

Collaborations with Academia:

Building Bridges for Community Research, Studies and Interventions

1998-2020

MEE's Academic Partnerships

Projects Funded By:



Behavioral Health • Population Health • Primary Prevention • Responsible Community Engagement • Culturally Specific Messages & Media Development • Digital & Online Interventions (e-Learning) • Participant Recruitment • IRB-Approved Research Protocols

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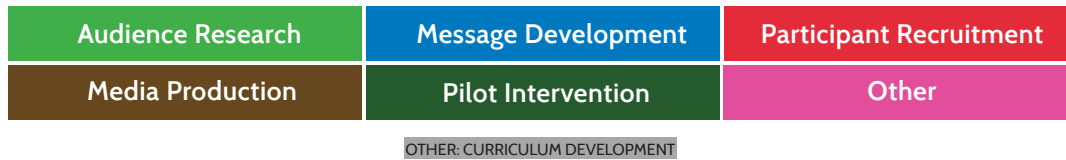


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NIMH/SBIR Parent-Teen Communications Project – Brown University



Developed online experience (“Working It Out Together”) to improve parent-teen communication



2012 – 2014

This two-year project was funded by the National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH), through the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grants program. The goal was to create a “Family-based HIV Prevention: An Interactive DVD.” The final product, “Working It Out Together: Successful Parent-Teen Communication,” is an online, digital self-education experience for both teens and parents/caregivers. It is an evidence-based, “workshop-in-a-box,” translated into a digital tool to be used by adults (parents, caregivers, providers) and teens. This family-based product gives African American parents the tools needed to be sure that their youth can make better decisions across a number of health issues. Caregivers learn how to better communicate and share and reinforce their morals and values. The foundation of the learning experience is teaching both parents and teens, through separate platforms, how to be more assertive and therefore more effective communicators.

MEE produced an educational video (DVD) and multimedia curriculum with a focus on improving communication between parents and their teen children. The foundation of the project content was a joint, face-to-face workshop for parents and their teen children (Project STYLE) that had demonstrated efficacy in a randomized trial study. Project STYLE was developed by MEE’s academic partners, a team of psychiatrists and psychologists from Brown University/Rhode Island Hospital (RIH).

To take the intervention to the next level and prepare it for commercial distribution and use in underserved communities, MEE developed an interactive video package, a customized website and user workbooks (curriculum) for both parents and adolescents. Part of the project included MEE enhancing a previously shot dramatic film, in order to add the educational elements needed to reduce sexual risk behavior and substance use among urban African-American youth. The new video content addressed how to improve parent-adolescent communication and interactions, parental monitoring, increasing parent and adolescent knowledge of HIV/STD information, substance use and adolescent risk reduction.

Product-feasibility testing was done in both Philadelphia and Providence through a randomized trial with 170 parent-adolescent dyads. An evaluation compared “Working It Out Together” to a general family-health DVD and workbook. Dr. Larry Brown and his research team at RIH compiled the research data and found a significant effect upon teens in the intervention, who reported more parental knowledge and oversight of their whereabouts when not at home.

MEE enhanced the final product (DVD and workbook) using the feedback from the dyads in the research, enhancing the workbook and reorganizing the teen video to clarify instructions for each section. The product was also revised so that it can all be viewed online using a website, as well as purchased as a DVD/workbook product. MEE developed a beta product-sales website, along with marketing materials for print and social media marketing.

An in-depth Commercialization and Marketing Plan was created to help promote the need for and long-term benefits of this innovative, culturally conscious parent-teen communication tool. The Plan also outlined key marketing and advertising strategies, including MEE’s longer-term plan for successfully positioning the product to appeal to a variety of target audiences.

Working It Out Together sets the stage for effective dialogue between adults and their teens to discuss a variety of topics. Topics addressed in Working It Out Together include assertive communications, safe sex and healthy relationships, HIV, self-assessment/personal strategies, peer pressure, substance abuse and conflict resolution. Parenting tools include stages of youth development, as well as monitoring tools to address young people’s potentially risky behaviors. Parents will be able to lead their teens to make healthier decisions and generate better outcomes.



Work It Out Together

SUCCESSFUL PARENT-TEEN COMMUNICATION

NIMH/SBIR Parent-Teen Communications Project: Process

2012



product-feasibility testing
with parent/teen



content/prototype
developed



focus group
testing

2013



new video
content



video/DVD
production



parent/teen
workbook

2014



marketing and
advertising strategies



final DVD and
workbook



customized
"have the talk" website



efficacy research with
parent/teens dyads



BROWN



Rhode Island Hospital
Lifespan. Delivering health with care.™

Audience Research for an Asthma Community – Education Program – University of Pennsylvania



Developed and tested educational materials for engaging families of young asthma patients for a top pediatric hospital.

Audience Research

Message Development

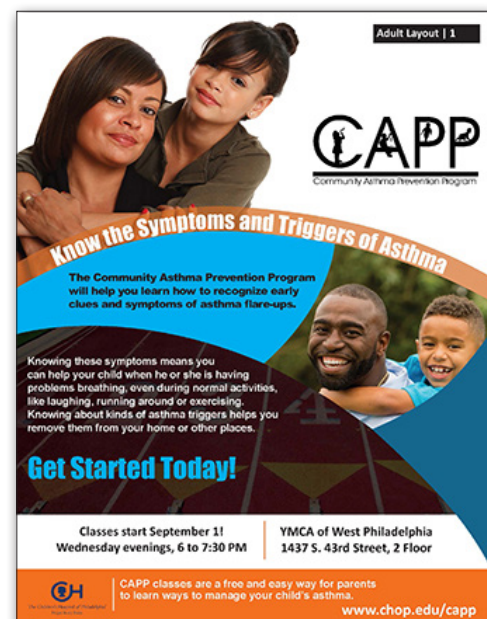
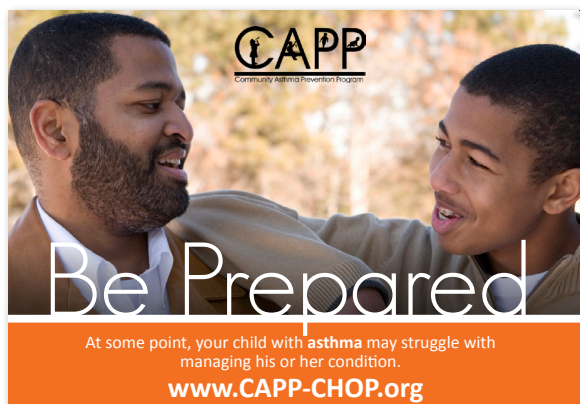
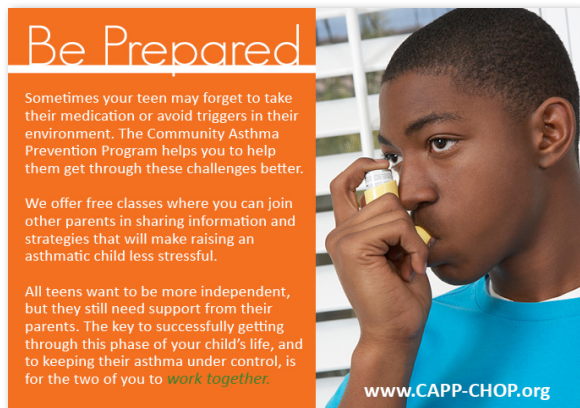
Other

2016

MEE was hired by Dr. Tyra Bryant-Stephens of the Community Asthma Prevention Program (CAPP) at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) to draft and test persuasive content for outreach and education materials (including potential social media messages) targeting Philadelphia-area teens with asthma, along with parents/caregivers of these teens.

Based on audience research with parents and teens, a selection of the message concepts were further developed into mock-ups of outreach flyers, social media layouts/posts, and web banners that MEE tested in focus groups. The goal of these focus groups was to gather current data, knowledge, behavior and attitudes about asthma; social, health and environmental challenges facing the project's target population and determine the effectiveness of the MEE-drafted asthma education materials.

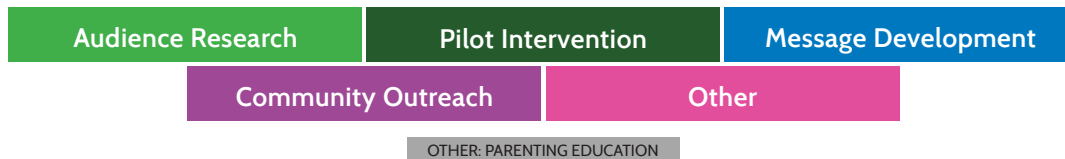
MEE developed a strategic plan that identified the best outlets for disseminating education materials and included the types and scales of social media to support promotion of future CAPP services, programs and outreach activities. In addition to developing materials for CHOP, MEE also created an outreach flyer for an affiliated program at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC).



Pilot Intervention to Reduce Parenting Stress and Child Abuse – Duke University



Developed and implemented an innovative community engagement program focused on helping low-income young mothers cope with stress..



2006

MEE developed and implemented a pilot intervention for Duke University's Center for Child and Family Policy, which was seeking to significantly reduce child maltreatment among young, low-income African American parents in Durham, NC (the city with one of the state's highest incidences of child maltreatment). MEE conducted audience research in a local housing project to identify strategies that could motivate young mothers (ages 18-25) to seek out the support they need for healthy parenting. Based on the parenting challenges they reported, with stress being a major element, MEE executed a unique intervention, "A Day of Pampering," designed to provide a "stress break" for young mothers and increase parenting knowledge, while also providing a safe space to share childrearing concerns and offering a venue to foster and strengthen connections with available community resources.

MEE offered nearly 100 mothers from a public housing community a day away from stress. More than just a day of beauty, the pampering events were designed to innovatively reach and teach young mothers about how to better deal with the stresses of being a single parent. A key feature of the pampering event was a series of "information zones" where mothers could obtain information from community-based organizations about their services and talk to local "experts" about issues they were facing. The information zones linked mothers with local community resources that offered information and assistance in a variety of areas that could help make their jobs as parents easier. Short (10 to 20-minute) small-group learning sessions included these topics:

- Effective and age-appropriate discipline strategies for children
- Information on "ages & stages" of early childhood development
- How to create balance in one's life
- Easy-to-implement stress relieving activities
- Dealing with hyperactive children or those with developmental delays
- Job training and development (including GEDs, continuing education and community colleges).

During MEE's event, participants were encouraged to mingle and talk with other local mothers. These interactions decreased the feeling of isolation that mothers of young children sometimes feel, and allowed them to see that "they are not alone." A kind of informal "support group" was created through the interaction of these women with similar challenges and interests. Such events/interventions are a great start toward reducing parental stress and encouraging healthy parent-child relationships.

An initial evaluation of this project showed that young mothers overwhelmingly felt that the Day of Pampering provided good parenting and stress management information, increased their informal social support networks, and introduced them to resources available in their communities of which they had not been aware.

Pilot Intervention to Reduce Parenting Stress and Child Abuse - Duke University

SMALL-GROUP LEARNING SESSIONS



EFFECTIVE AND AGE-APPROPRIATE DISCIPLINE STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN



INFORMATION ON "AGES & STAGES" OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT



TIPS ON HOW TO CREATE BALANCE IN ONE'S LIFE



EASY-TO-IMPLEMENT STRESS RELIEVING ACTIVITIES



DEALING WITH HYPERACTIVE CHILDREN OR THOSE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS



JOB TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT (INCLUDING GED'S, CONTINUING EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES)



UrbanTrends

A quarterly newsletter published by



Black Lives in Hard Times: Stress and Trauma



A "Pampering" Intervention: Short-Term Stress Relief for Young Moms



CENTER for CHILD and FAMILY POLICY



Implementation Sciences to Support Replication of the SISTA's Faith-based HIV Intervention – Emory University



Produced train-the-trainer videos for an HIV prevention and testing intervention for faith-based organizations.

Implementation Sciences

Other

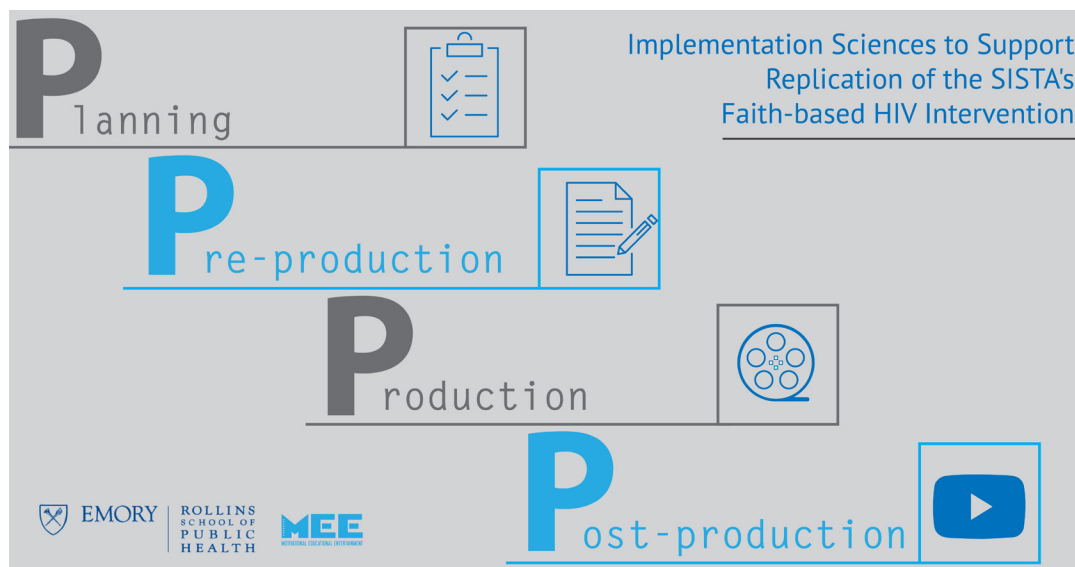
OTHER: TRAIN-THE-TRAINER | VIDEO PRODUCTION

2014

MEE was hired by Dr. Gina M. Wingood, ScD, MPH, Professor at Emory University's Behavioral Sciences and Health Education Department, to develop a series of training videos that would support Emory's implementation and expansion of its evidence-based HIV intervention, SISTA (Sisters Informing Sisters about Topics on AIDS). SISTA is aimed at educating and influencing young (ages 18-34), sexually-active, unmarried African American women about sexual health.

MEE created two (2) train-the-trainer videos in support of the replication of a faith-based spinoff of SISTA, called P4 for Women. This program, adapted for use in many mega-churches in Atlanta, promotes incorporating proven HIV interventions into everyday sexual health practices. Emory researchers assessed and analyzed SISTA's effect on women's HIV-associated sexual risk behaviors, with the eventual goal of enhancing "religious social capital" in the Black church.

MEE spearheaded the production process (planning, pre-production, production and post-production services) for the documentary-style training videos, which were shot on-site in Atlanta over several days. MEE worked closely with Dr. Wingood and her team at Emory to develop the video treatments, scripts, story boards and interview questions, then finalized edits and enhancements to the training videos. The videos helped potential program facilitators understand how to implement the core elements of the intervention. More than 50 churches in Atlanta received the MEE-produced training videos.



EMORY

ROLLINS
SCHOOL OF
PUBLIC
HEALTH

Reducing Concurrent Sexual Relationships to Prevent HIV Transmission Among African Americans – University of North Carolina



Developed and implemented a research-based media campaign using radio novellas to reduce HIV among African-Americans

Message Development

Media Placement

Media Production

2010-2012

In 2010, MEE collaborated with Dr. Adaora Adimora, MD, MPH's research team at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Division of Infectious Diseases to identify and understand the attitudes, perceptions and behaviors of African Americans (ages 18-34) engaged in concurrent sexual relationships.

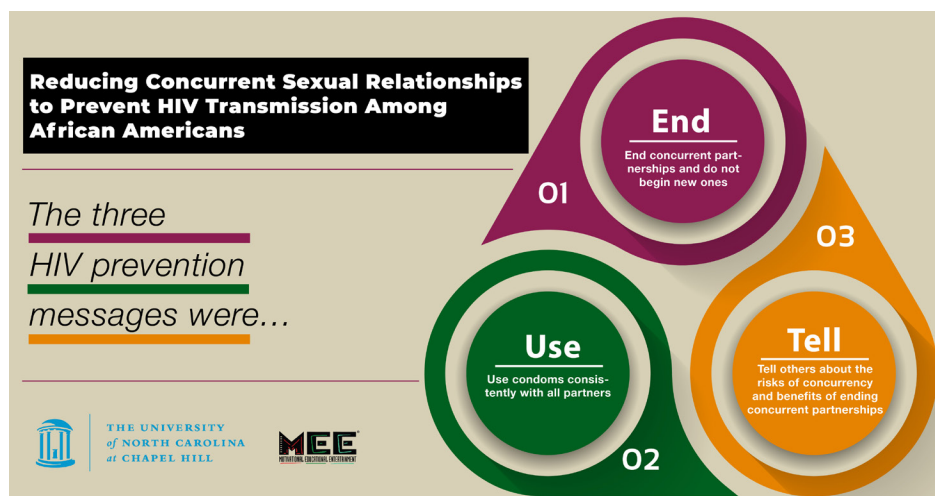
A National Institutes of Health/National Center on Minority Health Disparities research study indicated that concurrent partners can dramatically increase the transmission of HIV within a particular community, compared to serial monogamy. African American men are more likely to have concurrent partners than women. The higher prevalence of a partner's concurrency (having a sexual relationship with someone who has another sex partner as well), may increase women's exposure to HIV infection through sexual networks of their partners rather than through having many partners themselves. Mathematical modeling suggests that small decreases in concurrency could yield substantial decreases in HIV transmission, and targeting concurrency may be a cost-effective HIV prevention strategy.

The study represented a critical first step in the development and more definitive testing of a multi-component mass communication HIV prevention program for African Americans in the rural Southeast and throughout the nation. Upon the completion of research in 2011, MEE lead media development and media placement for the awareness campaign. MEE developed and produced an innovative radio campaign using storytelling techniques based on novellas.

For men, messages were: (1) end concurrent partnerships and do not begin new ones; (2) use condoms consistently with all partners; and (3) tell others about the risks of concurrency and benefits of ending concurrent partnerships. The narrative portrayed risky behaviors that trigger initiation of casual partnerships. For women, messages were: (1) end partnerships when you are not your partner's only partner; (2) use condoms consistently with all partners; (3) tell others about the risks of concurrency and benefits of ending concurrent partnerships.

MEE taught and raised awareness of sexual concurrency using the stories of Marcus, Antonio, Monique and Dee Dee's relationships and infidelity over a series of ads. The ads presented authentic representations of sexual risk behaviors of sexual concurrency, while emphasizing the benefits of healthy monogamous relationships.

MEE also developed the radio placement schedule that was to be implemented in 2012 after the pre-campaign, baseline research was completed. In 2012, the media campaign targeting African American men and women, ages 18 to 34, was launched in eastern North Carolina.



HPV Education Beauty Salon Campaign – Thomas Jefferson University and Emory University



Developed and implemented a study using Black beauty salons to provide HPV education to young adult Black women and mothers.

Message Development

Community Outreach

Media Production

Participant Recruitment

Pilot Intervention

2013

In 2012, MEE implemented an 18-month, non-randomized pilot study to assess the feasibility and effectiveness of using Black beauty salons as settings for culturally sensitive health education about the impact of HPV and cervical cancer, along with HPV vaccination. The unbranded pilot project, designed with cancer prevention researchers at Thomas Jefferson University, took place in Philadelphia and was underwritten by Merck, Inc., makers of the Gardasil vaccine.

This research project represented a unique private sector/academic partnership that leveraged and built on the skills and expertise of MEE's public health communications and social marketing expertise targeting underserved audiences. Our research partners included two nationally recognized thought leaders (Emory University's Ralph DiClemente, Ph.D. and Gina Wingood, Ph.D.) about how culture and environment impacts sexual health promotion, along with Amy Leader, Ph.D., a Philadelphia-based researcher who had developed and was implementing a community-based, multi-focused intervention to increase awareness and uptake of the HPV vaccine among young women in Philadelphia.

The team aimed to implement a highly tailored, culturally-relevant health education program for African-American women about cervical cancer prevention in neighborhood hair salons. The goals of the project were to help women make informed choices by increasing their knowledge and awareness about HPV, as well as to increase intentions to vaccinate among young women and their influencers /caregivers. MEE mobilized Black-owned hair salons because Black women in formative research focus groups we conducted said that they have trust in their stylist, which helped in introducing this sexual-health topic within the salon setting.

MEE recruited ten salons in North and West Philadelphia, educating stylists about HPV so that they could share information with their customers, and then offered in-depth education sessions with more than 200 women. We targeted African American salon customers, ages 18-26 who were able to make their own vaccination decisions and mothers or guardians (primary caregivers) of African American girls who were 9-17 years old.

Insights gained included those related to the most effective processes for delivering such a health intervention. We know now that the best way to use salons as a venue to reach their customers is to educate women while they are at the salon, rather than to recruit at salons and then educate them later as a two-step process. We know that women learned from the brief intervention, and continued the dialogue with their family and friends after our time with them had long ended. Knowledge and intentions to vaccinate against HPV significantly increased among study participants. More than two-thirds of the salon customers shared their provided HPV information book with a peer or family member after the session.

We know that knowledge and attitudes towards HPV vaccination were positively and significantly changed, and that in the future, lives may be saved because of it. Almost all young women ages 18-26 and 90% of mothers of girls eligible for the vaccines said they planned to talk to their doctor about HPV during their next visit. Stylists responded favorably to being a part of the study and were eager to continue to provide health education for their customers, allowing another avenue for long-term community interventions to reduce health disparities.

Journal Publication

Journal of Health Disparities Research and Practice (2015)

Subject: MS #1285 – Journal of Health Disparities Research and Practice

Amy Leader, Pamela Weddington, Ralph DiClemente, Gina Wingood, and Ivan Juzang

MEE President, Ivan Juzang and MEE VP of Communications, Pamela Weddington were part of a research team that included Dr. Gina Wingood and Dr. Ralph DiClemente from Emory University and Dr. Amy Leader from Thomas Jefferson University.

The goal of the study was to implement a highly tailored, culturally relevant health education program for African American women about cervical cancer prevention in neighborhood hair salons. We achieved this goal while learning immense amounts about the most effective process of delivering such an intervention. We know now that the best way to use salons as a venue to reach their customers is to educate women while they are at the salon, not to recruit and then educate them as a two-step process. We know that women learned from the brief intervention, and continued the dialogue with their family and friends after our time with them had long ended. We know that knowledge and attitudes towards HPV vaccination were positively and significantly changed, and that in the future, lives may be saved because of it. We know that the stylists responded favorably to being a part of the study, and are eager for us to continue to provide health education for their customers.

The team submitted a manuscript entitled, "Promoting HPV Vaccination Through African American Beauty Salons: A Pilot Test of a Culturally Competent Education and Empowerment Strategy" to the Journal of Health Disparities Research and Practice. After a comprehensive review, the manuscript was found to have a strong research foundation with findings and insights that added to the discourse addressing health disparities and practice. As a result that manuscript was accepted for publication and appeared in late 2014/early 2015 issue of the Journal.



Jefferson
Philadelphia University +
Thomas Jefferson University

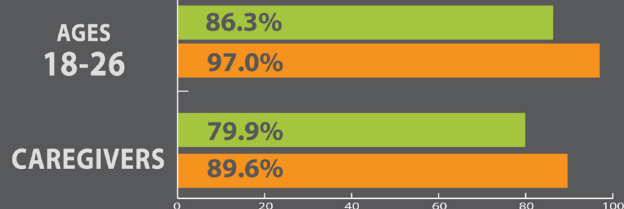
HOME OF SIDNEY KIMMEL MEDICAL COLLEGE



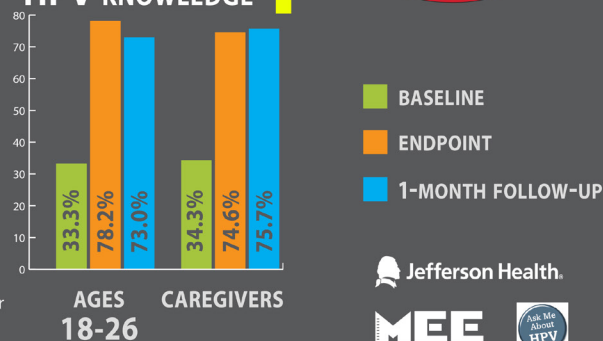
EMORY
UNIVERSITY

RESULTS

PLAN TO TALK TO DOCTOR ABOUT THE HPV VACCINE



HPV KNOWLEDGE



*To assess the feasibility, acceptability and effectiveness of using urban beauty salons as settings for culturally competent health education about cervical cancer disparities and HPV vaccination.

Jefferson Health.

MEE
MOTIVATIONAL EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT

Ask Me About HPV

“Ask Me About HPV”

Community Campaign for
Women of Color - Key Steps

MEE
MOTIVATIONAL EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT

Key Steps:

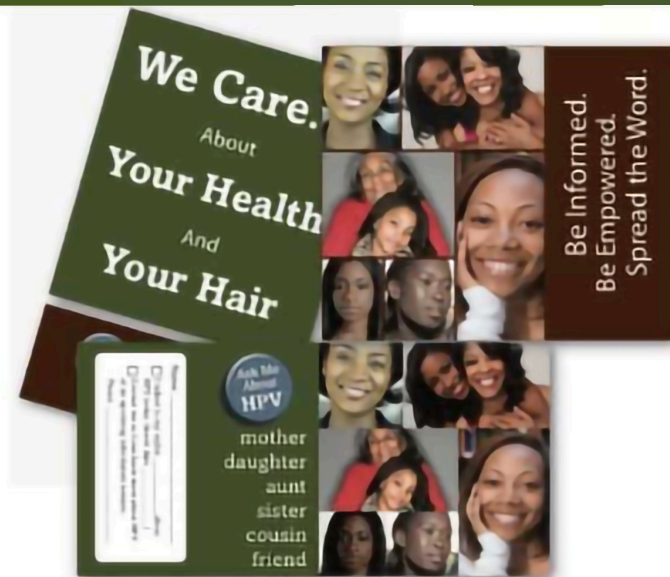
1 Salons Display Campaign Materials

2 Stylists Refer Clients to In-Salon Information Sessions

3 MEE Health Educators Provide *Brief* HPV Information Sessions

4 Everybody Wins!

- Customers receive free services and gift cards for post-education surveys.
- Salons receive hosting stipends.
- Community members are informed and empowered.



MEE
MOTIVATIONAL EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT

Jefferson.
HEALTH IS ALL WE DO

Ask Me About HPV

Project iMPPACS – University of Pennsylvania, Emory University, Brown University, Syracuse University, University of South Carolina



Study to evaluate effectiveness of a safe sex/HIV prevention media campaign aimed at African-American teenagers

Audience Research

Media Production

Message Development

Media Placement

2006-2008

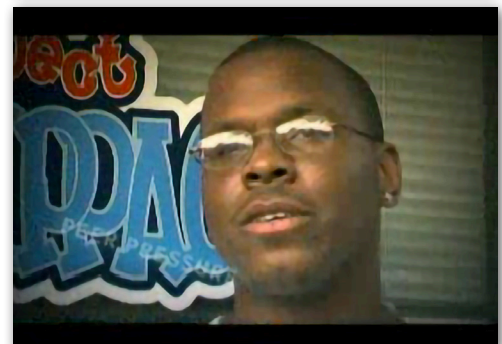
Project iMPPACS was a three-year, pilot intervention study funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and executed by a consortium of academic institutions — University of Pennsylvania's Dr. Michael Hennessy and Dr. Daniel Romer, University of South Carolina's Dr. Robert Valois, Syracuse University's Dr. Michael Carey Brown University's Dr. Larry Brown, and Emory University's Dr. Ralph DiClemente. The objective of the study was to measure the efficacy of a safe sex/HIV prevention media campaign targeting African American teenagers.

In 2006, MEE conducted focus group research with teens in two cities as a foundation for message development. The findings were used to refine radio and TV spots that included culture-centered counter-narratives to youth beliefs about sexual behavior.

In 2007, MEE developed a series of culturally-sensitive and age-appropriate messages (for African American 14-19 year olds) that promoted attitudes that would lead to safer sex behaviors and risk reduction for sexually-transmitted infections. MEE was responsible for all campaign media production and media placement.

Radio and television ads aired in Macon, GA and Syracuse, NY. The control cities were Providence, RI and Columbia, SC. The ads for the project received several national Telly Awards that recognized excellence in video and film production. "Check Yourself," "That was Great," "Class of 2008" and "Relationships" all won Telly Awards in 2007 and 2008.

Preliminary testing confirmed that the ads were popular and thought-provoking. They were expected to enhance adolescents' adoption of HIV-preventive attitudes, beliefs and behaviors on a community-wide basis.



Peer-Reviewed Journal Pub. (Project iMPPACS) –
University of Pennsylvania, Emory University, Brown
University, Syracuse University, University of South Carolina



Findings of a study to evaluate the effectiveness of a STI/HIV prevention media campaign targeting Black teenagers.

Journal Publication

The American Journal of Public Health (2013)

Safer Sex Media Messages and Adolescent Sexual Behavior: 3-Year Follow-Up Results From Project iMPPACS

Michael Hennessy, Daniel Romer, Robert F. Valois, Peter Vanable, Michael P. Carey, Bonita Stanton, Larry Brown, Ralph DiClemente, Laura F. Salazar, Ivan Juzang and Thierry Fortune

MEE was also part of the esteemed research team that published findings from Project iMPPACS. The resulting journal article, published in the American Journal of Public Health, illustrated the effectiveness of using mass media to support normative change with results from an ongoing HIV-prevention trial implemented in two medium-sized U.S. cities. MEE was also cited in The Journal of Health Communications for a related article, "Using culture-centered qualitative formative research to design broadcast messages for HIV prevention for African American adolescents."



EMORY
UNIVERSITY



BROWN



Penn
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA



Supporting a Research Study on Prostate Cancer & Intervention – Thomas Jefferson University



Developed educational materials and conducted community-based recruitment for Thomas Jefferson University's pilot study to reduce prostate cancer among Black men.



2016-2018

MEE is working with Dr. Amy Leader's research team based at Thomas Jefferson University and the University of Pennsylvania on a three-year project, "A Neighborhood-Based Intervention to Reduce Prostate Cancer Disparities Among African American Men."

MEE is providing the team with additional capacity in qualitative audience research; development of branding components, culturally specific participant recruitment, and prostate health education materials; grassroots community outreach and mobilization; and audiovisual/social media production. The project is funded by the U.S. Department of Defense through its Prostate Cancer Research Program. MEE leveraged its two decades of health communications research and expertise in low-income and underserved communities, relying on the medical experts to ensure accuracy and consistency of the educational information.

The study focuses on Philadelphia neighborhoods with high incidences of prostate cancer among African American men. One of MEE's major roles was to create culturally relevant study recruiting materials and to develop and adapt the various health message concepts and educational content (including videos) for the study's control and treatment groups. As a foundation for message development, MEE conducted four focus groups with African American men in the targeted age range and demographic profile.

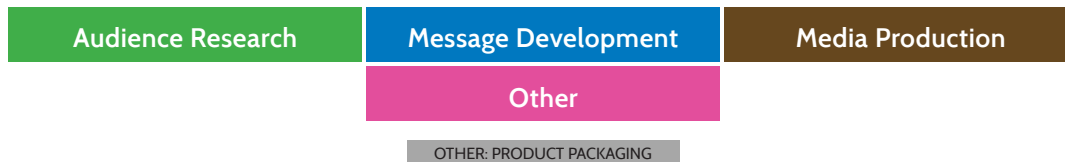
Based on data from the focus group, MEE developed recruitment and education materials. MEE is supporting the project with community-engagement tasks, identifying and engaging community-based organizations, faith-based institutions and local small businesses in each target community in Philadelphia. We have introduced the upcoming study to key stakeholders in each community, via MEE's Chat & Chew small-group information sessions, to get their buy-in, along with referrals of good sources to recruit study participants. Work continued through 2018.



Promoting Abstinence to Youth – Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science

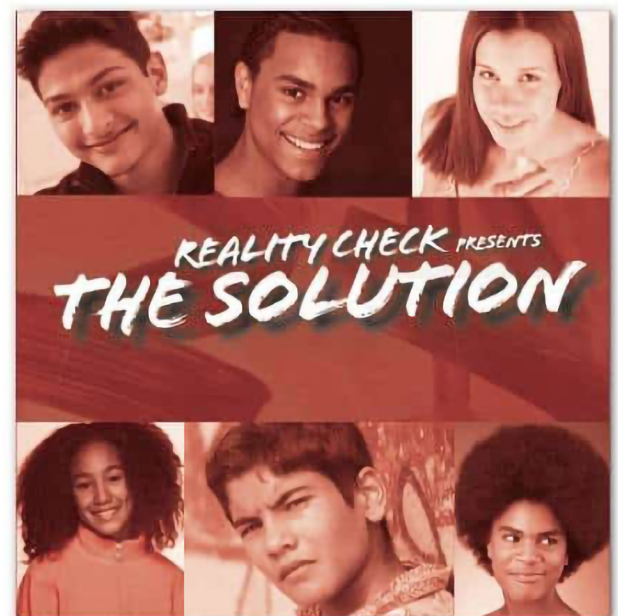


Researched and produced culturally relevant music CDs to promote abstinence and healthy relationships.



2005

In 2005, MEE was hired by Dr. Kimberly West at the Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science in Los Angeles to produce a culturally-relevant abstinence audio CD, entitled “Reality Check,” that was created by and for local youth. Topics addressed included teen relationships, sexuality and the choice to remain abstinent until marriage. After establishing a comprehensive research methodology, MEE conducted eight focus groups with African American and Latino youth ages 14-18. This provided youth input on sexual trends and perspectives on abstinence and other forms of protection against sexually transmitted diseases. Findings from the focus groups were used by the MEE Creative Team to develop youth-friendly vignettes for the audio CD. Fifteen Los Angeles-based youth were recruited from Drew University’s Community Free Teens Program for the final production of the CD, which contains more than 20 tracks of skits, poetry/spoken word, monologues, vignettes and urban music.



Promoting Early Childhood Education in Philadelphia's Promise Zone – Drexel University



Developed branding, messages and community engagement strategies to promote early childhood education and Pre-K learning centers

Audience Research

Communications Plan

Other

OTHER: BRANDING/ICONOGRAPHY | MESSAGE TESTING

2015

MEE was hired by Drexel University to develop the branding and community engagement strategies to support an outreach and awareness campaign for the West Philadelphia Early Childhood Education Initiative (WPECE). WPECE was a Drexel-led collaboration of social service and education agencies and community stakeholders working to create higher quality early childhood education options, for students and families in the 19104 zip code of West Philadelphia. The area had been designated as a Promise Zone by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The initiative, called West Philadelphia Action for Early Learning, aimed to build awareness around the importance of early childhood education; strengthen the capacity of childcare centers, Head Starts and Pre-Ks; support Pre-K and K-3 instruction with a strong emphasis on literacy; and more effectively link early childhood education centers to local kindergartens to ensure a seamless transition so that children and parents are better prepared for school.

MEE's primary responsibility was to create a brand that supported WPECE's goals and objectives, based on a strong understanding of the target audience. MEE developed all campaign messaging, branding and materials, including a campaign logo, campaign themes and slogans and outreach materials. MEE also developed a comprehensive communications plan that Drexel and its community partners implemented for the initiative.



Education Begins at Birth
Make Sure Your Child is Ready for Success

Did you know that 85% of brain development happens by age 3?

Help Your Child Jump Start Success!

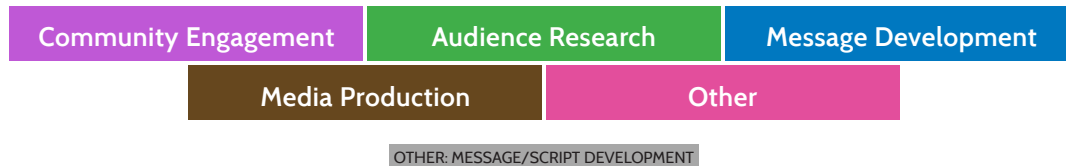
West Philadelphia Action For Early Learning
Our Community. Our Neighborhood. Our Kids.

Action for Early Learning is a collaborative initiative to support quality early childhood education in the 19104 zip code. It is led by Drexel University with the People's Emergency Center, Local Initiatives Support Corp., and the Delaware Valley Association for the Education of Young Children with primary support from the Lentz and William Penn Foundations

Sensitizing Providers to Urban Youth Trauma – University of Illinois at Chicago



Developed training content and videos for providers and therapists to improve engagement and communication with trauma-affected, low-income urban youth.



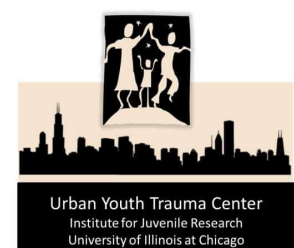
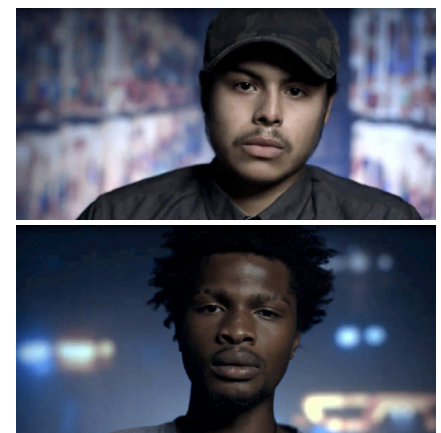
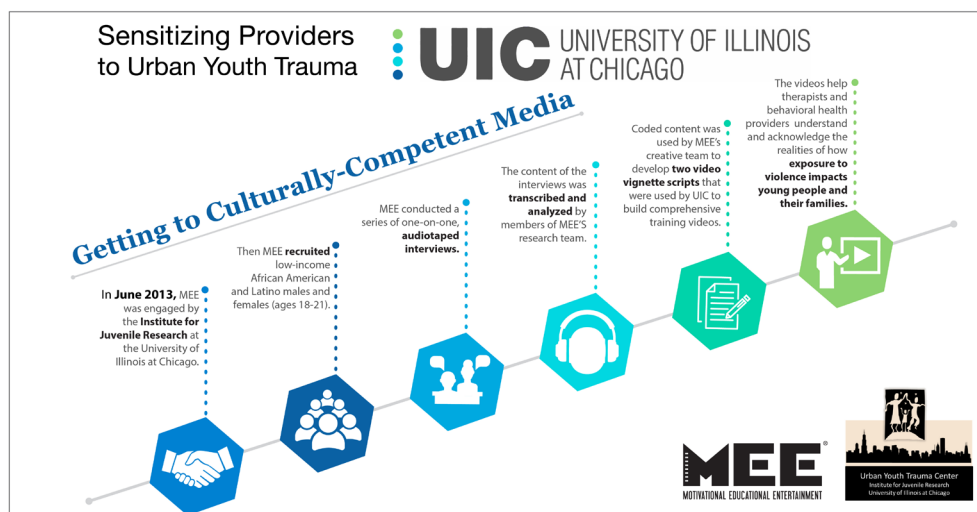
2013

In June 2013, MEE was engaged by the Institute for Juvenile Research at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) to help train providers and therapists on how to interact with youth affected by trauma. Direct exposure to domestic and/or community violence were both addressed in developing the script for a training video.

We leveraged long-standing relationships with members of MEE's Chicago Community Network to recruit low-income African American and Latino males and females (ages 18-21) for a series of one-on-one, audio-taped interviews conducted by MEE staff. During the interviews, youth shared personal stories about traumatic experiences linked to gun/gang violence and physical, and mental and/or sexual abuse in their home or community.

The content of the interviews was transcribed and analyzed by members of our research team, using a comprehensive coding process. The coded content was used by our Creative Team to develop two vignette scripts that were used by UIC to build out comprehensive training videos. Those videos will continue to support UIC in its work to develop clinical guidelines for therapists and service providers who work with audiences of underserved youth.

By viewing the videos, therapists and providers are able to witness the realities of how exposure to violence impacts young people and their families. Manifestations may include problems functioning at school or work, troubled relationships and behaviors that lead to being involved with the criminal justice and/or human services systems. MEE's insights are helping providers effectively communicate with and support low-income youth of color with adverse experiences as a result of repeated exposure to trauma.



Smoke-Free Three (Tobacco Prevention) PSAs – University of Vermont



Developed and produced radio and TV PSAs to prevent adolescent smoking for the University of Vermont's smoking prevention research program.

Message Development

Media Production

2000-2005

Between 2000 and 2005, MEE worked with Dr. John K. Worden (currently professor emeritus) at the University of Vermont's Office of Health Promotion Research (OHPR) on their research project called "Mass Media Interventions to Reduce Youth Smoking," funded by National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

During the initial stage, MEE conducted focus group research with tweens (10-13 years old) and teens (14-17 years old) on their leisure time interests, wishes and aspirations, and perceptions about the process of quitting cigarette smoking. MEE also conducted focus groups, testing media concepts. From 2002–2005, the second phase of the project, MEE worked with the OHPR to create media concepts for youth and then, annually, producing OHPR-selected radio and television spots. These ads were aired in the New England area for OHPR's research study.



The University of Vermont

In 2004, MEE's "Smoke-Free Three" TV PSA script was selected and funded for production. The resulting 30-second spot aired on television stations in the New England area during the last year of the campaign study.



Tuskegee University Bioethics Website Research – Tuskegee University



Conducted audience research to inform the development of a community educational website for Tuskegee University's National Bioethics Center.

Audience Research

Other

OTHER: WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT | EXPERT INTERVIEWS | WEBSITE TESTING

2004-2006

MEE worked with Dr. Vanessa Northington Gamble at the Tuskegee University National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care in 2006. MEE developed Website content and consulted on backend technology that could help the Center enhance its Internet presence. The Center's goal for the website was to create an online community of users who are like-minded in their interest in improving healthcare, health disparities among people of color, bioethics, public health issues and more.

MEE started the project with the National Center for Bioethics in Research and Healthcare at Tuskegee University in 2004, and we conducted formative research to determine the content, design and appeal of a proposed website highlighting the Center. MEE conducted focus group research with three audiences:

- African American adults in Chicago (blue-collar) and Los Angeles (white-collar)
- African American HBCU undergraduate students at Morgan State University
- Graduate students enrolled in the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University

In addition, MEE conducted three (3) expert interviews with leading scholars who had unique insights about the Tuskegee Study and bioethics in general. This report provides an overall analysis of the research data, the representative responses from the focus group participants and recommendations for the development of a prototype website for the Center.



MEE developed website content and consulted on back-end technology that could help the Bioethics Center enhance its internet presence.*

MEE conducted focus group research with three audiences:

Tuskegee University Bioethics Website Research

- audience 1** African American adults in Chicago (blue-collar) and Los Angeles (white-collar)
- audience 2** African American undergraduate students at Morgan State University (HBCU)
- audience 3** Graduate students enrolled in the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University

*The final research report provides an overall analysis of the research data, the representative responses from the focus group participants and recommendations for the development of a prototype website for the Center.

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National Center for Bioethics in Research and Healthcare

AT TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY



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Mission Statement

This is the nation's first bioethics center devoted to engaging the sciences, humanities, law and religious faiths in the exploration of the core moral issues which underlie research and medical treatment of African Americans and other underserved people.

Center Events Calendar

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					01	02
03	04	05	06	07	08	09
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30


JULY 2005

Bioethics News

- > Virus vaccines show promise
- > Stem cell research needs regulation
- > How old is too old to have a baby?
- > Our dying health care system
- > Should we be able to choose our kids
- > Building public trust in research

[About the Center](#) | [History of Health Leadership](#) | [The Tuskegee Syphilis Study](#) | [Bioethics Today](#) | [Multimedia](#) | [Events Calendar](#) | [Message Boards](#) | [Survey](#)

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JOURNAL OF HEALTHCARE, SCIENCE AND THE HUMANITIES

[Journal of Healthcare, Science and the Humanities](#)

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Welcome from the Director

About the Center

Faculty and Staff at the Center

The Center's Mission & Goals

Syphilis Study Legacy Committee

Legacy Committee Final Report

Newsletter - Voices of Our Father

Emergency Preparedness and Pandemics: Ethical Faith-Health Leadership

Supporting Vulnerable Populations (An HSCU response to COVID-19, et al.)

Thank you for your recent registration for the 2020 Public Health Ethics Forum. Ethical Dilemmas in Rural Health scheduled for April 12, 2020 or the Public Health Ethics Intensive and Commemoration scheduled for March 24-27. To ensure CDC and the NHC maintain their regional readiness, CDC and Tuskegee University National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care have decided to postpone the forum and Intensive Commemoration until September 14, 2020, for PHEF and the fall for PHIL. Thank you for your understanding on this matter.

[Upcoming Events](#)

The 9th Annual Public Health Ethics Intensive, March 24-27, 2020

National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care

SAVE THE DATE!

MARCH 24 - 27, 2020

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2020 Public Health Ethics Forum

April 12, 2020 | 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN RURAL HEALTH

REGISTER NOW!

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Featured Video: Presidential Apology

USPHS Syphilis Study at Tuskegee

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HIV Prevention Intervention (411 Safe Text) - University of Colorado



Developed and tested the 411 Safe Text Messaging program to prevent HIV among low-income urban youth and young adults.

Audience Research

Participant Recruitment

Message Development

2007-2008

There are many challenges in reaching urban adolescents with healthy lifestyle information. While many youth are “spreading their wings” toward independence from parental control, striving to make their own choices, we know that adolescence is also a time of life when many of the health-risk behaviors (e.g., smoking, drug use, physical inactivity, poor nutrition or high-risk sexual behavior) begin that may have negative effects later in life. At the same time, urban teens and low-income Black youth have proven to be the early adopters for the most cutting-edge technology. This combination of realities led MEE to explore using e-health applications to tackle HIV prevention among low-income youth and young adults.

MEE partnered with Dr. Sheana Bull from University of Colorado at Denver (UCD) Health Sciences Center to develop and audience-test the “411 HIV” concept, a new e-health technology application, to respond to this urgent need. In this Internet and cell phone-driven application, youth and young adults signed up to receive and respond to text messages promoting safe sexual behavior and healthy nutrition habits on their mobile phones. For the project, MEE developed, tested and applied a text messaging system for communicating health-promotion messages to urban youth on their mobile phones, two-way pagers or other handheld messaging devices. Messages countered the intrusive and negative impact of advertising media with positive messages.

Since the younger generation historically pushes technology and is almost always “connected,” the concept uses the medium and devices that are an intrinsic part of today’s youth culture as intervention points for culturally relevant, healthy messages. As a foundation, MEE conducted formative audience research for the project, using a mixed methodology of qualitative and quantitative methods. MEE then provided message and media production services to UCD to develop and audience-test the 411 Safe Text concept. We also co-lead the implementation of the cell phone-based intervention and its technical program delivery protocol.

Objective: Describe the methods used to recruit and retain young Black men in Philadelphia for the HIV prevention intervention.

Methods: Face-to-face recruitment was first conducted by MEE with the assistance of their community partner network; subsequent enrollment and data collection were conducted via telephone by staff at CSPH using a scripted protocol.

Results: We enrolled 58% of the young Black men recruited for the intervention, retained 77% of the young men for a follow-up survey at three months, and 65% of the initial enrollees were retained for the six-month follow-up survey.

Conclusions: Study results demonstrate the importance of the community-academic partnership formed and adherence to the principles of community-based participatory research (CBPR) in carrying out this work.

MEE | University of Colorado | Colorado School of Public Health



colorado school of
public health

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

University of Colorado
Boulder | Colorado Springs | Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus

411SAFE TEXT

The 411 On Safe Sex

This Week's Topic:
**Want to Stay Safe?
Talk About It.**

Weekly Quiz

Question:
True or False:
You should get support from others to help you lead a safe, healthy, and successful life.
A: True
B: False

WIN PRIZES!!!
Text the Question number and answer to
267-499-7166

Text should look like this:
Q: A, B, C or D

411SAFE TEXT

The 411 On Nutrition

This Week's Topic:
Fast Food leads to health problems

Weekly Quiz

Question 1:
African Americans are how likely to have type 2 diabetes as whites?
A: Equally
B: 2 times
C: 4 times
D: 6 times

WIN PRIZES!!!
Text the Question number and answer to
267-499-7166

Journal Publication

Contemporary Clinical Trials (2010)

Recruitment, Enrollment and Retention of Young Black Men for HIV Prevention Research: Experiences from The 411 for Safe Text Project

Thierry Fortune, Erin Wright, Ivan Juzang, Sheana Bull

Objective: There is abundant evidence of the HIV crisis in the Black community, yet African Americans—and African American men in particular—are consistently underrepresented in research on HIV prevention.

The purpose of journal article published by Contemporary Clinical Trials (March 2010) was to describe the methods used to recruit and retain young Black men in Philadelphia for an HIV prevention intervention.

Methods: A partnership between community members, MEE Productions Inc., and academic researchers of the Colorado School of Public Health (CSPH) in Denver was formed. Recognizing the core principles of community-based participatory research (CBPR), face-to-face recruitment was first conducted by MEE with the assistance of their community partners; subsequent enrollment and data collection were conducted via telephone by staff at CSPH.

Results: We enrolled 58% of the young Black men recruited, retained 77% of the young men for a follow-up survey at three months, and 65% of the initial enrollees were retained for the six-month follow-up survey. CSPH enrollment staff reported initial challenges due to the time lapse between recruitment and enrollment as well as participants' unfamiliarity with the enrollment staff. Subsequently, MEE recruitment staff emphasized the telephone area code that they would receive follow-up phone calls from and the specific names of Colorado enrollment staff who would call.

Conclusion: Our results demonstrate the importance of the community-academic partnership formed and adherence to the principles of CBPR in carrying out this work. Despite challenges in recruitment of racially and ethnically diverse participants for research, we successfully recruited, enrolled and retained young Black men in an HIV prevention program.



University of Colorado

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Educational DVD Production for STD Intervention Trial - Syracuse University



Developed and produced educational media for a randomized control trial (RCT) to teach healthy sexuality to reduce STD transmission among low-income adults

Audience Research

Media Production

Materials Development

Message Development

2010

In 2010, MEE worked with Dr. Mike Carey's research team at Syracuse University to develop messages and culturally relevant DVDs for a National Institutes of Health (NIH) funded STD intervention trial conducted at an STD clinic in Rochester, NY. MEE conducted focus groups and expert interviews to produce two intervention videos (treatment and control) using characters that reflect the demographic profile of clinic patients. Both videos were designed to be authentic, informative and engaging for a low-income adult audience that is predominately, but not exclusively, African American.

The treatment video "Be the Change" focused on sexual health and addressed attitudes, behaviors and preventive measures using real-life issues surrounding relationships, sex and safer sex. Messages educated viewers about the dangers of concurrent partners, the proper use of condoms and how to negotiate condom use with a partner. The control video "Take Control of Your Health!" focused on general health and offered tips on healthy living, including diet and exercise, as well as compelling reasons to take a proactive stand to reduce negative consequences of an unhealthy lifestyle.



Trauma-Informed Health Communications Training for Community Leaders - Johns Hopkins University



Developed and delivered a three-part course to members of a leadership program in Baltimore

Community Engagement

2018

MEE was hired by the Johns Hopkins Urban Health Institute to develop and deliver a three-session communications training for members of its Bunting Neighborhood Leadership Program (BNLP). Led by MEE President Ivan Juzang, the training provided participants with skills to develop trauma-informed and culturally-relevant communications messages that will resonate with communities of color, particularly urban African-American communities, and encourage sustainable lifestyle changes.

Session #1 improved participants' cultural competency and ability to communicate with low-income communities of color, by learning how to provide them with life-saving health information in a way that is effective and culturally-relevant.

Session #2 provided participants with a deeper understanding of the importance of community mobilization and how community-based organizations, non-profits and community opinion leaders can be an effective public health communications channel that competes with traditional media.

Session #3 explored MEE's "by-and-for" philosophy for developing public health communications and provided participants with an overview of MEE's audience research approach, which incorporates data-gathering and communications research as the foundation for every major behavioral health intervention.



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