

Title:

Evaluating a Peer Education HIV/AIDS Program at a Higher Education Institution in South Africa

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Session Title:

Patient Education for Vulnerable Populations

Slot:

E 03: Sunday, 29 October 2017: 4:15 PM-5:00 PM

Scheduled Time:

4:35 PM

Keywords:

Best Practice, HIV/AIDS and Peer educators

References:

1.HEAIDS.2010.HIV/AIDS prevention good practice.Strategies for Public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)in South Africa.Pretoria:Higher Education South Africa

2.From Theory to Practice in Peer Education: Training of Trainers

Manual. <http://www.fhi.org/NR/rdonlyres/e3lxovwbju6esfwy7jb33argd4y5uknpyniast4r5jk2vvthsp6vt-5somidzf762cym6imrd75k/Section1enyt.pdf>. (Accessed, 5 September 2010).

3 Singhal, A. (no date). HIV/AIDS and Communication for Behaviour and Social Change: Programme Experiences, examples and the Way forward. International Workshop. UNAIDS. Department of Policy, Strategy and Research.

Abstract Summary:

To gain an understanding of how to empower peer educators at higher education institutions regarding taking responsibility for their own sexuality and HIV/AIDS prevention. Communication should be strengthened for an effective program.

Learning Activity:

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
The learner will be able to identify best practices to be applied in an HIV/AIDS peer education program	The value of self reflection by both peer educator and trainer; regular workshops for training should be presented in a more creative manner. These workshops should focus on life skills training as well.
The learner will be able to discuss measures required for dealing with challenges for an HIV/AIDS peer education program.	Communication between trainers and peer educators , poses one of the biggest challenges. Language is a big barrier. Also balancing academic timetables with peer educators duties. pose a major challenge

Abstract Text:

Background: The one problem that we are facing as a nation is the scourge of the HIV/AIDS pandemic throughout Africa. Education seems to be one of the biggest weapons to fight this pandemic; hence it is expected of Higher Education Institution (HEIs) to respond to this problem in a meaningful manner in order to make HIV/AIDS a visible reality on all our campuses. This research was prompted, based on the feedback of a HEAIDS report in 2008, that no peer education program at HEIs were monitored and evaluated. The objective was to identify various best practices and challenges of these peer education training programs at an HEI in the Western Cape.

Methods: The setting was a HEI. The key population was the students who were selected between 2010 and 2011 academic years to serve as peer educators for HIV/AIDS education in the selected HEI. These students were selected at the beginning of each academic year to participate in this program, participation was voluntary. Focus group interviews were used, to collect data. 40 Peer educators participated in this research project. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and thematic content analysis was applied to interpret and analyzed the data. Where necessary, experts in the field are called upon to assist. All ethical considerations were adhered to.

Results: For Best Practices, the following was evident: Reflection needs to be focused on during training sessions for both trainers and peer educators. This will assist both parties to translate theory into practice. Trainers and peer educators will also have to self-reflect on their own identities and how these came to be shaped.

Challenges were as follows: Peer educators reported that HIV/AIDS information received was outdated and the same program content was offered in the last 3 years. Training courses were overloaded with information. Lack of communication between trainers and peer educators, were also a major obstacle. The use of the English language predominantly in sessions, was also problematic, as the majority of the peer educators were XHOSA speaking.

Conclusions: If the lifespan of the peer education training programs on HEIs is intensified and more students are engaged in these programs, it would have the potential to develop students into advocacy-orientated communities that would eventually challenge the HIV/AIDS pandemic through united mobilized action. HEIs should also provide more financial assistance to make these programs more viable.