Background & Significance

- Incarcerated youth are disproportionately affected by mental health challenges
- There is a paucity of effective mental health interventions for incarcerated youth
  - 2 programs on Blueprints, 10 programs on CrimeSolutions.gov
- There is a lack of rigorous evaluation of programming for incarcerated youth
- Majority of studies are pre-post design
- The pilot study of the WRITE ON (Writing and Reflecting on Identity To Empower Ourselves as Narrators) Intervention was conducted to:
  1. Evaluate youths satisfaction and response to programming
  2. Evaluate the efficacy of an innovative writing based intervention

This Study

- WRITE ON was piloted in 4 non-secure detention (NSD) sites in NYC in summer 2014
- This pilot evaluation aims to:
  1. Examine youth satisfaction and learning → Satisfaction surveys
  2. Compare mental health outcomes of youth receiving WRITE ON intervention as compared to a matched control group → Outcome data
  3. Learn about youth’s experiences with the WRITE ON intervention → Qualitative data

Study Design

- Quasi-experimental multi-method evaluation of a pilot intervention, sites randomly assigned to WRITE ON or Control Support Group (CSG)
  - Self-report assessments administered at 4 time points (identical protocols employed for WRITE ON and CSG conditions)
  - Youth who had completed at least 50% of WRITE ON were invited to be interviewed

Results

Satisfaction Survey Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CSG</th>
<th>WRITE ON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mental Health Outcomes

- Resilience

Youth’s Perceptions of WRITE ON

- Emotional Effects
  - "I’m learning… to be more open and that it’s okay to… for people to hear what you have to say."
- Peer Relationships
  - "[Sharing my writing with my peers] just like touched me, in my heart. I didn’t really expect that feedback."

Youth’s Perceptions (continued)

- Evaluation of WRITE ON
  - "The program was helping us, we were (inaudible) writing because we were getting stuff off our chest that we wouldn’t say to each other or say to anyone."
  - "I mean, one thing that can probably… you guys can probably do is maybe just… just for not… not just for NSD. Maybe you guys should do like a whole facility, like just for girls, and maybe like have this as a regular program."

Conclusions

- Results suggest that youth in the WRITE ON intervention were engaged and satisfied with the program
- The piloted WRITE ON intervention significantly increased resilience in youth receiving the intervention as compared to those in a matched control group
- Qualitative data highlight three domains of interest: emotional effects, peer relationships, and positive evaluation of the program
- Future directions include further evaluation of the WRITE ON intervention through the use of intent-to-treat randomized controlled trials

Contact

Additional questions can be directed to Dr. Shabnam Javdani (shabnam.javdani@nyu.edu) and Chloe Greenbaum (chloe.greenbaum@nyu.edu).