

# FOCUS ON YOUTH (FOY)

## Good Evidence – Risk Reduction

### INTERVENTION DESCRIPTION

#### Target Population

- Low-income, urban African American youth

#### Goals of Intervention

- Increase abstinence
- Increase condom use

#### Brief Description

*Focus on Youth (FOY)* is an 8-session intervention delivered to small naturally formed peer friendship groups (3-10 youths) via discussions, games, and multimedia formats. The intervention consists primarily of seven 90-minute sessions focused on decision-making, which include discussions concerning extrinsic (social approval) rewards with exercises related to communication and negotiating skills and information regarding the high prevalence of peer condom use. Other discussions focus on intrinsic (personal pleasure) rewards and emphasize values clarification and goal setting. Facts regarding AIDS, STDs, contraception, and human development are presented and condoms are provided. In the seventh session, youths develop community projects with specific target audiences and intervention messages. The primary intervention series concludes with the eighth session, which is an all-day field trip in which projects are presented and a “graduation” ceremony is conducted. The intervention is followed by monthly and annual booster sessions in which youth are given specific challenges to work through to reinforce the skills (e.g., decision making, communication, and condom use) they acquire in the primary sessions.

#### Theoretical Basis

- Protection Motivation Theory

#### Intervention Duration

- Eight weekly meetings: seven 90-minute sessions and one day-long session
- Monthly and annual 90-minute booster sessions

#### Intervention Setting

- Recreation center meeting room; a rural campsite

#### Deliverer

- Two trained adult interventionists, typically African American community members, at least one of whom is gender matched to the group

### Delivery Methods

- Arts and crafts
- Exercises
- Games
- Group discussion
- Lecture
- Risk reduction supplies (condoms)
- Role play
- Social event
- Storytelling
- Video

### INTERVENTION PACKAGE INFORMATION

Information, tools, and materials on the **Focus on Youth (FOY)** intervention are available online at <https://effectiveinterventions.cdc.gov/>. In August 2013, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention (DHAP) **announced** that in accordance with its High Impact Prevention approach, DHAP will focus its behavioral intervention portfolio on interventions that are cost-effective, scalable and prioritize prevention for persons living with HIV and those persons at highest risk for acquiring HIV. **Focus on Youth (FOY) will no longer be funded by DHAP** for diffusion, adoption, and implementation, but the online resources continue to be available.

**The Focus on Youth (FOY)** intervention package and training are available through **ETR Associates** under the name [Focus on Youth](#).

**The intervention package for FOY + IMPACT** is available through **ETR Associates** under the name [Focus on Youth + IMPACT](#).

### EVALUATION STUDY AND RESULTS

The original evaluation was conducted in Baltimore, Maryland between 1993 and 1996.

#### Key Intervention Effect

- Reduced unprotected sex

#### Study Sample

The baseline study sample of 383 African American youths is characterized by the following:

- 100% black or African American
- 56% male, 44% female
- Mean age of 11 years, range: 9-15 years

#### Recruitment Settings

Recreation centers associated with public housing developments

#### Eligibility Criteria

Youth were eligible if they were part of a naturally formed friendship group consisting of 3-10 friends of the same gender who varied no more than 3 years in age, with no friend being younger than 9 years or older than 15 years of age at the beginning of the study.

### Assignment Method

Naturally formed groups of friends (N = 76 groups) were randomly assigned to 1 of 2 arms: Focus on Kids (n = 38 groups; 206 youths) or comparison (n = 38 groups; 177 youths).

### Comparison Group

The comparison group received a group-level HIV/STD prevention program consisting of 8 weekly sessions delivered at six community sites. At each session, a factual movie about AIDS, AIDS risk behaviors, AIDS prevention, contraception, or other risk and protective behaviors was shown and followed by a discussion with a facilitator. Condoms were also provided. There was no focus on decision-making or cultural integration. Individuals could attend any session with or without their friends, and no attempt was made to deliver the comparison program through the natural friendship groups.

### Relevant Outcomes Measured and Follow-up Time

- Sex behaviors in the past 6 months (including having sex, condom use at last sex, and unprotected sex) were measured at 6-, 12-, 18-, 24-, and 36-month follow-ups.

### Participant Retention

- FOY Intervention
  - 82% retained at 6 months
  - 79% retained at 12 months
  - 73% retained at 18 months
  - 69% retained at 24 months
  - 45% retained at 36 months
- Comparison
  - 75% retained at 6 months
  - 64% retained at 12 months
  - 63% retained at 18 months
  - 58% retained at 24 months
  - 48% retained at 36 months

### Significant Findings

- Sexually active FOY intervention participants were significantly less likely to report unprotected sex compared to those in the comparison at the 18-month follow-up ( $p < .05$ ).

### Considerations

- This intervention fails to meet the best-evidence criteria due to low retention rates and small analytical sample sizes.
- While the intervention meets good-evidence criteria based on the 18-month findings, findings at the 24- and 36-month follow-ups do not meet the criteria because of low retention rates and small sample sizes.
- Significant intervention effects for unprotected sex were not found at the shorter follow-ups or maintained at the 24- and 36-month follow-ups, probably due to the small sample sizes at those follow-ups.
- Intervention effects were not found to be significant for the other relevant outcomes at any follow-up, probably due to small sample sizes.
- Very few participants attended the booster sessions, which led the researchers to the conclusion that boosters did not affect findings and to the decision not to include booster sessions in the current intervention package.

- Agencies interested in *FOY*, may also be interested in *FOY+ImPACT*. The *FOY+ImPACT* intervention, which includes the 8 *FOY* sessions plus the single parent-child session from *ImPACT* focusing on parental communication, has been identified as a best-evidence intervention. Please see [FOY+ImPACT fact sheet](#) for further information.
- Tingey et al., 2015 evaluated an adaptation of *Focus on Youth* for American Indian adolescents called *Respecting the Circle of Life: Mind Body and Spirit (RCL)* against an educational lesson only comparison in a randomized controlled trial (N = 267). *RCL* consists of eight 90-minute group sessions, delivered over the course of an eight day community-based summer basketball camp. The intervention is designed to increase condom use efficacy and improve HIV risk reduction knowledge, efficacy, attitudes, and behavioral intent among American Indian adolescents.
  - This adaptation study did not meet the PRS best- or good-evidence criteria because there were no significant risk reduction relevant outcomes at any of the three follow up assessment time points. See [PRS Good Evidence Risk Reduction Efficacy Criteria](#) under the ‘Strength of Evidence’ section for a list of outcomes relevant to the review.
  - Significant intervention effects were observed on the following non-relevant outcomes:
    - Condom use self-efficacy
    - HIV transmission knowledge
    - Partner negotiation self-efficacy
    - Condom use intentions
    - Speaking with a family member or adult about HIV/AIDS
    - Condom efficacy beliefs
    - Three theoretical constructs in protection motivation theory:
      - Self-efficacy
      - Response cost
      - Response efficacy

## REFERENCES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

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