Summary of Key Accomplishments & Successes

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENT #1

LEADS was one of the first Office of Population Affairs (OPA) funded agencies to make a smooth and successful transition to virtual implementation early in the COVID-19 pandemic. Our Pinellas County Florida public schools closed on March 14, 2020, for Spring Break and never reopened. Anticipating a long closure, LEADS implemented its first virtual class on March 28, 2020, with all materials hand-delivered to participants. Despite quickly shifting to a virtual format, our program remained high in quality and fidelity.

Expectations: We achieved Community Engagement & Replication by engaging youth in fully virtually sessions with high retention rates.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENT #2

Amidst the challenges of virtual implementation, we served 270 youth and their families in year 2 with a completion rate of 96.67%. Note: in our program youth must complete 100% of the curriculum to be considered completed.

Expectations: We achieved Community Engagement & Replication as we continued to serve the community by incorporating meaningful and authentic engagement of youth, families, and other caregivers throughout the development, implementation, and evaluation of the project.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENT #3

We provided professional training of the Love Notes Sexual Risk Avoidance Evidence Based Program (SRA EBP) conducted by master trainers of the Dibble Institute to 21 community facilitators and our two program facilitators. Our year one training was done face-to-face, our year two training was conducted virtually.

Expectations: This accomplishment allowed us to meet two OPA expectations: Project Management and Sustainability. It took solid management to hire strong, community-based facilitators and organize the trainings. All 21 facilitators completed their training and received their completion certificates from the Dibble Institute. Even after our funding ends, these facilitators, who are part of the community at local schools, churches, and other non-profits serving African American youth ages 14-19, will be able to still provide the program on a smaller scale.
Program Overview: Life-skills, Empowerment and Development Services (LEADS), a community-based non-profit, implemented the Health Education and Relationship Training Services (HEARTS) Project using the Love Notes Sexual Risk Avoidance Evidence Based Program (SRA EBP) curriculum. Love Notes builds skills and knowledge for healthy relationships with peers, co-workers, family, friends, and dating partners. The program protects teens’ hearts as well as their bodies. It’s designed to help youth make wise relationship and sexual choices and to assist them in achieving their education, employment, relationship, and family goals. The program was implemented during two consecutive Saturdays, initially at schools, community churches and recreation centers, and later virtually. At each of the free sessions, youth received breakfast, lunch, snacks, and a T-shirt. They also received the program journal (designed for youth to complete program activities), as well as craft materials for curriculum related activities. Those who completed the 2-day program received an Amazon gift card. During the two-year program, LEADS served 530 primarily African American (93%) youth ages 14-19 in South St. Petersburg, Florida. Local churches, schools, and other non-profits that serve youth made referrals for recruitment. Our primary partner - Next Stepp Pregnancy Center - supported our recruitment efforts serving as liaison with our other community partners.

HEARTS Project

Health Education and Relationship Training Services

Key Finding #1
The HEARTS project was needed by the population & community. Participants enjoyed the program and felt it was a good fit for the population.

Key Finding #2
The intervention was implemented with high quality and fidelity to the evidence-based LOVE NOTES SRA EBP model and youth and families were actively engaged in the program.

Key Finding #3
A continuous quality improvement process was able to refine project design and performance to ensure that the project was implemented as intended, was relevant, and resonant with the intended audience.

The HEARTS project was supported by Grant Number # TP1AH0197A from the HHS Office of Population Affairs
The HEARTS project was needed by the population & community. Participants enjoyed the program and felt it was a good fit for the population.

We secured 25 MOUs with local churches, schools, and community organizations which demonstrates population and community need.

530 Youth Served

We served 97% African American youth

Source: Youth Satisfaction Survey

HEARTS served:
- 100% 13–19-year-old.
- 36% boys
- 56% girls

The HEARTS Project reached predominantly African American youth ages 13-18 and their families in South St. Petersburg, FL.
100% OF YOUTH PARTICIPANTS FOUND THE COURSE MATERIAL INTERESTING AND THE CONTENT COMFORTABLE

Interest, Comfort, & Use

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think I will use something I learned from this program</td>
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<tr>
<td>The material is interesting to me</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am comfortable with the program material used</td>
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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Was the program needed by the population & community?
- Did participants like the program being replicated?
- Was the program a good fit for the population?

Source: Youth Satisfaction Survey

SUPPORT FOR HEARTS PROGRAM NEEDED

A lot of children do not realize what healthy relationships are, what consent is, and they do not have comfort in talking about it.”

- Parent of participant

SUPPORT FOR HEARTS PROGRAM LIKED

“[My child] enjoyed the program and was able to relate to others similar to themselves.”

- Parent of participant

SUPPORT FOR HEARTS PROGRAM FITS

HEARTS provides a safe space for young people and allowed them to ask questions that they needed to ask.”

- Parent of participant

100% of our partners agreed that

- The HEARTS program is a good fit for the community
- The community benefits from youth having access to the HEARTS program
- Youth who attended the program, liked it.
Key Finding #2
The intervention was implemented with high quality and fidelity to the evidence-based LOVE NOTES SRA EBP model and youth and families were actively engaged in the program.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
Was the program implemented with high quality and fidelity?

The fact that they are able to communicate with others, they felt comfortable in the group setting and felt like they trusted the facilitators because they were able to speak openly

–Parent of participant

Source: Parent Focus Group

SUPPORT FOR HEARTS QUALITY
100% of facilitators (N = 21) (and alternates) have received training from the Dibble Institute Program Creators.

SUPPORT FOR HEARTS FIDELITY
100% of program sessions were delivered without changes to content.

SUPPORT FOR HEARTS QUALITY
92% of youth attended the program demonstrating participant engagement and intervention quality.
85% of youth completed the trusted adult activity.

This activity is where youth connect with one trusted adult that they have identified to discuss material from the course. This helps them to form bonds and facilitate open communication around relationships, dating, and sexuality.

**Key Finding #3**

A continuous quality improvement (CQI) process was used to refine project design and performance to ensure that the project was implemented as intended, was relevant, and resonated with the intended audience.

**EXAMPLES OF REFINING PROGRAM DESIGN WERE**

- Choosing when to implement single versus dual facilitators
- Developing a plan for facilitator observation
- Choosing best facilitators for virtual implementation
- Hand-delivering program supplies and materials

**Aligned core themes**

We documented how we used CQI to refine project design & performance

**Examples of how we applied Edward Deming’s Plan-Do-Act-Check Framework**

- **Plan**
  - Train facilitators
  - Plan implementation with partners

- **Act**
  - Hired data manager
  - Personalize discussions during sessions

- **Do**
  - Implement virtual & in person sessions
  - Deliver supplies for virtual camps

- **Check**
  - Weekly staff & evaluator meetings
  - Review satisfaction surveys and database
HOW CQI SUPPORTED A QUICK AND EFFICIENT TRANSITION TO A VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- WE IMPLEMENTED OUR VIRTUAL PROGRAM 16 DAYS AFTER W.H.O. DECLARED A COVID PANDEMIC.
  - We started discussions in early February regarding COVID.
  - We created virtual versions of all documents just in case.

- WE HAND-DELIVERED ALL MATERIALS TO YOUTH TO FACILITATE SMOOTH PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION.
  - A staff member became ill and we were able to move her into a different position to deliver supplies including gift cards and T-shirts.
  - We first used “if it fits – it ships” boxes but switched to logoed boxes to support advertising.

- TO IMPROVE ENGAGEMENT IN A VIRTUAL FORMAT AND PREVENT STUDENT BURNOUT, WE REVIEWED FEEDBACK FROM YOUTH THAT SHOWED THEY ENJOYED DISCUSSIONS.
  - We increased the amount of personal stories related to curriculum content.

Evaluation Process

- Purpose: to determine program quality & fidelity.
- Led by external evaluators in collaboration with the program director and staff.
- Included: review and analysis of satisfaction surveys and program database, focus group data, and facilitator observations.

Evaluation Outcomes and Measures

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<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Data collected</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of formal partners</td>
<td>Signed MOUs &amp; provider surveys</td>
<td>25 signed MOUs; 7 partner surveys</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reach &amp; Dosage</td>
<td>Attendance records</td>
<td>530 attendees; 96.94% average attendance rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scale &amp; Sustainability</td>
<td>Training records from Dibble Institute</td>
<td>All facilitators trained</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitator Quality</td>
<td>Evaluator observations</td>
<td>All planned sessions were implemented; we observed 6 camps for a total of 15 lessons.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Satisfaction</td>
<td>Satisfaction Surveys and Focus Groups</td>
<td>530 satisfaction surveys; 6 focus groups with 14 parents and 30 teens</td>
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Program Next Steps

- Expand HEARTS to neighboring Florida counties and to middle & high schools.

Contact Person

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Draeger, V. (2020). The Health Education and Relationship Training Services (HEARTS) - The St. Petersburg Rotary

Draeger, V. (2020). The Health Education and Relationship Training Services (HEARTS) - Pinellas County Small Business Consortium

Satcher, M., & Draeger, V. (2020). The Health Education and Relationship Training Services (HEARTS) - Florida Health Department, Pinellas County

Satcher, M., & Draeger, V. (2020). The Health Education and Relationship Training Services (HEARTS) - The Non-profit Connect
