

Linking Families and Teens: Reducing Teen Pregnancy by Increasing Family Connectedness and Youth Self-Efficacy

The Office of Population Affairs (OPA) funded the development and rigorous evaluation of the Linking Families and Teens (LiFT) program to determine if it is an effective approach for preventing teen pregnancy and improving communication about pregnancy prevention with supportive adult(s). This program joins the ranks of Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP) programs that have experienced positive outcomes when evaluated for effectiveness. OPA's TPP Tier 2 grantees develop, replicate, refine, and rigorously evaluate additional models and innovative strategies to reduce teen pregnancy. The TPP programs that experience favorable impacts are then considered evidence-based and become eligible to replicate in communities across the country.

Program Overview

LiFT is an innovative program designed for families and youth ages 13 to 19 in rural communities. Its goal is reducing unplanned teen pregnancies by increasing family connectedness and increasing youth's self-efficacy, knowledge, and skills related to sexual health.

LiFT is a two-module curriculum workshop for youth and their parenting adults. Topics for youth include communication skills, condom use, and skill building to access sexual healthcare resources. For parenting adults, topics include building a climate of trust and open communication with youth about sexual health. Trained and certified facilitators deliver each 2.5-hour module. Youth and parents participate in simultaneous but separate programming in community locations such as schools or health care settings. Youth and parenting adults also receive participant guides that encourage communication between them. Facilitators encourage youth and parenting adults to opt-in to receive weekly texts that offer additional resources and suggestions for fun ways families can communicate; these continue for 12 weeks after the workshop. Finally, parenting adults receive a phone call from the facilitator 3 to 5 weeks after the workshop to reinforce the skills learned during the program.

Program/Intervention Name

Linking Families & Teens/ Uniendo Familias y Jovenes (LiFT)

Program Overview

A family connection program consisting of two 2.5-hour modules for high-school aged teens and their parenting adults living in rural communities across the United States. LiFT also includes a 12-week text message component for youth and the parenting adult and a booster call with the parenting adult to provide additional support, resources, and encouragement.

Setting

Rural communities in Alaska, Hawai'i, Idaho, Oregon, Utah, and Washington

Population

Teens ages 13 to 19 and their parent(s) or supportive adult(s)

Type/Mode

Small Groups

Length/Duration

Two 2.5-hour modules of programming with 12-week text message component and booster call

Evaluation Study Design and Results

The evaluation design was a cluster randomized controlled trial. Families (dyads of youth and their parenting adults) were randomly assigned to participate in the intervention or comparison group. The comparison group did not receive LiFT programming but had access to any other programming available in the community.

Both intervention and comparison group participants received existing services available within the broader community, which included sexual education delivered in the local school system. Study staff tracked access to other TPP programming offered at the study sites. Facilitators offered parenting adults in the comparison group a brief one- or two-hour parenting workshop after the final follow-up data collection. All study participants were surveyed at two points in time: (1) at the kickoff event or individual meetings before random assignment (baseline) and (2) immediately post-program. In addition, youth were surveyed one year following the LiFT workshop. An implementation evaluation assessed attendance, fidelity, and quality.

LiFT was found to be effective at improving competency and communication related to sexual risk, and improved teen pregnancy rates among those receiving the intervention. Adolescents receiving the LiFT intervention had lower pregnancy rates, reported improved competency to prevent pregnancy and communication about pregnancy prevention with supportive adult(s) compared to adolescents in the control group.



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