BRIDGING YOUTH RELATIONSHIPS FROM CLUBHOUSE TO TEEN CENTER:
A CURRICULUM FOR YOUTH LED PEER-ORIENTATION PROGRAM

By

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Abstract

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Bridging the gap between youth populations, served through a community focused non-profit organization, can enhance the development of leadership skills in youth. This project was structured around a theoretical framework for positive youth development, which allows the teens to use skills that they already contain to solve problems that they may face (Damon, 2004, p.13). The goal of this project was to create a three-week curriculum that facilitates stronger connections between members at the Clubhouse and the Teen Center. The objective of the curriculum was to increase attendance by reinforcing the transition from the Clubhouse to the Teen Center, as well as fostering a sense of community between the facilities and the populations. Also included in the transition program is an orientation that focuses on four key points: facility collaboration, youth input for programming, outreach, and tour of the new site. At the end of the project, the Teen Center members created an Orientation for members transitioning from the Clubhouse to the Teen Center.
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Introduction

This Master’s project developed a curriculum for the Boys & Girls Club (BGC), which is a non-profit agency that works with children within a rural, northern California city. This curriculum accomplished three goals: it improved members connections with the community, established itself as a sustainable program and empowered the members to want to continue leading and growing into more influential leaders at the Teen Center. It was built around a positive youth development (PYD) framework (Damon, 2014). The framework has been defined in the literature review, but in short, it uses youth experiences and guidance to help solve problems that arise within the program. Along with PYD, the curriculum also used middle school orientation models as a structure. The curriculum used “near peer” mentoring to form a better connection with the members of the Clubhouse. Near peer mentoring is a term used to refer to a mentorship relationship between peers with an age difference between one and five years. Forming bonds between members built a sustainable connection between the two sites, which helped encourage members from the Clubhouse to continue participation at the Teen Center.

History of BGC

The first Boys & Girls Club was started in 1860 in Hartford, Connecticut when Mary Goodwin, Alice Goodwin, and Elizabeth Hammersley brought in boys who were roaming the streets (Boys & Girls Club of America, 2014). Goodwin, Goodwin, and Hammersley thought these boys should have a positive alternative to being left on their
own. Back then, the organization was only known as the Boys Club and was later named the Boys Club of America in 1931. It was not until 1990 that it was re-named the Boys & Girls Club of America (Boys & Girls Club of America, 2014).

The mission of the BGC is “to enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their potential as productive, caring, responsible, citizens” (Boys & Girls Club of America, 2014). The club seeks to complete this mission by focusing on five key areas at each club site: education, character and leadership programs, health and life skills, arts, and sports, fitness and recreation. In 2014, there were 4,175 chartered clubs. Some 1,500 are connected to schools; around 300 are in public housing, while another 200 are on Native American lands. Considering the age groups that attend BGC, 30% of the members are 10-12 years old; 19% are 13-15 years old, and only 10% of the members are 16 and older (Boys & Girls Club of America, 2014).

**Purpose of Project**

In my first year as an MSW student, I had the opportunity to intern with the local Boys & Girls Club and was able to observe the value of their programs. When selecting a Master's project that would have value and personal meaning, I chose to return to the Boys & Girls Club in order to be of service. Upon asking my community partner about a challenge they were facing, they identified the gap in the transition process between the Clubhouse program that was serving up to 90 members a day and the Teen Center program, which typically serves 20-25 members in a day. Many other Boys & Girls Club sites have the same age group in the same building, but each site tends to handle how
they divide the groups differently. For the local program, they divide the ages 5-12 at the Clubhouse and ages 13-18 at the Teen Center.

Currently, many children who participate in the Clubhouse do not transition on to the Teen Center. The BGC knows this is a problem, but does not know why large numbers of members are not transitioning to the Teen Center. This project created a program that can be implemented year after year to establish more connections between the Clubhouse and Teen Center as well as between the incoming members and current member leaders at the Teen Center. This program was created to be a consistent model of how to build and maintain this connection and can be ran, essentially, using the same methods each year with minor modifications based on interests and skills of the members. The input and the ideas will be coming from different members of the Boys & Girls Club. Not only does this program have value, there is also organizational interest from the executive director, who was really excited for the curriculum’s potential to bring more members to the Teen Center and build a stronger BGC.

The project focused on the development of a curriculum, which was then implemented at the Boys & Girls Club. The target population was Teen Center members interested in leadership and skill development. The curriculum created an opportunity for peer led engagement and eased the transition into a new environment. Transitional phases, for kids at this age, can often lead to different types of anxiety, making the transition worse for the person involved (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006). There are ways to reduce the anxiety, and one of them is by providing a program for the students specifically focused on transitions (Kindle, 2000; Kingery, Erdley & Marshall, 2011).
Implementing this program at the Teen Center supported a friendlier, more caring atmosphere, which allowed members to establish trusting relationships. Starting to foster these bridges and bonds reinforced an inclusive and integrated environment. Connecting these peer leaders with the incoming members from the other site encouraged the incoming Teen Center members to continue participation in hopes to increase membership at the BCG.

Currently, at the Teen Center, members are broken off into their own groups, even if they have the same interests as other groups. During my time there, I noticed that some of the members stood out above the rest; they had this go-to quality that could rally a bunch of kids to get excited about an upcoming event or program. These are the leaders who were targeted for this program and also members who are ready and willing to bring a new perspective to the way that things were run.

This curriculum was designed specifically for local members to transition at BGC sites. There are many programs within this community that teach kids how to be independent, give them social living skills, and a place to feel safe. This project focused on utilizing near peers to connect incoming members to their new BGC site. In other attempts at connecting the two sites, staff members have offered graduation ceremonies for the younger members when they reach the age limit at the Clubhouse. The Clubhouse also has a mentoring system in which that allows Teen Center members to go to the Clubhouse and mentoring younger members. My curriculum blended these two approaches to ease the transition between the two sites and increased membership at the Boys & Girls Club. The overall goal of this project worked on creating a caring
community made up of members from several different schools across Boys & Girls Club sites.
**Literature Review**

The literature review consists of three themes. The first is Positive Youth Development (PYD), which focused on how youth can learn from each other and that adults do not have to be present for growth to happen. The second theme was transition programing. Middle school orientation provided the foundation for what the transition programing looked like. The last theme for the project was peer mentoring. Peer mentoring brought the other two themes together by having the Teen Center members develop a transition program. The leaders at the Teen Center demonstrated peer-mentoring skills when the younger kids arrived.

**Positive Youth Development**

Positive youth development is a theoretical framework that utilizes youth skills and experiences as a solution to help solve a problem within a given situation. Damon explains, “The field of positive youth development focuses on each and every child’s unique talents strengths, interests, and future potential” (2004, p.13). PYD encourages youth to build confidence in themselves, while promoting them to grow within a community that is accepting of their skills and experiences. This framework is commonly used in the school setting, which is fitting. If used correctly, a whole school will be full of youth that can benefit from each other's unique skills. Focusing on youth’s talents gives them something that they are able to excel at and this approach allows for kids to learn more within the same situation (Damon, 2004, p.15). While analyzing this approach it
was important to consider what qualities youth could bring to each situation. The youth
that are involved in PYD felt more empowered to be a part of the solution instead of
feeling like they were part of the problem.

Programs that use PYD are intended to support growth within five areas known as
the Five C’s, “...positive development that can be achieved when youth strengths find a
fit in their developmental context can be operationalized by Five Cs: Competence,
Confidence, Connection, Character, and Caring” (Crocetti, Erentaite, & Z’ukauskiene,
2004, p. 1820). The Five C’s show what type of skills or traits youth can develop or
identify within themselves. The five traits are all attributes that can be shared among each
other and can bring the community together and make it stronger.

Another benefit of the PYD framework is the creation of space where youth can
feel more connected and involved in their community. Youth can “expand their capacity
to contribute to a larger community, promoted a sense of community, confidence for the
members...” (McKay, Sanders & Wroblewski, 2011, p.22). PYD lets youth “contribute to
their own development, however, they can act as change agents in their families, peer
groups, and communities” (McKay et al., 2011, p.22). The idea of building community
was also stated by Crocetti and colleagues. They asserted, “youth are likely to become
civically engaged when they perceive they have the competence to contribute to their
society and the confidence that their actions are worthwhile” (2004, p.1820). Building
community is why McKay and colleagues said, “PYD is an approach to school social
work that has a micro level impact with a macro level reach” (2011, p.18).
Positive youth development demonstrates that youth can be used to help solve problems while also connecting them to a community. It allowed youth to grow interpersonally within the Five C’s, which contributed to their personal development, and allowed them to contribute more to their community. While at the Teen Center, the youth continued to share their strengths and felt more connected to those around them.

**Transitions Program**

The four main concepts that allow for successful transitions programs are: student leadership roles, making a connection, introduction to the new space, and involvement from the elementary school (Davy, 2009). These four main concepts, if used within a transition program, will reduce the anxiety of the incoming students to middle school. With reduced anxiety, the student will be able to focus on the educational aspects of the school experience and have positive associations with the social aspect of school.

The concept of student leadership encourages the transition program to have input from the students who hold leadership roles (Davy, 2009). Hearing the stories of other students close to their age that are going through the same situation helps ease the fears, children transitioning (Allen, Akinyanju, Milliken, Lorek & Walker, 2011). Seeing their “near-peers” being successful in the environment that they are about to enter is a positive experience that the students can then imitate. Student leadership in transition programs can create an opportunity for incoming students to meet a friendly face who they can come to if they are lost or struggling in their new environment (Baker & Narula, 2012); this can also lead to them making a positive connection to the new site.
The second concept is making connections with the staff. When the research mentions making connections, it encourages having many of a school’s staff, volunteers or students available to reach out to new students (Roybal, Thornton & Usinger, 2014). This creates multiple opportunities for a young person in the transitioning phase to meet and build a relationship with individuals at the new site. Another way the transition project could connect students to the new school is by letting them meet all the other incoming students, thus allowing them to chat and establish connection through conversation (Baker & Narula, 2012). One such school had a parent’s night, “The event was held at the middle school and was attended by parents, the ninth grade principal, as well as middle school teachers and administrators,” (Chapman & Sawyer, 2001, p.238). These events show efforts to welcome and connect students to the incoming community.

Concept three was discovering the new space. It is best practice for students who are in transition, to be able to physically see the new space where they are going to be spending most of their time (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006). Changing school sites can be a big adjustment, so getting a chance to see will help them to build familiarity and not be completely lost the first day they arrive on campus (Reynolds, 2005). One school even went so far as to schedule the first day for the incoming middle school kids on a different day than the rest of the students. This allowed the students to have the whole campus to themselves so they would not feel overwhelmed by all the upperclassman (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006).

The role of the elementary schools is the last concept in the successful transition program. The elementary school would have some of their staff present on the first day of
middle school year in order to improve the comfort level of the incoming students (Bates, 2013). Another important role of elementary schools is to encourage their student to come into their new situation with an open mind and positivity (Frey, Ruchkin, Martin & Schwab-Stone, 2009).

**Near Peer Mentoring**

Peer mentoring was an important part of this project it connects to both the transition program and PYD. By using peer mentoring, most groups learned from each other (Longhurst, Jones, Hiatt & Hart, 2011, p.25). This research implies that students near the same age can exchange experiential knowledge. “Peers were found to be very influential in the lives of the students and in many cases acted as tutors and counselors. They either encouraged their friends to stay in school or discouraged them from attending.” (Sottie, Dubus & Sossou, 2013, p.380). As peer mentoring can create both a positive and negative exchange of values, beliefs and behavior it can be beneficial to agencies and the communities they serve to provide the structure and support of positive peer mentoring.

The training of mentors can create an opportunity to reinforce the responsibilities role and guidelines for appropriate interaction with the mentee. “Mentoring training lasted 6 hour, was conducted over 2 days, and included: responsibilities as a mentor, sharing points of view, working with different points of view, and motivating your mentee” (Smith, 2011, p.19). Mentor trainers must facilitate this process by modeling the behavior and strategies for engagement with the perspective mentors. “Earlier studies
have found positive outcomes when peers engage their colleagues in activities that will 
enhance their academic and social lives” (Sottie et al., 2013, p.380). Within this structure 
of near peer mentoring, the closeness in age can bridge the relationship with the 
similarities of life experience and social context. “Children have been found to be more 
active in the presence of peers than when alone, and peers promote enjoyment of activity 
through mechanisms such as support, norms, and friendship” (Spencer, Bower, Kirk & 

A key element of successful peer mentoring was choosing the right mentors for 
the program. At that young age, it can be simple for a youth to take advantage of their 
mentee or not be an ideal role model. Jones cited Karcher, Davidson, Rhodes and Herrera 
study that said, “Successful peer mentoring programs have often utilized students that are 
independent, performing well academically and held skills of reflection, empathy and 
concern for others”(2015, p.15). Jones also cited Roth, Brooks and Gunn on their study 
that said, “the single most important element, is that mentors hold an attitude that other 
youth are ‘resources that can be developed rather than as problems to be managed” 
(2015, p.15). This concept connects back to PYD in that mentors see their mentee as part 
of the solution. The connection of peer mentoring and PYD is to help the youth mentor 
understand that their mentee, as themselves, is a resource that everybody can learn from.

There is a strong correlation between all three theoretical concepts for this project. 
Positive youth development was used to develop the BGC transition program because of 
its focus on the leadership role of the teenagers within the project. The teens determine 
how they used their strengths and ideas to create their ideal program. PYD was also being
implemented in this project when looking at near peer mentoring. The near peer mentoring connects with the transition program by bridging the gap between Clubhouse and Teen Center members.
The four themes in the methodology section are curriculum design, curriculum implementation plan, recruitment of members to be leaders, and the focus group planned process. The first two themes talk about how PYD affected the curriculum, and how to lead the curriculum. While the last two themes talk about getting members involved in the project and how I planned to run the focus group, that was unfortunately not able to occur.

Curriculum Design

The design for the curriculum was based upon the research described in the literature review. The sections of the curriculum included three different categories, peer mentoring, positive youth development and transition program concepts. Below is an outline of the curriculum with the main points.

Session 1

- Introduction
- Warm up
- Setting standards
- Explain the Big 4 Component of Transition Program
- Decide the order of rest of the program
Within session one there were two sections that implemented PYD, setting standards and, the deciding the order of the program parts. Setting the standards of the meeting lets the members talk among themselves about how the meeting are going to be ran. The same can be seen with deciding the order of the program and giving the members the choice of how they want to complete the planning of orientation. There are two sections in this meeting that implement the transition program, the sections are introduction and, explaining the four components of the program, which gives them the tools that the members need to complete the program. The last section is the warm up which promoted peer mentoring, the warm up being ran by the staff person is the chance that they have to model good mentorship in how they carry themselves when attention is on them.

**Session 2**

- Warm Up
- Orientation Topic 1
- Orientation Topic 2
- Question for next Meeting

Session two, warm up is the section that shows peer mentoring along with the question that happens at the end, for next meeting which gives that staff members a chance to show how to come prepared and leadership by opening and closing the meeting and an professional way. The two sections for PYD are Orientation Topics 1 and 2. The topics are there for the members to work their way through and find a solution of how to
incorporate the topic within the orientation. The curriculum does have guide questions for the member if they are not able to come up with ideas for these topics but those are used as a last measure.

**Session 3**

- Warm up
- Orientation Topic 3
- Rehearsal

In session 3 the Orientation Topic 3 is connected to PYD. While warm up and rehearsing are used as peer-mentoring techniques, the warm up is being used to start the meeting in a commanding way. The rehearsal can be used as one on one tools to improve the members’ presentation and approach, and to give them tips on how to improve their tours of the Teen Center.

**Curriculum Implementation**

The curriculum focused on four main concepts: youth voice, getting Clubhouse staff involved, making connection, and showing off the new site. It also used positive youth development framework to connect youth leaders. Warm ups were used at the beginning of each session to make the members more aware of the other members and see what those members’ interests are. The guiding questions that are used within the curriculum are only there as a suggestion in case the members are not sure how to get the conversation started or do not have any ideas for the concepts. In my experience, the
members were full of ideas that they were willing to share about the four main concepts.
The introduction speech that I gave, and is provided in the sample curriculum, provides
an overview of what the concepts are and why they need to be involved within the
orientation.

The major highlight on the first week was the introduction speech. The speech set
the tone and gave the members all the information about the project and what they need
to build it. Then we completed a warm-up activity to get the youth connected. After the
warm-up the members set the standards for their meetings. Members then selected the
order in which Orientation Topics would be addressed over the next two weeks.

In week two warm-ups were used to start the meetings in order for the members
to build the community. Meeting standards from the first meeting were posted in view.
The next step within the meetings was hearing the members’ ideas of the concepts of the
curriculum. The curriculum is made for each concept to be interchangeable so those
members feel comfortable in whatever they chose. Each concept has questions that are
there in case the group struggles to come up with something that will work. For this pilot
project, the Orientation Topics for week two were Getting to Know the Site and
Connecting Clubhouse Staff to Site.

In week three, the meeting began with warm-ups and the meeting standards were
posted in the room. The final of the Orientation Topics was addressed; for this pilot
group, that was Making Connections with New Staff. At the end of the third meeting I
had each of the members lead me through their tours. This allowed them to practice their
speeches for the younger members and for them to build their own sense of being prepared.

The curriculum allows for the members’ collective voice and leadership. The structure of the curriculum is designed to be adjusted to what works best and ensures the members have their voices heard. The curriculum is structured based off of other programs that are used within the Teen Center. Overall, the Teen Center operates from a positive youth development framework, so it was easy to integrate this curriculum into the existing program.

**Recruitment of Peer Leaders**

Recruitment of the members willing to participate in the peer mentor program was a three-step approach. The first step was identifying and engaging with prospective near peer mentors. At this step in the process of recruitment, building relationships with the prospective near peer mentors is key. The second step in the recruitment process requires the investment and incorporation of current BCG staff. Utilizing staff as a resource to promote the program’s benefits and opportunity assured the potential participants that the BCG environment and standards would extend to the program. The final step in the recruitment is to clearly outline the incentives provided for participation. The incentives provided for project and focus group participation was a party at the Teen Center where food was provided, in addition to youth leaders receiving the agency currency of participation points.
Focus Group Planned Process

The planned process was to have followed the steps below. Permission slips to secure parental consent for participation were sent home three separate times in hopes of securing permission for youth to participate. If any permission slips had been received, I would still have connected with individual youth to see if they were willing to participate. A designated confidential space in a meeting room was available for our use. The plan was to pass out, go over and answer any questions about the assent process and forms. Once the assent form process was completed, the focus group would have begun.

The focus group questions were:

What did you like about this process?
Next time we do this, what should we do differently?
Did you feel connected to any particular part of the process?
What did you learn from doing it?

I would have asked the questions to the members, as well as clarifying questions to follow up on their responses. Participant feedback would have been noted on the flip chart paper before moving on to the next question. After the focus group, participant responses would have been entered into a document on a password-protected computer, and the flip chart paper would be shredded. No identifying information of the members would be connected to the data. Participant response data would have been deleted after the completion of this project, estimated date May 2016. Unfortunately, no parental consent forms authorizing the members to participate in the focus group were not
received by the scheduled date, so no focus group took place. The youth leaders were able to participate in a celebration of their efforts, which had been planned to occur after the focus group.
Results

The primary results of this project are the development of an adaptable curriculum that can be utilized in the future by the Boys & Girls Club and the pilot implementation and participation of youth from both the Teen Center and Clubhouse sites. An unexpected outcome of the project was the difficulty in obtaining permission slips for the focus groups. There are also some additional limitations to consider for future use of the curriculum.

Curriculum Development

The first outcome of the project was the development of the curriculum itself that has been provided to the Director of the Boys & Girls Club as both a binder and in electronic format. The curriculum incorporates a positive youth development framework into a three-week peer led orientation model. The curriculum is a three-week program that includes orientation with the Clubhouse members to be completed on the fourth week.

Pilot Implementation

Week 1

During the first week an informational meeting was held, letting the members know what they are signing up for. I prepared an introduction, gave a program overview and explain what the program entailed. The first thing that happens after the welcoming
speech is the warm-up. The warm-up I had everybody in the room say their name and a place they want to visit. This helped me get to know them.

Once done with the warm up the group began. First we outlined the expectations of what is going to happen within the program. The rules and expectations were set encouraging the members to choose how the meeting would be ran, and how they should behave. They all agreed on the rules and identified the one they liked best and wrote them all down. For this group the rules were:

1. One person talking at a time,
2. Be respectful,
3. Everybody gets a chance to share their ideas
4. Come to the meeting on time, and come ready to work.

After setting the rules, they chose a place to display rules so that everyone could be reminded of them. The members discussed how the next two of sessions are going to look in terms of what topics that would be discussed. I presented the three topics that needed to be covered within the orientation.

The group decided that week two they would decide how to get the Clubhouse staff involved and how to showcase the Teen Center. This left week three to cover one how to establish a connection with the Teen Center staff, and also the walk through of the whole orientation for the third week of the program. After that, the members needed to confirm that this is the schedule that they wanted to make permanent. Lastly, permission slips were disbursed that allowed them to participate in the focus group at the end of the program.
For week one, it is important to have patience when running the group and stick to the main points. This helps maintain the interest and energy of the members and helps them want to return next week. Having a planned speech for both the introduction and going over the four main components of the orientation is recommended. Another recommendation is to have a way to get the members make final decision, it’s helpful if there are already typically used decision making models within the overall program.

**Week 2**

During week two, I lead the warm up exercise; again this should be something simple and easy to build rapport with the other group members. The group then analyzed how the tour of the new site will be arranged. First, they looked at what space they liked most in the Teen Center and shared why they liked that area. After they shared, they had a discussion and decided that the theme of the tours would be demonstrating how much freedom that is allowed within the Teen Center and allowing the younger member sign their names on the wall of the art room.

In the following discussion, the members talked about wanting to get the Clubhouse staff involved with the orientation. This topic was a little harder for the group to grasp, because none of the members had transitioned from the Clubhouse. This was one barrier that could be avoided with future success of this program. I gave them some ideas of some things that could be done. In the end, the group chose to make a video of the Clubhouse staff encouraging the Clubhouse members to join the Teen Center. The staff would talk about how great the Teen Center is and try to get some handwritten notes to go with the video.
The last topic of the second meeting was asking how to get the Teen Center staff involved in the orientation. The members were told to come up with three ideas each, and come back with them for the session next week. I provided incentive for those that did bring ideas by promising that they would receive a cupcake at the next meeting.

One recommendation for week two was to get a theme for the orientation. It really helped the members when they were able to come up with a theme for what they wanted to frame the orientation. The ideas started to flow once that happened. One thing to look out for is holding the members to the expectation that they had set in the first meeting, so they know that the rules were set for a reason, and that it is ok to stop the meeting and point the expectation out if it is getting out of control.

**Week 3**

When the third meeting started, it began with another warm up. The group played a game of Jenga. Once the game ended, the members read their ideas for what they wanted to do to get the Teen Center staff involved with the orientation. After each member read what he or she had for his or her ideas, the members agreed on which of the ideas they were going to use. The group decided to introduce and say what they liked best about each of the staff members during the tour.

The final step for this meeting was putting together the game plan for next week. The run down of the plan for the orientation looked like this:

- The group of Clubhouse members would meet in the computer lab where the teens are waiting for them.
- The members introduce themselves and talk about the Teen Center.
• Teen Center members would show the video of the Clubhouse staff.
• The Teen Center members would break up into smaller groups
• The groups would tour the new area and have the Teen Center members introduce the staff.
• Teen Center members would reconvene in the computer lab
• Teen Center members would answer any other questions that the Clubhouse members might have.
• Teens would make pledge to the Clubhouse members that if they were to ever come to the Teen Center that they would be more then happy to help them out and show them the ropes of how it is at the Teen Center.

For week three, I met one on one with the members in order to coach them on what to expect during the orientation. This allowed me to give tips, feedback, and answer their questions. This helped relax the members. Also, for week three you can have the member run a warm-up if they feel the group is up to it, this would show that you trust in the members.

Participation

Throughout the three weeks of the project the attendance for the program fluctuated. The first week that the program was ran there were ten members that showed up and that took the consent form packet for their parents to sign for the focus group. On the second week of the program there were only eight members that showed up, and none of them had returned the packet with their parent signature yet. The two members that did
not show up for the program were present at the Teen Center that day, but chose not to participate in the program. As for the third week of the program two members showed up for the last meeting and did the run down of the orientation. Because of the low attendance, I came the day before the orientation to talk with the youth leaders, in order to provide additional preparation and remind them of the event occurring the next day. On the day of the orientation three members showed up to lead the program for five Clubhouse members that came over to the Teen Center.

**Focus Group Challenges**

The challenges to completing the focus group component of this project were two pronged and involved both the lack of response on the parental permission and spring breaks interruption in the curriculum. BCG staff prompted the members with reminders and encouragement to return the permissions slips but were unsuccessful. Another challenge to the implementation of the focus group component was the weeklong break in between the scheduled implementation of the curriculum and the first two weeks of the group meetings.

**Limitations**

The most significant limitation to the project was timing. The orientation was conducted early in the school year. One recommendation is to implement this program closer to the end of the school year, as the members are about to graduate from sixth grade. The program ran two months before the end of the school year, which could result
in a lack of excitement toward the Teen Center. Another limitation for the study was running the program during school-scheduled spring break. The challenge to having a weeklong break in the middle of the curriculum is the loss of participant motivation and overall program momentum.
Conclusion

Value of the Project

Bridging the gap between the Clubhouse and the Teen Center and reinforcing positive skills and development of the youth in our community is an invaluable contribution of this project. The orientation was able to bridge a gap between the two sites. This project also allowed the teens a chance to demonstrate and develop skills that support lifelong success, including leadership, esteem and community engagement. At the end of this project I was able to create and supervise a three-week curriculum that was student led. The curriculum look at getting kids to the Teen Center, but with input from Teen Center members. The true value of the project will not be seen until the Clubhouse members age out and attend the Teen Center.

Value of Positive Youth Development Framework

The value of Positive Youth Development (PYD) is the emphasis on the voice of the members and nurturing the ownership and responsibility to community. Another value of PYD is that the members developed and put together a well ran orientation. The members came up with group norms, dates, what time worked best for them, and where they wanted to meet. There was a staff there to make sure that they stayed on track, and to provide guiding questions on the four main points for the orientation. PYD is empowering the Teen Center members to take pride in what they have at the Teen Center.
PYD also gives the teen members a sense of belonging, because they are being tasked to help bring new members to the Teen Center

**Recommendations**

Recommendations for this youth-led orientation model to be implemented in the future would be to have the program implemented during the summer, possibly in July. Clubhouse members would be able to see the Teen Center right before they age out of the Clubhouse and be reminded of what awaits them. Another idea is to have the program ran more than one time in a year. This would give the Clubhouse members more chances to interact with the Teen Center.

Another recommendation for future implementation is to have a recruitment plan for the Clubhouse members. Recruiting members to visit the Teen Center is just as important as having Teen members to lead the project. During this project the Clubhouse director passed out permission slips and explained what was going to happen. Thankfully the members were excited enough to see the Teen Center that they returned the permission slips.

**Sustainability**

For this program to continue for years to come, it is important that there be one staff member or intern committed to run the program. Staff or intern characteristics necessary to support the continued success of this curriculum are positive rapport with members, good communication and effective relationship building skills. Implementing
the curriculum will require the staff or intern to engage and entertain the teen members throughout the three weeks of the program. The staff member or intern will also have to be able the to have the skills to engage and recruit Clubhouse members.

Future Projects

Future projects focusing on the need to bridge the transition from the Clubhouse to the Teen Center and increasing the membership at the BCG could benefit from expanding the scope of input. One of the first steps could be surveying the Teen Center members about the strengths and challenges of the Teen Center from their perspective. Another thing that could be done would be to survey the members of the Clubhouse and all the BCG parents. Broadening the scope of input could benefit the program by increasing the voice and representation of community members, parents, other agencies, and Clubhouse member.
References


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