Evaluating Parents in the Know: An innovative parent-focused child sexual abuse prevention program

Leslie Reynolds1, MPH(c); Philip Massey1, PhD, MPH; Suruchi Sood1, PhD; Maria Pajil Battle2; Julie Evans3, MSW; Delilah Rumburg4; Alexa Livelsberger4, LSW

1Drexel School of Public Health, Department of Community Health & Prevention; 2AmeriHealth Caritas, Philadelphia, PA; 3Pittsburgh Action Against Rape, Pittsburgh, PA; 4Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, Enola, PA

Background
The prevention of child sexual abuse is of paramount importance as research suggests that 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 20 boys is a victim of child sexual abuse.1 Current prevention efforts focus on:
- Teaching children intolerance to sexual abuse;
- Teaching teens about dating violence;
- Teaching children to identify dangerous situations;
- Teaching adults bystander intervention strategies.

Despite these efforts, there is limited research and available literature on the prevention of child sexual abuse through parent and caregiver intervention.

The Parents in the Know (PIK) educational training program works with parents and caregivers to equip them with the skills and tools to recognize inappropriate behavior or “warning signs”, as well as build confidence to be an active bystander.

Purpose: To evaluate a child sexual abuse prevention program administered to parents and caregivers.

Research Question
Did participants of “Parents in the Know” demonstrate significant changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of prevention of child sexual abuse?

Program Goals
1) Promote safe & respectful behaviors between parent & child;
2) Recognize questionable behaviors in adults;
3) Intervene in warning behaviors;
4) Promote discussion of healthy relationships between parents & children, and;
5) Successfully implement Parents in the Know.

Parents in the Know
PIK was held at 7 sites in the Philadelphia and greater Philadelphia region from September 2014 to November 2014.

The program consists of 8 hours of structured training and was facilitated by 2 trained individuals from partnering stakeholders.

Sessions included:
- Ice breakers
- Lectures
- Role-play
- Behavioral skills practice
- Videos
- Group discussions & brainstorming
- Take home mini-ops
- Self-discovery

Sessions are broken down by topic as follows: Boundaries; Bystander; Bystander and Healthy Relationships; and Healthy Sexuality.

Evaluation Methods
The evaluation of the PIK program included both process and summative evaluation methods.

Data were collected from participants through self-administered questionnaires completed at pre (n=58), post (n=52), and one-month follow-up (n=33) and program sign in sheets.

Participant Characteristics
The typical program participant (n=70) was a women (87%), Hispanic/Latino (54%), graduated from high school (43%), and had an average age of 37.

Participant Race/Ethnicity
- White
- Black/African-American
- Hispanic/Latino
- Bi-Racial
- Other

Participant Gender Per Data Collection Point
- Female
  - Pre (n=58): 88%
  - Post (n=52): 85%
  - Month (n=33): 94%
  - Overall (n=70): 87%
- Male
  - Pre (n=58): 12%
  - Post (n=52): 15%
  - Month (n=33): 6%
  - Overall (n=70): 13%

Participant Level of Education
- Did not graduate HS
- Graduated from HS
- GED
- Went to college, but did not graduate
- Graduated from college/university
- Beyond 4-year college/university

Preliminary Results
Three items from the Child Sexual Abuse Myth Scale were used to assess parent knowledge of potential offending behaviors in adults.

Conclusions & Future Directions
Findings demonstrate positive changes from baseline to follow-up and support the need for parent-focused child sexual abuse prevention programs.

Future directions include comparing results between Hispanic and non-Hispanic participants and comparing results between participants who attended 2 sessions and participants who attended 4 sessions to better understand the most effective format.

References

Results Continued
Parents who were confident in their ability to identify community resources on a 5-point Likert scale increased from 68% at baseline to 85% at follow up. In the word cloud below, the larger the word, the more it was identified by participants.

Resource Identification Word Cloud at Month-Test

The greatest change between pre and post training sessions was seen in parents’ ability to identify strategies to intervene in possibly abusive or harmful situations.

Session 1:
- 23%
- Prevention
- Education

Session 2:
- 42%
- Prevention
- Education

Session 3:
- 36%
- Preventative measures
- Safety planning