

Research Projects 2004-2005: Poster Campaign Evaluation

I. Research Questions

Objective of Evaluation #1:

To determine whether a poster campaign / social-cognitive intervention can improve self-efficacy and perceived control over not committing sexual violence amongst adolescents' ages 11-13 in the afterschool and beacon programs in which poster is placed.

Objective of Study #2

To determine whether a poster campaign/ social-cognitive intervention affects the social norms around sexual violence as understood by adolescents' ages 11-13 in the afterschool and beacon programs in which the Alliance poster campaign is placed.

- the respondent's norm
- the respondent's perception of their friends' norms

II. Summary of Literature Review

Research literature on the target group (boys ages 11-13) tells us that in addition to dealing with puberty and their emerging sexuality, boys this age are beginning to develop a sense of themselves both as individuals and as moral beings. The influence of the peer group and role models such as sports heroes begins to have a greater influence over their attitudes and behaviors than the family does. One interesting point here was that in much of this research (including the focus groups), boys acknowledged the influence of role models in terms of material goods, but preferred to hear from other kids like themselves concerning more personal matters.

It is also during this period that heterosexual boys begin to explore relationships with the opposite sex. The research suggests that these early relationships, and the level of aggression they may or may not contain, can be strongly influenced by how these boys understand and experience 'Masculinity'.

In 2002, the Alliance worked with a consulting firm, Applied Research and Consulting to conduct a literature review examining the concept of 'masculinity' and young boys and relationship and peer pressure and to conduct focus groups with boys ages 11-15 across New York State.

III. Research Fit with Alliance Mission and Goals

The mission of the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault is to provide leadership in creating a society in which rape and sexual assault are not tolerated. One way to accomplish this goal is to focus on prevention of sexual assault and changing the norms of a society that accept sexual assault.

The poster campaign is the Alliance's first foray into the prevention field. Designed as a precursor to a larger project, this poster campaign will give us an idea about designing messaging for young boys around sexual assault and the willingness of afterschool and beacon programs to address this issue.

IV. Preliminary Qualitative Research

a) Message Development

Initial focus groups were held with boys ages 11-15—two groups in New York City and two groups in Albany. Early in the project it had been decided that the overall goal was to develop a campaign with positive messages about relationships with and attitudes towards girls and women. To this end, the focus groups were designed to explore the following three areas:

- 1) Relationships—including acceptable and unacceptable models of behavior, with special attention to aggression towards others and popular strategies or models for conflict resolution.
- 2) Self-identity issues—including how boys perceive themselves and what do they consider the most desirable images of 'manhood' or 'adulthood'.
- 3) Media and information issues—in particular, who teenage boys identify as authorities or experts and where they look for guidance and information about acceptable and unacceptable behavior with girls and women.

A brief summary of the findings:

- ❖ Adolescent boys do not think of their future in certain terms, they see it in a very distanced, abstract way. Therefore, the message(s) should not address the consequences of the boys' actions, as they would relate to months or years from now
- ❖ Issues of fairness are pre-eminent in boys' lives. However, fairness is not necessarily the same as what is right and wrong.
- ❖ Gender anxiety is a constant in boys' lives and this anxiety may conflict with their capacity for moral reasoning. Messages should not evoke gender anxiety.

The consulting group also conducted an extensive review of existing media campaigns.

Based on these findings, the Alliance worked with Yoe! Studios in developing the 'Pause Button' poster and several other posters.

b) Message Testing

Focus groups, conducted by the Michael Cohen Group (consulting agency) were held with 86 boys in grades 7-9 in two locations: Dover Plains—a rural village in upstate New York, and New York City around the messaging of the posters developed. In addition in the Dover Plains

Location, 77 girls participated in small group interviews. Focus group participants were asked about 1) Decision-making; 2) Public Service Announcements, 3) Alliance Public Service Announcements. Key results from the focus groups are presented below:

- ❖ Boys were most drawn to messages in which the visual images read as clearly being directed to them.
- ❖ Boys enjoyed the concepts that used wordplay and metaphor much more than the one that used a very directed message. They expressed an interest in trying to decode or figure out the meaning behind messages and advertising in general.
- ❖ They also enjoyed the idea of using a familiar product/image to new ends
- ❖ Boys were really tired of messages aimed at telling them what they cannot or are not allowed to do, especially those that did so directly. They appreciated the opportunity to be engaged by messages regarding their behavior that focused on getting them to think about how they should or could behave in a given situation.
 - They also really liked messages that offered them a choice in terms of their behavior. The ‘pause button’ message was particularly compelling in this respect, as it let them draw their own conclusions about the possibility of consensual sexual activity and led them down the path to making decisions regarding the propriety of their own behavior in such a situation.
- ❖ It is important to note that the boys generally opposed or feared messages that felt as though they were promoting sex for kids their age.
 - These boys have received a great deal of abstinence only information, and thus hold a great fear of the consequences of sex and sexual activity. A more nuanced understanding of sexual behavior felt like it would be welcomed by, and of use to, them.

Focus groups indicated that the ‘Pause Button’ poster resonated most with boys in this age category. The message is simple and effective: “Know when to use your pause button: sexual assault is not a game.” Focus testing found that boys felt clearly that this message was intended for them, and that if they came across an ad like this, no matter the location, they would stop and check it out. All boys immediately and readily understood the message: as a 9th grade boy participating in a focus group said: *“It’s not a game. You get points in playing games, but you don’t get points for rape.”*

V) The Poster Campaign

a) Methodology

Working with the Michael Cohen Group, the Alliance will recruit 25 afterschool and beacon programs in New York City to pilot the pause button poster and toolkit. The Michael Cohen Group will conduct the quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the Alliance’s poster. In addition to the recruitment of sites, the Alliance will also develop a toolkit to accompany the poster, which will outline resources, answers to common questions and programming ideas around the poster.

b) recruitment of sites

A universe of possible afterschool and beacon programs was developed based on the following criteria:

- 1) Have youth leadership and peer education programs as listed by the Department of Youth and Community Development
- 2) Have counseling and group work programs as listed by the Department of Youth and Community Development
- 3) Have health education programs as listed by the Department of Youth and Community Development
- 4) Serve both boys and girls ages 11-13
- 5) Are located in New York City

Proportionate stratified sampling was conducted by borough based on the percentages of 11-13 year olds live in each borough (2000 census data). Based on this, it was calculated that of the 25 recruitment sites:

- ❖ 3 of the sites should be in Manhattan
- ❖ 1 in Staten Island
- ❖ 5 in the Bronx
- ❖ 7 in Queens
- ❖ 9 in Brooklyn

Simple random sampling was done by strata and the organizations were contacted about participating in the poster campaign. To date, 22 afterschool and beacon programs that were identified have agreed to participate and include representatives from:

- ❖ Bronx
 - SCAN-NY (Support Children's Advocacy Network) in Melrose/Concourse
 - East Side House Settlement—Patterson Community Center in Mott Haven
 - Aspira, MS 222 Beacon in Bedford Park
 - Adolescent and Family Comprehensive Services, Inc Positive Peer Connection Program in Fordham
- ❖ Brooklyn
 - Ralph-Lincoln Service Center (Crown Heights)
 - Chinese American Planning Council, IS 220 Beacon in Borough Park
 - YMCA Greenpoint Family in Greenpoint
 - Educators for Social Responsibility PS 24 PAZ program in Bush Terminal
 - Good Shepherd Services PS 15 Beacon in Red Hook
 - YMCA North Brooklyn-Eastern District in Williamsburg
 - Research Foundation, CUNY Medgar Evars MS 2 Beacon in Parkside
 - Project Reach Youth, JHS 265 Beacon in Navy Yard
 - CAMBA, IS 271 Beacon in Ocean Hill
- ❖ Manhattan
 - Police Athletic League, Harlem Center in East Harlem
 - Boys and Girls Harbor in East Harlem
 - Ice Hockey in Harlem
- ❖ Queens
 - Aspects, JHS 226 Beacon in Ozone Park

- Forest Hills Community House, JHS 217 21st Century Community of Learners in Jamaica
- Sam Field YM & YMHA in Bayside
- Police Athletic League, PS 118 in Hollis
- Hellenic American Neighborhood Action Committee (HANAC) in Astoria
- ❖ Staten Island
 - United Activities Unlimited, PS 18 Beacon in Livingston

c) Focus Groups

Two focus groups will be held with youth service providers on November 10th to guide the Alliance in the preparation of a toolkit to accompany a poster and a website (www.pausebutton.org) that will be set up with basic information for youth to access regarding the poster and its messaging.

e) Data Analysis

The research and data analysis portion of this project will be conducted by the Michael Cohen Group. It was determined that have an outside consulting firm evaluate the poster campaign would be more appropriate then doing the evaluation in-house.

f) Dissemination of Findings

- ❖ Findings will be disseminated in report form to all participating afterschool and beacon programs
- ❖ Research findings will be compiled in a report and widely distributed
- ❖ This report will be posted on the Alliance's website
- ❖ Publish results in a peer-reviewed journal

g) Alliance Use of Research Findings

- ❖ Research findings will help guide the Alliance in future prevention projects
- ❖ The Alliance would like to work with schools in the future and working with afterschool and beacon programs is a good first step
- ❖ Research findings will help the Alliance as we move to do similar campaigns with the other posters we developed.

Image of poster below

