Teen Leadership Academy: A Novel Intervention for Reducing Substance Use and Enhancing Community Advocacy Among Youth in a Rural Midwestern County

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Sponsored by the Rusk County Youth Council and Indianhead Community Action Agency.
Rusk County, Wisconsin

- Population: 14,333
  - Largest town Ladysmith, pop. 3,285
- Density: 16.2 people per square mile
  - Wisconsin average: 105.0
- Poverty Level: 18.7%
- Median Income: $38,658
  - Wisconsin average: $52,413
- Free and Reduced Lunch: 62%
- Children in Poverty: 30%
- County Health Ranking: 71st out of 72
Lack of Hope for the Future

• Youth lack hope for the future.
  – People with Bachelor’s Degree or Higher: 14.3%

• Levels of parent education:
  – College degree: 7%
  – Attending some college: 33%
  – High school diploma: 39%
  – No diploma: 21%

Too often, parents are not supportive of their children moving on to college.
Community That Values Youth?

• “There are lots of adults in my neighborhood I could talk to about something important.”
  – 62% answered no

• “There are people in my neighborhood who are proud of me when I do something well.”
  – 54% answered no
Improvement

• 2014 Community Health Improvement Plan
  – #1: Youth behavioral health (depression)
  – #2: Youth substance use

• CTC data was used in determining these priorities.

• The planning process was open to the entire community, and members of all community sectors were present.
HOW THE TLA CAME ABOUT: 
FORMATION OF A COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP
HWPP

• 2012 Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Planning award granted for collaboration between Indian Head Community Action Agency and the Medical College of Wisconsin
• Community and Adolescent assessment of high risk taking behaviors
  - alcohol
  - drugs
  - violence
  - depression
HWPP

• Communities that Care Survey indicated high number of students with depression

• Rusk county schools involved
  - set aside time to discuss issues
  - trained teachers/staff on Teen Intervene
HWPP

- Next step:
- Indian Head Community Action Agency and the Medical College of Wisconsin awarded the Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Implementation Grant

Focus:
- Policy Change
- Development of Teen Leadership Academy
THE TLA PROGRAM

3 Days of Leadership Training

Action Plans

Social Change, Advocacy, Empowerment & Youth Voice
Student Selection

- Freshman or Sophomore
- Leadership Potential
- Passing classes
Foundation for TLA

• Student Voice is Essential
• Youth Lead, Adults Guide
• Gaining Advocacy Skills, Empowering Youth
Vision & Perspective
Real World Seed Challenge - Who is the winner? How does vision impact the outcome? How does perspective?

Training: Day 1

Action Planning
What is going on in each community? What are the concerns for students?
Action Plans

Each school developed individual action plans to address issues within their own communities.
# Youth Voice = Action Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort 1</th>
<th>Cohort 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Bullying-Student Empowerment</td>
<td>• School Climate</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Substance Use</td>
<td>• Academic Support/Tutoring</td>
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<td>• Self Worth/Self Respect &amp; Empowerment</td>
<td>• Poverty</td>
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<td>• Student Involvement: Extra/Co-Curriculars</td>
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<td>• Student Connections &amp; Substance Use</td>
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Training: Day 2

Individual Strengths
How do individual strengths impact the team?

Action Planning
What is going well?
What roadblocks are emerging?
Training: Day 3

Communication & Relationships

How does one work with someone they don’t care for?

What about *conflicts*?

How does *communication style* impact outcomes?
Symposium: Day 3

Community leaders, parents, government and school officials are invited to learn about TLA and the student projects.

Each group of students have the opportunity to voice their thoughts and concerns while giving an overview of their projects.
Graduation: Day 3

After completing the Academy, the students are acknowledged for their dedication and determination through a graduation ceremony.
Lessons Learned: 1

Action Plans need to focus on **Sustainability** and the **Impact** they will have.
Lessons Learned: 2

School staff (adult guides) need to be **invested** in this process and project.

The students and school staff work on their action projects in the time between TLA training days.
Lessons Learned: 3

School staff (adult guides) need to be **supported** in this process and project.

We established due dates for updates to ensure all groups are making progress.
Lessons Learned: 4

Due to our lack of resources (rural area with high poverty), it has been a struggle to stay connected with the students to support them.

Communication and student support are essential.
OUTCOME DATA
Outcome Goal Measures

- Substance Abuse/Risky Behavior
- Community Engagement/Connectedness
- Resiliency/Self-Efficacy

Hypothesis: Improvement would be seen in all 3 areas after youth engagement in the TLA
Evaluation Overview

• Community-Wide Evaluation:
  – Communities that Care Survey (CTC Survey)

• Evaluation of TLA Participants:
  – Child Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM)
  – Self-Created TLA Surveys
  – Teacher Interviews
Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM)

• A measure of resources available to youth that may bolster their resilience

• Good reliability and validity (Liebenberg et al, 2012)

• Available online at: http://www.resilienceresearch.org/research/resources/tools/33-the-child-and-youth-resilience-measure-cyrm
CYRM Subscales

• Individual Capacities/Resources
  – Personal Skills
  – Peer Support
  – Social Skills
• Relationships with Primary Caregivers
  – Physical and Psychological Caregiving
• Contextual Factors facilitating a sense of belonging
  – Spiritual
  – Educational
  – Cultural
TLA Pre- and Mid-Year Surveys

• Self-created survey designed to assess impact of TLA on participants

• 4 broad content areas:
  – Substance Use/Other Risk Behaviors
  – Self-Efficacy/Goal Orientation
  – Quality of Relationships
  – Constructive/Positive Activities
TLA Participants

• Cohort 2 = 38 participants

• **Day 1** (Pre): 10/21/15 **Day 2** (Mid): 1/13/16

• Demographics:
  – **Age**: Age 15 = 50%, Age 14 = 33%, Age 16 = 17%
  – **Gender**: 61% Female, 39% Male
  – **Ethnicity**: 94% Caucasian
    3% Multiracial
    3% No Response
AODA/Risky Behaviors: CTC Survey

Reported Lifetime Substance Use

- Cigarettes
- Alcohol
- Sniffed glue, aerosol spray, gas
- Marijuana
- Prescription Drugs

2015 vs 2016
AODA/Risky Behaviors: CTC Survey

Question: Your friends would feel it was “wrong” or “very wrong” if you:

- Smoked Cigarettes
- Smoked Marijuana
- Took Prescription Drugs
- Had 1 or 2 alcoholic drinks/day

Bar chart showing the percentage of students who think it would be wrong to perform these actions.
AODA/Risky Behaviors: TLA Survey

Number of participants who reported the following behaviors:

- Cigarettes
- Marijuana
- Alcohol
- Rx Drugs
- Other Drugs
- Car Under AODA
- Out Past Curfew
- Other Behaviors

Graph showing the comparison of behaviors on Day 1 and Day 2.
AODA/Risky Behaviors: TLA Survey

• Trending Significance:

“Stayed Out Past Curfew”  \( p = 0.109 \)
Connectedness/Engagement: CYRM

• Paired Sample T-Test
• $p \leq 0.05$ was considered significant

• Significant Change: Individual Question
  “I enjoy my community’s traditions”
Subscale: Contextual Factors (Cultural)
  $p = 0.37$
Connectedness/Engagement: CYRM

- **Trending Significance**: CYRM Subscales

- Physical Caregiving Subscale
  
  $p = 0.199$
Connectedness/Engagement: TLA Surveys

• Paired Sample T-Test

• Significant Change:
  “I engaged in constructive activities outside of school”
  \[ p = 0.037 \]
Sometimes I think life is not worth it
At times I am no good at all
All in all, I think I am a failure
Felt depressed most days in past year

Reported Symptoms of Depression/Poor Self-Concept

2015
2016
Resiliency/Self Efficacy: CYRM

**Trending Significance:** Individual Questions

- “I cooperate with people around me”
  Subscale: Individual Capacities (Personal Skills)
  \( p = 0.129 \)

- “I am aware of my own strengths”
  Subscale: Individual Capacities (Personal Skills)
  \( p = 0.174 \)
Resiliency/Self Efficacy: CYRM

Trending Significance: Subscale

• Spiritual Subscale

  \[ p = 0.085 \]
Resiliency/Self Efficacy: TLA Survey

Trending Significance:

“I have something valuable to offer”

$p = 0.147$
Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge our research assistant, Eva Igler, for her assistance with performing statistical analyses.
READY TO DEVELOP A
TEEN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY?!?
Partnerships

- Who are the stakeholders in your community?
  - What do they offer?
    - Schools (Students & Personnel)
    - Law Enforcement (Mentoring)
    - Businesses (Funding and Support)
    - Community Coalitions (Volunteers)
    - Public Health, Community Organizations, and More (Volunteers, facilitation skills, funding and support)
  - What are you asking of them?
    - Approach with specific needs.
    - Everyone is busy – Respect their time
    - If you need help planning, be honest and tell them that.

- Partnerships are critical to success with TLA!
Partners

Based on Communities that Care Theoretical Framework

Medical College of Wisconsin

- Academic Partner
- Public Health Training
- Youth Intervention Services
- Toolkit Development
- Teen Leadership Academy

RCYC

- Youth
- Parent
- Business
- Media
- Schools
- Healthcare Professionals
- Religious/Fraternial Organizations
- Law Enforcement
- Civic Groups
- Other organizations involved in reducing substance abuse

Indianhead Community Action Agency

- Staffing: Director Coordinator Evaluator
- Oversight
- Reporting
- Evaluation
- Coordination
- Toolkit Development
- Teen Leadership Academy

ICAA Board of Directors

Finance

Fiscal Operations

WI Fresh Start

RC Mental Health Coalition

3 School Districts

Public Health: WIC

Policy

Referrals

Screening

Staff Training

Toolkit Development

Teen Leadership Academy

RRYP
Other Considerations?

• Who will be invited?
  – What age group?
  – Academic performance
    • “A” students?
    • Those struggling?
    • Anyone with leadership potential?

• Where will you host it?

• Who will facilitate?
Funding

• Grant Funds
  – Online Databases
  – Foundation Directories

• Sponsorships
  – Local businesses/organizations

• Department funds

• Fundraising/Donations
VIDEO PRESENTATION