

Positive Youth Development through a Leadership Council Program

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i Introduction

Positive youth development (PYD) programs have been shown to help adolescents develop teamwork, communication, and interpersonal skills (Ahrens et al., 2015).

In this **qualitative study**, we examined whether a youth-led sexual health leadership council program could contribute to the development of a comprehensive skillset.

? Present Study

Looking Out For The Youth (LOFTY) Crew is a leadership council of select alumni of the Teen Health Project (THP), a sexual health intervention in Atlanta, Georgia.

LOFTY Crew is a youth-led program aimed at the community-wide dissemination of sexual health information to prevent teen pregnancy and the transmission of HIV and STIs.

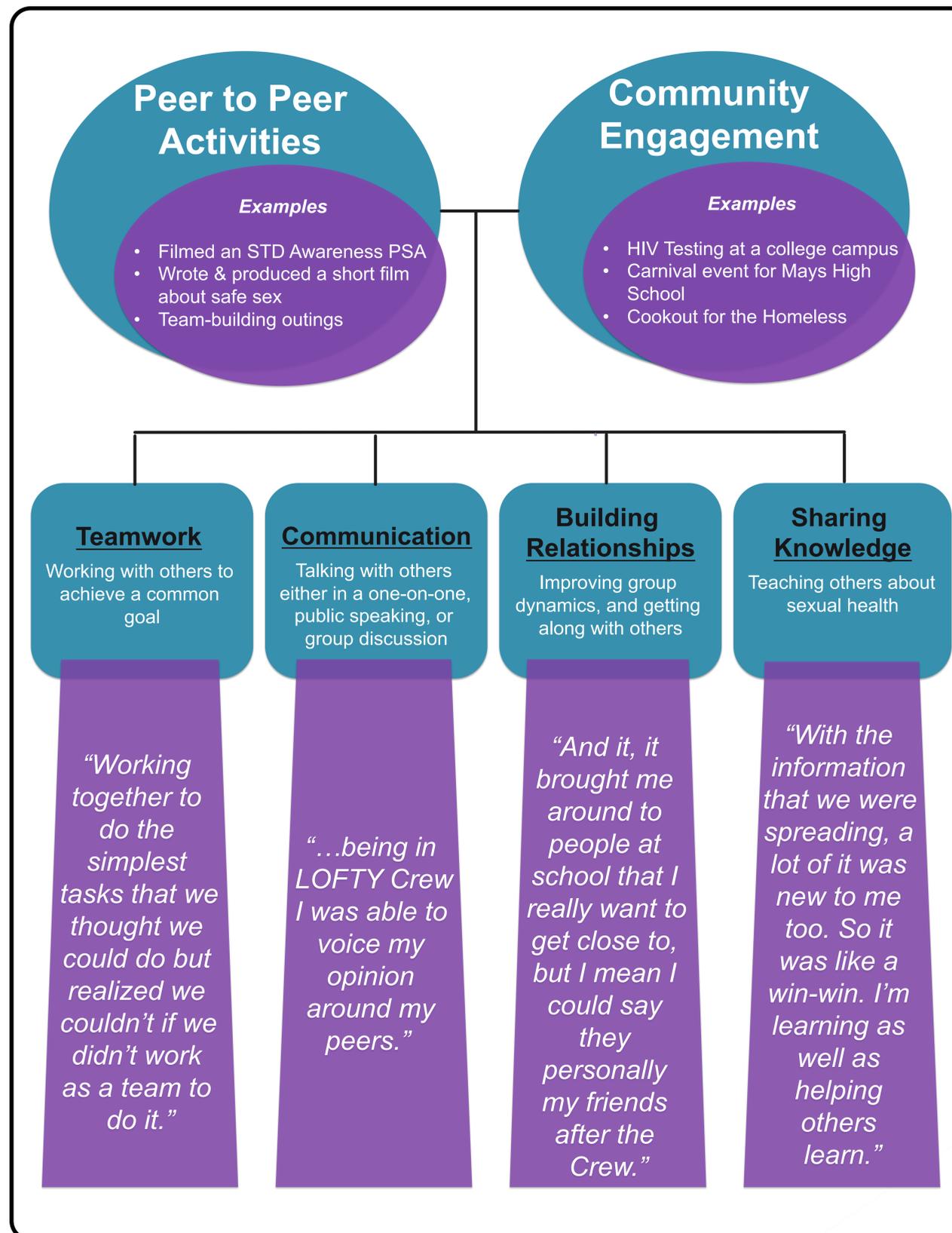
The purpose of this study is to determine whether the program also helps youth establish other beneficial skills.

Participants

- N= 21 (6 Males, 15 Females)
- 100% African American
- Between ages 15 to 21 (Mean= 17.8)

✓ Methods

- 3 focus groups & 2 interviews with former LOFTY Crew Participants
- 2 raters coded transcriptions
- Inter-rater reliability: 80.4%



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Results

LOFTY Crew participants gained skills in **four areas:** Teamwork, Communication, Building Relationships, and Sharing Knowledge.

These skills were gained through **community engagement** or **peer-to-peer events**.

The most common skill participants discussed was **Sharing Knowledge**, in which participants reached out into the community and informed others about how to improve sexual health.

Participants continued utilizing these skills and expressed improvement in **communicating with others** and **stepping outside of their normal friendships**. Participants also mentioned that they **developed a sense of teamwork** to accomplish designated tasks.

Conclusions

PYD programs like LOFTY Crew provide youth with skill-building opportunities that are applicable to future leadership endeavors.

The skills participants gained can be utilized in many different environments, such as college relationships and internships

Future Directions

Future studies may include:

- A more racially diverse sample
- A focus on specific ages
- Interview questions that are more focused on skills and skill building
- Controlling for time passed since the participant was in LOFTY Crew