

Background

- Over 1 million youth run away each year
- While on the run, risk of trauma, particularly sexual exploitation is magnified
- Sexual exploitation has been connected to depression, suicide, homicide, substance use, and trauma responses

Purpose

To investigate the influence of the Minnesota Runaway Intervention Program (RIP) on trauma responses at 3, 6, and 12 months post enrollment.

Intervention (RIP)

- Designed by advanced practice nurses
- Home visiting
- Intensive case management
- Empowerment groups

Methods

Subjects. Youth who have run away at least once and have a history of extra-familial sexual violence or sexual exploitation were enrolled in RIP between 2008 and 2015 in the St. Paul area were assessed for trauma responses at enrollment and at 3, 6, and/or 12 months post enrollment.

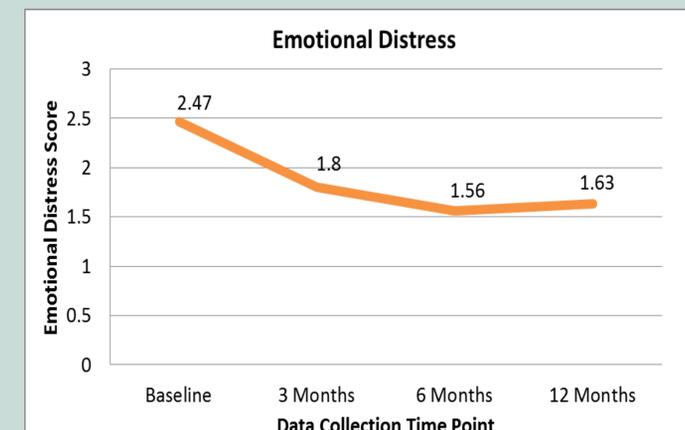
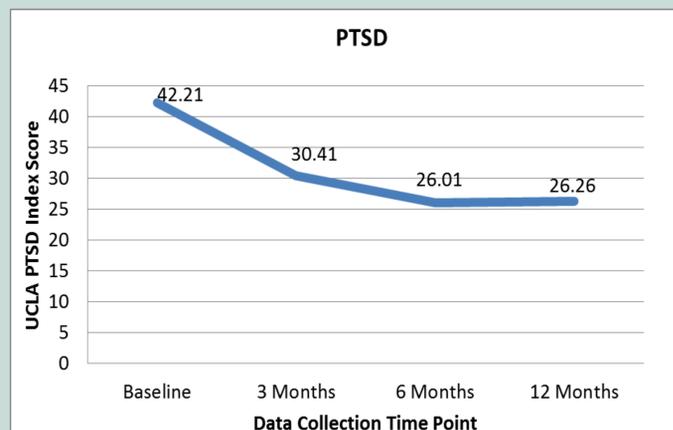
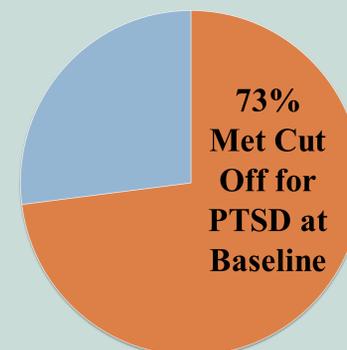
Measures. Trauma responses were measured using the UCLA PTSD Index, plus a 4-item scale of emotional distress in the past 30 days.

Analysis. Growth curve modeling was used to implicitly impute missing data. A repeated measures ANOVA was used to assess if trauma responses changed over time, and a growth curve analysis was conducted using dose variables (i.e. RN visits, parent visits, case management visits, and empowerment group attendance) to determine what aspects of the intervention independently predicted any change.

Results

Sample (N=361)

- Ages 11-17
- 96% girls



Independent predictors of decrease in PTSD symptoms:

- RN visits ($p < 0.001$)
- Empowerment groups ($p = 0.01$)

Independent predictors of decrease of emotional distress:

- RN visits ($p < 0.001$)
- Empowerment groups ($p < 0.001$)



Photo credit: Deccan Chronicle

Conclusion

- RIP, particularly the RN visits and empowerment group elements of the intervention, had an influence on decreasing trauma responses in runaway youth with a history of sexual violence after 3 and 6 months of enrollment, and those decreases were maintained at 12 months.
- Given the high rates of PTSD and emotional distress among runaways who have been sexually exploited or experience other sexual violence, approaches such as RIP offer promise for improving mental health outcomes.

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