

CHOOSING LIFE: EMPOWERMENT, ACTIONS, RESULTS (CLEAR)

Best Evidence – Risk Reduction

INTERVENTION DESCRIPTION

Intended Population

- Young HIV-positive substance abusers

Goals of Intervention

- Reduce sexual and substance use risk behaviors
- Improve mental and physical health

Brief Description

Choosing Life: Empowerment, Actions, Results (CLEAR) is a 3-module intervention that is delivered in one-on-one sessions to young people living with HIV. Each of the 3 modules is comprised of 6 sessions that focus on different target behaviors. Module 1 focuses on improving youths' physical health, including the use of and adherence to antiretroviral medication, implementing new daily routines to stay healthy, and coping with their serostatus. Module 2 aims to reduce unprotected sex acts and substance use through the identification of situations that elicit risky behavior. In this module, participants build skills in condom use self-efficacy and negotiation of safer sex. Module 3 aims to reduce emotional distress and to increase quality of life of participants. Each participant is taught relaxation, self-instruction and meditation techniques in order to control negative emotional states. Participants also identify long-term life goals in this module.

Theoretical Basis

- Cognitive Behavior Therapy
- Social Cognitive Theory

Intervention Duration

- 18 sessions total (6 sessions per module); each session lasts 1.5 hours

Intervention Settings

- Coffee shops, community agencies, private rooms at collaborating sites, parks, or participants' residences

Deliverer

- Licensed therapist or clinical social worker

Delivery Methods

- Demonstration
- Exercise/games
- Goal setting
- Lectures
- Role plays and practice

INTERVENTION PACKAGE INFORMATION

Please contact study author for training and intervention materials. Please contact **Mary Jane Rotheram-Borus**, UCLA Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences, 10920 Wilshire Blvd., Box 957051, Suite 350, Los Angeles, CA 90024.

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EVALUATION STUDY AND RESULTS

The original evaluation study was conducted in Los Angeles and San Francisco, California, and New York City, New York, between 1999 and 2003.

Key Intervention Effects

- Increased proportion of condom-protected sex acts with all partners and with HIV-seronegative partners

Study Sample

The baseline study sample of 175 young people living with HIV characterized by the following:

- 42% *Hispanic/Latino/Latina*, 26% *Black or African American*, 23% *White*, 8% *other*
- 78% *male*, 22% *female*
- 76% *homosexual, bisexual, or questioning*
- *Median age of 23 years (range 16–29)*

Recruitment Settings

Adolescent AIDS clinics, social service agencies, community-based organizations, media outlets (including newspapers), conferences, and community events

Eligibility Criteria

Participants were considered eligible for the evaluation if they were HIV-seropositive and used illicit drugs at least 5 times in the prior 3 months.

Assignment Method

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the three intervention arms: in-person intervention (n = 61), telephone-delivered intervention (n = 59), or wait-list control (n = 55).

Comparison Group

The waitlist control group received a delayed intervention.

Relevant Outcomes Measured and Follow-up Time

- Sexual risk behaviors during the prior 3 months (including number of HIV-negative sex partners, percentage of protected acts with all partners, percentage of protected acts with HIV-negative partners, consistent condom use and abstinence) were assessed at 3, 6, 9 and 15 months post baseline.
- Drug injection during the prior 3 months was assessed at 3, 6, 9 and 15 months post baseline.
- Follow-up time points translate to during the intervention and 1.5, 4.5, and 10.5 post intervention.

Participant Retention

- In-Person Intervention
 - 89% retained at 3 months
 - 80% retained at 6 months
 - 79% retained at 9 months
 - 84% retained at 15 months
- Telephone-Delivered Intervention
 - 85% retained at 3 months
 - 71% retained at 6 months
 - 90% retained at 9 months
 - 80% retained at 15 months
- Waitlist Control
 - 84% retained at 3 months
 - 80% retained at 6 months
 - 82% retained at 9 months
 - 78% retained at 15 months

Significant Findings

- At 15 months post baseline, participants who received the in-person CLEAR intervention reported significantly greater increases in the proportion of protected sex acts with all sex partners ($p < 0.01$) and proportion of protected sex acts with HIV-seronegative partners ($p < 0.05$) than waitlist control participants. Participants receiving the in-person intervention also reported a significantly greater increase in the proportion of protected sex acts with HIV-negative partners at 15 months post baseline than participants in the telephone-delivered intervention ($p < 0.01$).

Considerations

- The telephone-delivered intervention did not meet the best evidence criteria because the in-person intervention resulted in a significantly greater proportion of protected sex acts than the telephone-delivered intervention and the telephone-delivered intervention was not efficacious in reducing risk behaviors relative to the control group. Only the in-person CLEAR intervention is considered to meet the best-evidence criteria.
- Other targeted outcomes – substance use, HIV medication adherence, health behaviors, and emotional distress-were not significantly improved by the intervention.

REFERENCES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Rotheram-Borus, M. J., Swendeman, D., Comulada, S., Weiss, R. E., Lee, M., & Lightfoot, M. (2004). [Prevention for substance-using HIV positive young people: Telephone and in-person delivery](#). *JAIDS Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*, 37(Suppl. 2), S68–S77. <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.qai.0000140604.57478.67>

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