



Triangle SST Program: Safety and Self-Advocacy Training For Successful Transitions from School to Adult Life

A demonstration pilot study made possible by the Deborah Munroe Noonan Memorial Research Fund

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Background

Overview: Individuals with disabilities in the U.S. continue to have worse employment outcomes than the general population. Only 18.7% of persons with a disability (ages 16 and over) are employed as compared with 64% of the general population (Bureau of Labor Statistics, October 2012). The poverty rate for people with disabilities is more than twice that of people without disabilities (27.9% vs. 12.5%) (DeNavas-Walt et al., 2010). Much needed programs have been created across the country to address this issue. They focus on developing workforce skills and employment opportunities for young adults transitioning from school to careers. Given that people with disabilities experience twice the level of violence as do people without disabilities (National Crime Victimization Survey, 2008), transition brings with it concerns of increased vulnerability to abuse as individuals join the general workforce, travel to and from worksites, and move out of sheltered environments. To successfully engage this population in positive work experiences, transition programs need to focus on developing participants' safety self-advocacy skills.

Purpose of Project: The purpose of the Safety and Self-Advocacy Training for Successful Transitions from School to Adult Life (SST) project is to address these issues by assisting youth with disabilities in transition to adulthood to develop safety and self-advocacy strategies. The main objectives of the study were (1) to teach participants to make good decisions, develop safety and self-advocacy skills, and recognize healthy relationships; and (2) to explore the feasibility of implementing the SST intervention in an established school-to-career program.

Intervention

Who	3 groups (2 male, 1 female) of Triangle school-to-career participants
What	Ten 90 minute sessions- 7 IMPACT sessions on safety and self-defense: Realistic simulations of potentially unsafe situations ranging from low-level intrusions to high-level imminent violence. Scenarios include bullying, unwanted attention, attempted abduction & familiar sexual abuse. 2 MASS sessions in self-advocacy: One session focusing on self-advocacy and one session on self-determination including role playing, speaking up, goals, friendships, and families. 1 session from CHA about healthy and safe relationships Focused on consent and sexual boundaries, same concerns as other teens.
Where	Sessions took place at Triangle in Malden, MA
When	Groups met for 10 consecutive weeks (October 2011-June 2012)

Evaluation



- Pre/post design with comparison group:
- Easter Seals comparison group - individuals similar to Triangle's STC participants but NOT involved in an intervention such as SST
- Mixed methods:
 - Quantitative (surveys) and Qualitative (interviews)

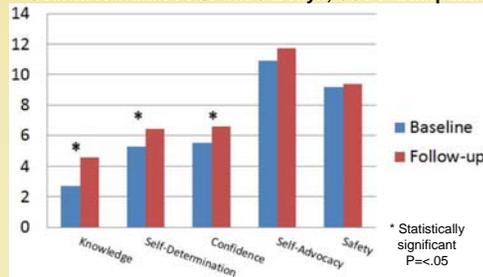
Results

Sample Size: Triangle N=17 (15 boys and 2 girls); Easter Seals N=8*

Attendance: Over 80% of participants attended ≥ 80% of sessions.

*Results below do not include data from comparison group due to limited sample size.

Overall Results: Pre/Post Surveys, SST Participants



* P values determined from McNemar's test

Exploratory Analysis of Generalized Self-Efficacy (GSE) Subgroups

Compared participants with high (>50th) vs. low GSE score (>50th) at baseline.

Results = Participants with low GSE scores at baseline increased their GSE scores significantly* at follow-up. There was no significant change in GSE scores at follow-up for those with high GSE scores at baseline.

* p<.05; P values determined from paired sample t-tests

Results

Participant Interview Summary (N=6)

- Enjoyed training, especially moving around while practicing
- Discussed feeling more confident, safer, more able to say "no"
- Half said they already had a chance to use new skills including safety and awareness, self-advocacy, and goal-setting

Parent Interview Summary (N = 6)

- Supported the intervention and noticed some subtle change but did not feel well-informed
- Parent suggestions:
 - Make SST classes part of regular STC content
 - More parental involvement
 - Include sessions on:
 - Online safety/cyber-bullying
 - Self-calming techniques

Discussion

Though we experienced challenges around developing an appropriate size comparison group, identifying girls to participate in the evaluation (many girls in Triangle's STC program had already taken IMPACT), and finding valid questions to capture participants' feelings of safety, this pilot study produced preliminary evidence of program effectiveness and feasibility. Analysis found statistically significant changes in participants around safety and self-advocacy knowledge, self-determination, and confidence. A subpopulation of participants experienced statistically significant change in self-efficacy. Participants enjoyed the training and parents supported its inclusion in a school-to-career program.

Next Steps:

SST Program - Evaluation findings will be used to improve the SST program. Some planned changes include weaving messages from all three program components throughout the 10 session training, expanding curriculum to include other safety topics such as cyber-bullying, and increasing parental involvement. Efforts are underway to determine how SST can be integrated into the established school-to-career program activities.

Current and Future Safety and Self-Advocacy Programming and Evaluation - The survey developed for the SST study has been refined and is currently being used to evaluate IMPACT: Ability trainings in the Boston Public Schools. This study has also provided preliminary data for numerous Triangle initiated grant proposals that address safety and self-advocacy issues for youth with disabilities.

Project Collaborators: Triangle; Institute for Community Health; IMPACT; Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong; Cambridge Health Alliance; Easter Seals; Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center- Center for Violence Prevention and Recovery

Works Cited: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, [Accessed November 26, 2012]. [http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empst106.htm]; DeNavas-Walt, Carmen, Bernadette D. Proctor, and Jessica C. Smith, U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, P60-239, Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2010, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 2011.; Harrell, Erka, and Michael R. Rand. 2010. "National Crime Victimization Survey, 2008: Crime Against People with Disabilities, 2008". Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, NCJ 231328.