

TEEN ESTEEM: PATHWAYS TO POWER

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TEEN - SELF-ESTEEM - EMPOWERMENT

Purpose: The purpose of this pilot study was to describe the effects of a community-based intervention, "Teen Esteem: Pathways to Power" (TE:PTP) on self-esteem and locus of control in a sample of 15 African-American adolescents, living in a high-risk environment.

Method: A convenience sample was obtained from a pre-existing group of adolescents participating in a summer camp program sponsored by their public housing authority neighborhood. A pre-test/post-test research design was utilized. Subjects were recruited for an 8 week program. All participants completed questionnaires prior to the onset of the 8 week program and again, after the completion of the intervention. Informed consents were obtained from the parent (s) of each child and written assents were obtained from each participant.

The dependent variables of self-esteem and locus of control were measured by: the Rosenberg (1965) Self-Esteem Scale specific for this age group (SES) and the Nowicki-Strickland (1973) Internal-External Control Scale for Children (CNSIE). Both instruments have been used extensively and judged to be reliable and valid. A demographic questionnaire was also administered during the pre-intervention phase. The intervention consisted of a teen-guided program, facilitated by graduate nurse practitioner students that took place one day per week over an 8 week span of time. The intervention program consisted of a variety of topics for presentation including: role modeling through presentations by successful, culturally-similar adults, social skills and conflict resolution training, career planning and implementation strategies for careers, health promotion activities and celebration of the spirit.

Findings: Adolescents ranging in age from 11-18 participated in this intervention. The average age was 13 years. All of the participants were African American. Over half of the group were male (62%). Attendance at intervention sessions ranged from 66% to 100%. The mean attendance rate for this intervention was 80%. Seventy-three percent of participants demonstrated a positive change in locus of control at the completion of the program. The SES indicated a positive change in self-esteem for 50% of the participants.

Discussion: Post intervention discussions with the teens revealed a move toward internal locus of control with regards to health promotion and career planning. All participants expressed a strong interest in pursuing further education upon graduation from high school. The findings of this pilot study are limited due to size and a lack of diversity among the participants but it provides valuable information about African-American adolescents and directs future research to investigate the effect of the intervention across ethnically diverse groups. The possibility of exploring other outcome measures such as adolescent health and lifestyle choices will be discussed.