Sidney LGBTQ Youth

Program Evaluation for 2020-2021

Program Overview:
Sidney LGBTQ Youth

- LGBTQ Youth met twice a month for the duration of the in-person program
- Members received mental health-oriented resources in the mail monthly, including journals that contained evidence-based activities for improving mental well-being
- In-person meetings focused on building resilience
- In-person meetings included guest educators who covered the following topics:
  - Suicide prevention
  - Substance Use Prevention
  - Tobacco Use Prevention
  - Nutrition Education
- Online components such as the group discord server and instagram group chat helped students stay connected between meetings

Student Feedback: Measures of Central Tendency

	Safe Env.	Leader Respect	Taught Coping	Taught Resources	Guest Ed Respect	Journal Learning
Averages	5	5	4	5	4	4
Median	5	5	5	5	4	4
Mode	5	5	5	5	4	3

Scale Used:

Strongly Agree (5) **Agree** (4) **Neutral** (3) **Disagree** (2) **Strongly Disagree** (1)

Student Feedback:
Correlations of Participation and Benefits

- There was no meaningful correlation (+0.1) between attending meetings frequently and learning about how to cope with challenging situations.

- There was a moderate negative correlation (-0.49) between meeting attendance and learning about resources for mental health.

- There was a moderately strong correlation (+0.88) between writing in journals frequently and learning mental health skills from journals.

Student Feedback: Qualitative Responses

"What was your favorite part of SLY?"

- ***Social Aspects: 3 responses***
- Program Activities: 2 responses
    - Guest Educators: 1 response
    - Art Activities: 1 response
- Self-Expression: 1 response
- Not Sure: 1 response

"If you could change one thing about SLY what would it be?"

- ***"Nothing": 4 responses***
- "Not Sure": 2 responses

gay people new covid

meeting

projects

year talking

friends everyone

art

nicotine

Discussion of Results

- Students unanimously agreed that the leaders of SLY made them feel safe and respected, and that SLY felt like a safe environment to be themselves.
- Students agreed that guest educators made them feel safe and respected.
- Guest educator days had the highest attendance.
- Attendance and learning to cope with challenges were not correlated, but students reported that they agreed that SLY helped them learn to deal with challenges in a healthy way.
    - Two possible explanations are that the remote aspects of the program may have helped facilitate learning, or that students benefited from just attending a few meetings.
- Students agreed that SLY taught them about resources, but meeting attendance was moderately negatively correlated with learning about resources.
    - Resources were also distributed through the mail and in the SLY Discord. Additionally, only one meeting explicitly provided resources.
- Using journals was positively correlated with learning mental health skills from Journals.

Program Weaknesses

- Due to spikes in COVID-19 cases, SLY was unable to meet at the start of the school year; this decreased the number of meetings we were able to have
- The evaluation methods used should be improved for next year and should include:
  - A valid and reliable measure of the mental health constructs that the program is focused on
  - Evaluations at the start and end of the year
  - Attendance tracking
  - An evaluation of whether higher attendance is correlated with improvements in mental health constructs being evaluated
- Having a youth-led group created issues with sustainability; long-term adult involvement is a needed component for this to be a sustainable program

Key Takeaways:
Enhancing Youth Groups in Richland County

- Pre-existing youth groups and clubs can be successfully used as a space to promote mental health
- Guest educators can be brought to youth groups to promote health
- Social media can be used to keep young people connected
- Integrating multiple modes of connection and communication may help insure that young people benefit from programs
- Sustainability and comprehensive assessment plans are needed in youth-led group programming