through the utilization of multiple coders of focus group transcripts and pictures, along with a consensus-based team process for determining final categorization of photos and final themes. Additionally, the researchers attempted to verify and engage in member checking during focus groups to ensure that they accurately understood participant voices related to photos they took

and the meaning the ascribed to them. Minor participants and their parents had an opportunity review and approve the photos selected for the final community exhibit.

Results

Data analysis revealed overarching themes, categories, and subcategories. The themes reveal the girls' personal reflections on their own health as well as the health of their community. Relationships between individual and community health were also identified.

Socioeconomic Status

The theme of socioeconomic status (SES) encompasses the girls' thoughts around money and their basic needs. Many of the girls were from lower-income families and had a heightened awareness of money. They knew when the family was paid each month and altered their eating habits and lifestyle based upon the proximity to payday.

We found that SES had an impact on the food choices families made and the family's culture or beliefs about food. Some of the girls had experienced extreme repercussions of poverty such as homelessness and food insecurity. The girls were also surprisingly aware of the cost/nutrient value of food. The girls had noticed that there were times when their families chose unhealthy food because it was cheaper than healthy food.

> ". . . the healthy food costs more money. Fast food like McDonald's, a greasy, greasy burger costs a buck."

Additionally, SES also played a role in their recreational choices. The girls shared the challenge of finding activities that were inexpensive and they voiced concern over transportation difficulties.

> "Gas prices are going up these days."

> "…all of the city pools you have to pay for it."

Moral Development

The theme of Moral Development emerged from the girls' discussions about their sense of empathy for others and their beginning ideas of justice. Like many adolescents, GirlPower participants were developing their own value set with input from their families, peers, school, community, and media. They often struggled to develop or hold on to a strong sense of personal confidence in the face of peer and other pressures.

> "Well, if you're secure about yourself then you don't really have to worry about what everybody else thinks, but it's kind of hard to get secure about yourself when everybody else is trying to bring you down."

The girls were also observed developing empathy for others and developing a sense of justice regarding the treatment of others and animals. They were observed to be particularly aware of the incongruity between a person's stated beliefs and his or her behaviors.

> "my uncle owns a church and he, there was one (homeless man) who came up to our car and asked him for money for food and he had a kid with him, and my uncle threatened to run him over and told him to get off his lazy, yeah, and get a job."

Personal Health

The theme of personal health included discussions around personal hygiene, dental hygiene personal health problems, and decisions related to personal health. They discussed the high cost of some personal hygiene products and the challenges of personal or parental health problems. One girl described her commitment to dental hygiene as a result of viewing her teeth as one of her best physical features.

> "... I think soda's really bad for your teeth, and that's why I don't drink it, because like, my teeth are like my most treasured possession thingy. I like, I don't mess around with my teeth. I can't go a day without brushing my teeth."

Additionally, the girls identified that health conditions can impact self-image.

> "I have this thing called hyperhidrosis. . . it means I sweat. My hands are always sweaty, but when I have to wear long sleeve shirts and stuff, like pit stains and stuff, people judge on that."

Physical activity. Physical activity surfaced as a sub-theme under Personal Health when the girls talked about how they spend their time. As young adolescents, they still portrayed a similar attitude toward physical activity as children who naturally integrate movement into their day as described below:

> "We're really close, and um, we usually walk around our neighborhood to hang out with friends, there's like a mile between our neighborhood and the school, and we live a mile and a half away."

> "I've been swimming every day since we got out (summer break)"

Body Image

The theme of body image emerged out of the girls' discussions about their perceptions of others' views on their weight, hairstyles, clothes, and skin color. Many girls made decisions based on how it would impact their physical appearance.

> "Sometimes I wonder if like everybody looked the same and the only difference would be how our personality was, how many people would be more secure about themselves, and be able to show who they really are to people."

The girls also shared the strong influence of peers on body image and behavior. One girl tried a starvation diet and intense exercise after a boy called her fat.

> "I used to be fat, like last year I was like . . . I need to do something about this. After one boy called me fat, then like I was like you know what I have to do something about this. I stopped eating for a week, and then I realized it wasn't working very well. So I started doing like a billion exercises and I almost died, but yeah, and I ate good food so it worked a lot better than trying to starve yourself."

In addition to physical attributes such as, weight and perceived body size, girls also discussed the importance of clothing, hairstyles, and skin color.

> "People judge on how you dress and stuff."

> "I wish I were lighter. Like, not light-light, but I want to be like my mom, light."

In addition to the challenges girls' discussed related to social pressures to look a certain way, girls involved in this project also expressed a sense of developing their own self-image that was not based on their peers or the media, and demonstrated resiliency despite peer pressure and socialized gender norms related to body image and appearance.

> "I don't like it when a person judges me because like, they don't even know me or anything. If they don't like me, well it's their fault, because they're missing out on something, and, well, I'm confident in myself and I don't care what anybody says. Cause I feel good about myself."

ISSN 2159-8142

Food

The overarching theme of food includes all discussion related to eating, snacks, meals, and grocery shopping. The family's SES and the family's beliefs and practices around food impact the theme of food. As noted under the SES theme, the girls from low-income families had a heightened awareness of the cost of food and altered their eating habits based on proximity to payday. Notably, the girls were aware of hypocrisy and the mixed messages they receive from authority figures regarding food.

> "Especially like, during volleyball and basketball games, and like in the rec gym. They (teachers) always talk about changing . . . our diets into healthy stuff, but they're (teachers) the ones that sell soda for a dollar…"

> "The water is more expensive than the soda (at school)."

We also observed the importance that food played in the cultural identity of the girls and their families.

> "I eat Mexican food. . .because I'm Mexican."

> "My stepdad is from Africa, so he taught mom how to cook this thing it has . . .onions and then . . . like rice and chicken."

> ". . . since it's summer we started a garden in spring, our annual garden, we usually eat some vegetable from there."

Family food culture. This subtheme represents the relationship that families have with food and its connection to their culture and identity as a family unit. The girls described the importance of food in celebrations of holidays and birthdays or ethnic heritage. The family unit influences eating habits and food choices in a number of ways. Many of the families were creating a norm of eating at fast food restaurants because it was inexpensive. These findings relate to the quotes shared below:

> "My mom does allow fast food, but she just wants me to eat it like not more than twice a month, so basically she doesn't want me to eat fast food."

> "Well, the place we go most often is Taco Bueno, because we can eat, a family of four we can all eat there and get full for under ten dollars, and it's good food."

An additional finding of this study was that the girls in our study did not regularly eat together with their families. Interestingly, even families that may home cook food were not sitting down to eat together. Many of the girls reported eating while watching television or family members eating in their own rooms separate from each other.

> "We (family members) eat at different times."

> "Since my mom started dating her boyfriend, we've been eating out way too much. My mom's only cooked once in the last, like, three months. And if we ever eat at home, I cook, and don't like cooking for long periods of time; I think whatever is fastest, like ramen with butter."

In some families the responsibility for food preparation was shared equally by the members and in other families only one parent was identified as the cook.

> "Yeah, I cook, everybody cooks in the house; even my brother cooks."

> "... and it's like my dad always makes, has some sort of meat product and always has some sort of vegetable, and um some other side, so it's always meat, vegetable, something else."

Relationships

Youth today navigate multiple relationships including family, peers, romantic relationships, school personnel, and the community. The girls in our sample represented a variety of familial structures. Peer relationships were both supportive and damaging. They had varying levels of interest in forming romantic relationships and had an emerging awareness of the opposite sex.

Family. Family broadly encompasses those persons who are both biologically and legally related to the girls or people living in their home who share a close, personal connection with them. Only one girl involved in the project lived with both her biological mother and father and many lived in non-traditional families due to various challenges. The health or illness of one member of the family had a profound impact on the family. For example, one girl shared that she had taken on a more parental role in her family as a result of her mother's health condition.

> "... but my mom has spina bifida and she... can't bend over, and when my brother moved out, I got all the chores, and it's just me, my mom, and my little sister living in the house, and I'm the only one who cleans... I'm not really capable of cleaning all of that by myself ... so our house hasn't been cleaned since we moved in three years ago. Because it's all my job and nobody else can clean."

Another girl shared how her mother's illness was bringing a great deal of stress to the family. The family was working hard to clean the house because they were afraid of a second visit from the child welfare office.

> "A lot of stuff keeps happening ...My mom and I keep fighting and something big happened ...we were home at like 9 in the morning and somebody knocked on the door... She was like 'I'm Kimberly from Child welfare' and somebody called and reported my mom for leaving us unattended, which is bull, she never leaves us home alone ... and I'm almost 14, so it's not illegal, but no, they have to come and do a home visit and our house isn't clean, so we have to spend all week cleaning, and my mom has been really stressed about it."

Peers/Friends. This subtheme encompassed the girls' relationships with their fellow classmates and friends. The girls described relationships that provided them with support and discussed the challenges of navigating relationships with peers.

> "I take my friends very seriously because like, my friends, especially best friends are the funniest people they make me laugh every single day. My best friends are like the best comebackers cause if someone makes fun of me they will come up with something."

> "I like to talk in groups, when you like you're so caught up on your insecurities, if someone in the room intimidates you, or makes you feel so insecure that you can barely talk in a group, even though you have something you want to say, that just isn't...I don't know... It's just that you don't want to mess up in front of them or say something stupid."

Community Health and Safety

Community Health and Safety is the broadest theme and refers to the resources both accessible and inaccessible within the community as well as the overall sense of well-being within the community. The subthemes of crime and delinquency, animal cruelty, substance abuse and clean and healthy spaces emerged from our conversations with the girls and the connection of these traits to the overall health and well-being of a community.

Crime and delinquency. Crime and delinquency refer to the presence of criminal activity both within their neighborhoods and their schools. The girls shared their experiences with crime in their communities.

> "... I'd rather be out doing something like graffiti"

> " ... over there they have lots of fights ... and they're all videotaped. "

Animal cruelty. Animal cruelty emerged as an important issue for the girls. This discussion provided further evidence of their moral development and their emerging sense of justice. In addition to moral development, this discussion also provides insight into the safety of their communities.

> "But some people don't treat animals right. They grab them bad they like just. . ."

> "People hit their cats and their dogs, they slap them and they throw things at them, and stab them, and cut them."

Substance abuse. Substance abuse is a subtheme that reflects the girls' experiences with both family and friends using drugs and alcohol. The girls described experiences of being pressured to use drugs and of substance abuse by peers.

> "...it was vodka, and it was just out on the counter open when her parents left, and we were home, alone for like, 9 hours, till like, 4 o clock in the morning and they were out at the bar."

> "…I've told them (peers) I've never had marijuana before and they're shocked."

> "... I know that I'm never going to fall into that peer pressure thingy into drugs because I have read books like Crank and all that, and it really messes up your life."

Healthy spaces/cleanliness. Healthy spaces encompass city parks and neighborhood pools. The girls reported that they enjoyed visiting a few of the neighborhood parks, but also expressed concern that their friends and classmates would ruin a public park if they went to it very often. They expressed concern regarding the cleanliness and appearance of their school grounds and neighborhood parks.

> " 'cause like, people leave dog poop everywhere, when they take their dogs for walks, like, and when they smoke, they just throw the cigarettes on the ground and they throw their beer bottles on the ground, with all those little kids out there, and like step on glass and stuff."

Limitations

Although the Girlpower Photovoice project was widely considered a success by participants, the research team, and community members, there were several limitations that need to be pointed out. One limitation of this study was the ages of participants and that even a 1-2-year age different among adolescents can be significant in terms of their developmental abilities around abstract thinking, moral development, and social responsibility. Another limitation in this study is that the girls themselves did not write narratives for the pictures displayed in the community forum. In most Photovoice projects, participants ascribe titles and descriptions to their work before it is displayed for advocacy purposes. However, given the different literacy levels of the girls, the team decided that it was better to have participants discuss photos during regular focus groups sessions and orally discuss photos with community leaders at the advocacy session. Finally, this study was undertaken in one specific context with a small sample of the girls and may not have transferability beyond the study's context and location.

Implications and Discussion

The Girlpower Photovoice project illuminated several key areas of youth life and the perceptions of teen girls regarding their health and the health of their communities. The findings spanned the continuum of illustrating resources and strengths as well as deficits and challenges present in the lives of the girls, and it represents a modest contribution to the literatures related to health promotion, health and families, and the risks and resiliency traits of adolescent girls. The implications of this project are timely given the current socio-cultural emphasis on youth health and well-being at the state and national levels.

Family Influence on Adolescent Health

Within this context we found that families have a strong influence on the health knowledge and behaviors of a girls. In particular, our findings support the influence families have upon adolescents' food choices. The girls participating in our project frequently mentioned family eating behavior and norms when discussing health in terms of food selection, their own eating habits, and body image. Significantly, research indicates that family connectedness, parental support, shared family meals, and a positive environment at mealtime were linked with higher levels of body satisfaction (Fulkerson et al, 2009). Family connectedness can actually work as a protective factor against poor body image. (Resnick, Harris, & Blum, 1993). Additional research findings support an association between positive psychosocial outcomes among adolescents and family meals. The frequency of meals consumed as a family has specifically been correlated with lowered rates of depression and stress, increases in positive coping skills and family cohesion (Fulkerson, Kubik, Story, Lytle, & Arcan, 2009)

Research findings also indicated that families had a unique influence over substance abuse beliefs and behaviors among participants. The parents' behaviors around substance use differed from the verbal messages they had provided their daughters. While the girls did not report using alcohol or substances at this point in their lives, with continued lack of supervision, access, modeling by parents and pressure from peers it seems unlikely that they will continue to avoid alcohol and substance abuse. As a result, public health interventions need to create more inclusive messages that target children and families.

Socialized Gender Norms and Adolescent Girls' Health and Wellbeing

The larger socio-cultural contexts within which the girls exist also emerged as a significant finding with implications. An especially important area to consider is the perceived relationship between beauty and health. The media and popular culture have made healthy, fit, and skinny synonymous. We found that the girls had an emerging understanding of health and healthy behaviors; however, that understanding was influenced primarily by their perception of beauty. The girls based their health behaviors on its potential impact on their looks. Research has found that adolescents' body image has a negative impact on their engagement in healthy behaviors. For example, adolescents with low body image were more likely to engage in unhealthy dieting practices, binge eating, and lower levels of fruit and vegetable intake and physical activity (Neumark-Sztainer, Paxton, Hannan, Haines, and Story, 2006). Leveraging familial influence on body image may thus improve girls' health behaviors.

Impact and Outcomes on Participants

Several of the participants reported a newfound interest in photography and desire to become involved in the promotion of health within their community. The use of Photovoice within the project provided the participants with a voice and a new way to share their story. One participant elaborated on her experience when she stated, "we would talk about pictures together, but we were allowed to be ourselves because each picture meant something different to everyone." Additionally, another participant shared, "I learned that every person contributes to the community for better or for worse . . ., everything and everybody matters in a community."

Final Thoughts

Teen girls are especially affected by sociocultural gendered messages, often reinforced through traditional and social media, peer groups, and even institutions. As a society, especially in public health circles, we may be inadvertently encouraging young women to engage in dangerous behaviors, through the messaging of our interventions, which often focus on outcome-based measures such as, BMI, weight, and physical activity levels, rather than on socioemotional wellbeing, positive body image, and self-esteem.

In conclusion, we would like to encourage social workers and counselors within schools, youth serving-organizations, and public health centers to engage families in their health-related interventions. Despite current research trends that have often found that children and youth are more strongly influenced by their peers than their parents (Harris, 2009), our findings illustrate the strong influence that parents and families have on their children's health. Perhaps integrating family interventions to improve health into youth award ceremonies, graduations, and fun events like block parties will have a stronger impact than television commercials and billboards.

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