INTERVENTION

Seeds of HOPE (Health, Opportunities, Partnerships, Empowerment)

DEVELOPER
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INTENT
The Seeds of Hope intervention features a manual-based curriculum that focuses on increasing healthy behaviors while addressing social determinants that underlie health disparities. It is a community-based intervention tailored for lower-income, rural women. The curriculum addresses healthy eating, physical activity, weight control, and stress management. The curriculum also addresses socioeconomic factors like education, job skills, and money management. The recommended delivery of the Seeds of Hope curriculum is through existing social networks that bring women together in Circles led by lay leaders who follow the manual’s content and order of topics.

OVERVIEW
Seeds of Hope is a health promotion intervention that integrates individual-level lifestyle behavior change with efforts to address social and economic factors that heavily influence health.

Seeds of HOPE evolved from the HOPE Works project that involved nearly 20 years of community-based participatory research in eastern North Carolina. After widespread plant closings and job loss, intervention developers, in partnership with community members, decided it was time to consider alternative intervention models that addressed the economic realities of the area. Seeds of Hope deals with women’s lack of empowerment to make positive changes for themselves and their families. The intervention’s primary health promotion focus is obesity with an emphasis on a holistic approach to addressing socioeconomic factors.

The Seeds of HOPE curriculum includes the following:

1) Goal setting and action planning – Program participants make very specific plans for what they will do to reach their goals. At the first Circle meeting, women are asked to set one health behavior goal and one life goal related to finances, education or job skills. The curriculum helps them set actionable (SMART) goals. At Circle meetings these goals are reinforced with discussion about progress and brainstorming ways to overcome barriers to achieving their goals.

2) Lifestyle sessions focus on:
   - Healthy eating
   - Physical activity
   - Weight control
   - Stress management and achieving balance in your life
At each session, women engage in at least 20 minutes of light to moderate physical activity as a group and have a healthy snack.

3) Socio-economic session topics include:
   - Budgeting and keeping track of your money
   - Debt and credit
   - Resume writing
   - Interviewing skills
   - Small business development

Intended population: Lower-income women. To develop the Seeds of HOPE program, UNC researchers worked with community members from four eastern North Carolina counties to ensure that the curriculum was tailored to the strengths and needs of women in the community.

Setting: The community. Locations to deliver the intervention can be decided by the Circle group and often include churches, community centers or homes.

EVIDENCE REVIEW SUMMARY
The Seeds of Hope intervention is an expanded version of the HOPE Works research study intervention. The components of the Seeds of Hope intervention included:
- HOPE Circles: A lay leader recruited women from her social network and/or organizations to join her respective Circle. Women in the Circle set their meeting schedule and a manual-based curriculum provided the content for each session.
- Seeds of Hope was the manual-based curriculum, which is an augmented version of the HOPE Works manual-based curriculum.

Here is a brief summary of evidence in support of the primary outcome for the HOPE Works study, which was weight loss. For the full results, including secondary outcomes, please read the study posted in the Additional Information section.

The primary outcome for the study was weight loss and women receiving the intervention lost 4.5 (+ 1.2) pounds (p=0.054) compared to 0.4 (+ 0.4) pounds (p=0.145) for comparison women over a six-month period. Women in the intervention group decreased their BMI by an average of 0.74 and women in the comparison group decreased their BMI by an average of 0.04.

Process evaluation measures indicated that the majority of women (77%) reported high trust in the accuracy of information provided by Circle leaders. Women reported that HOPE Circles helped them change health behaviors (40% a lot and 40% some) and reach life goals (29% a lot and 45% some). When asked about what they like best about being in a HOPE Circle, they most often referred to the support and fellowship of other circle members to help them set and reach goals.

MATERIALS
All materials for the Seeds of HOPE program may be downloaded from the Research 4NC website.

Please provide credit to the UNC Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention when reproducing Seeds of HOPE materials in their original or adapted form.
Seeds of HOPE - HOPE Circle Leader Manual (PDF)
- Provides complete instructions for implementing the curriculum
- The manual contains 24 sessions; the first 13 sessions were used in the research study

Seeds of HOPE Journal (PDF)
- A Journal should be given to each participant.
- Journal content includes handouts for sessions 1-13 from the Leader’s Manual.
- Journal includes notes pages, worksheets, and logs.

Creative Visualization audio (mp3)
- Creative Visualization for session 12

HOPE Works documentary links on YouTube
- Part 1
- Part 2
- Part 3

URL: http://research4nc.org/resource?id=1199

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
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PUBLICATIONS

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