The purpose of this study was to describe and evaluate a promising program model, the Joven Nobel curriculum, for Latino male adolescents that promotes positive youth development and addresses prevention of a number of risk-related sexual behaviors within a cultural context. A quasi-experimental design was used that included a pre- and posttest assessment of 683 adolescent males. Results revealed that youth exposed to the 10-week curriculum had significant increases in knowledge and decrease in behavior related to high risk sexual behaviors. Out of eight scale measures (ATSS, Perceived Risk, HIV Knowledge, CAPS: Talk, CAPS: Comfort Talk, CAPS: Cool Sex, ATA, Cultural Esteem, and Hombres Con Palabra) seven yielded a significant and positive outcome results. The curriculum appears effective in shaping youth’s attitudes and beliefs about high-risk sexual behaviors. © 2010 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.
constitute 15% of the total U.S. population; the Latino population has grown by 58% over the past 10 years (Marotta & Garcia, 2003) and is expected to reach 29% of the U.S. population by the year 2050. Socioeconomically, Latinos have a substantially lower median income than the general U.S. population, approximately one in four live in poverty, and 33% lack health insurance (Marotta & Garcia, 2003). This is of particular concern given that socioeconomics has been shown to be an important indicator as to the extent that Latinos are able to integrate into the larger social context (Sinha, 1990). For example, Latinos have less access to health services, utilize services less often, and are often diagnosed in the late stages of mental health and health related conditions (Vega et al., 2007). Furthermore, given their socioeconomic status, Latino families often reside in urban locations that lack the infrastructure needed for access to resources and promotion for the wellbeing of children and families. As such, Latino youth are often exposed to traumatic and violent behaviors in their family and community, and they experience educational challenges (Cervantes, Córdova, Fisher, & Kilp, 2008). The U.S. Census (2007) reports that 4 in 10 Latinos 25 years of age and older do not have a high school diploma. In addition, many Latino youth experience various forms of perceived discrimination, which has been shown to have detrimental mental health consequences (Coker et al., 2009).

**BEHAVIORAL CONSEQUENCES: SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND HIV/AIDS**

The human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) risk associated with substance use is present in many contemporary Latino communities. The use of licit and illicit substances has been shown to be a major contributor to mental health and health disparities experienced by Latino youth (Prado, Szapocznik, Maldonado-Molina, Schwartz, & Pantin, 2008). Findings from the Monitoring the Future program, for example, reveal that Latina/o eighth graders' use of licit and illicit substances was the highest among eighth graders across all substances, with the exception of amphetamines (Johnston, O’Malley, Bachman, & Schulenberg, 2006). Furthermore, Latino 12th graders reported the highest use of crack, heroin, methamphetamines, and Rohypnol (Johnston et al., 2006). This is particularly troublesome given that substance abuse and HIV/AIDS are intertwined epidemics with 40% of U.S. AIDS deaths related to drug abuse (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2008).

Although Latinos account for 15% of the total U.S. population, they accounted for 17% of new HIV infections in 2006, which is three times that of Whites (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2008). Furthermore, during this same year, Latinos accounted for 19% of new AIDS diagnoses and 19% of persons living with AIDS (CDC, 2008). This makes HIV/AIDS the fourth leading cause of death among Latino women and men ages 35–44 (CDC, 2008). As of 1998, 20% of the cumulative number of AIDS cases reported among female adolescents and adults had been among Latinas with 64% stating they contracted the disease through intravenous drug use (IDU) or sex with an intravenous drug user(s). This high-risk sexual behavior among teenagers has become a public health concern as prevalence rates among female students have increased progressively from grades 9 through 12 with 32%, 46%, 60%, and 66%, respectively (Kann et al., 1995). Furthermore, Latino youth are the most likely to report not having used a condom during their last sexual intercourse (CDC, 2008). These trends in substance abuse, acquisition, and transmission of HIV/AIDS...
among Latino youth underscore the need for prevention and early intervention (PEI) efforts targeting this population.

LATINO YOUTH AND BEST PRACTICE TO PREVENT SUBSTANCE USE AND HIV/AIDS

Despite the fact that Latino youth are at increased risk for substance abuse, unsafe sexual practices, and HIV acquisition (Prado et al., 2006), there currently exists a dearth of best practice approaches developed specifically for Latino youth or adults that target substance abuse and HIV prevention (Cervantes, Kappos, Duenas, & Arellano, 2003). For example, Szapocznik, Prado, Burlew, Williams, and Santisteban (2007) identified only four drug abuse preventive intervention models that (a) utilized random control trials, (b) targeted Latino youth ages 12–17, and (c) where Latinos represented 70% or greater of the sample. Even more alarming is the fact that fewer HIV/AIDS basic and prevention and early intervention research has been conducted which target Latino youth (Prado et al., 2006). Of the limited research that exists, findings suggest that culturally appropriate preventive models are significantly more effective in recruitment and engagement of Latinos. However, more research is needed to determine the extent to which culturally appropriate preventive models produce better outcomes (Kumpfer, Alvarado, Smith, & Bellamy, 2002). Such models should emphasize culture in all five phases of prevention research, which include (a) testing of etiologic models for Latino youth; (b) development of Latino-specific interventions and evaluation methods; (c) randomized control trials to compare generic, culturally-adapted, and culturally sensitive versions of the program; (d) evaluation of new cultural versions with other Latino populations; and (e) implement dissemination studies to determine effectiveness.

JOVEN NOBLE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

One promising program model that addresses prevention of a number of risk-related sexual behaviors within a cultural context is Joven Noble (Tello, 2003). Developed in 1996, the Joven Noble rites of passage and character development program, is a youth development, support, and leadership enhancement program for ages 10–24. The program incorporates an approach and curriculum that is based on the philosophy that youth need other men and women, their family, and community to care for, assist, heal, guide, and successfully prepare them for true manhood and womanhood.

The Joven Noble youth development approach draws from four theoretical principals to integrate a strengths perspective approach and to avoid pathologizing Latino youth. Specifically, the Joven Noble intervention is informed by Positive Youth Development (Larson, 2006), risk and protective factors framework (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996; Szapocznik & Coatsworth, 1999), acculturation (Berry, 1990), and Latino cultural values (Falicov, 1998).

Risk and Protective Factors

Prevention science and empirical research has clearly demonstrated that a risk and protective factor model is essential in conceptualizing and developing a better understanding of youth behaviors (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996; Szapocznik &
Coatsworth, 1999). The risk and protective factor model serves as both a unifying descriptive and predictive framework that includes biological, psychological/behavioral, and social/environmental characteristics (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2002). It has been postulated that the more risk factors a youth experiences in their development, the more likely they are to engage in substance abuse and comorbid behaviors. Strengthening and placing an emphasis on protective factors, however, could potentially buffer negative contextual challenges experienced by adolescents and facilitate resiliency.

Positive youth development. Positive youth development theory is interested in the ways in which adults, mentors, teachers, parents and other model figures support, empower and emphasize protective factors in the youths’ development, which in turn, facilitates their potential for growth and encourages pro-social behaviors (Larson, 2006). From this perspective, youth are most motivated to work towards overcoming challenges in their development when there is perceived ownership of the decision making processes, thereby acting as agents of change (Larson, 2006).

Latino culture. Researchers have identified key cultural values that are likely to have an important influence on the lives of Latino youth and their families (Falicov, 1998). Most noted in the literature are respeto, familismo, personalismo, and colectivismo. Respeto refers to the ways in which all relationships are informed by a mutual respect towards one another. Familismo highlights the importance of la familia (the family), both vertical (i.e., generational) and horizontal (i.e., extended), particularly those that are close and cooperative in nature. Personalismo emphasizes the value of establishing intimate and meaningful interpersonal relationships. Colectivismo highlights the ways in which interdependence and working collectively are key to positive development and to reach goals for the common good of the entire family (Falicov, 1998).

Acculturation and gender socialization. Acculturation refers to a complex phenomenon and the ways in which change occurs as a result of contact between two or more distinct cultures (Berry, 1990). Acculturation may occur at both the group (e.g., family) and individual (e.g., psychological) level and is operationalized through numerous variables, some of which include language proficiency, culturally related behavioral preferences (e.g., watching English television), nativity status (U.S. born vs. foreign born), and ethnic identity (Berry, 1990). One key factor considered to be a challenge to healthy and positive acculturation is “machismo.” For example, many Latino male youth associate the idea of manhood or machismo as being directly linked to physical dominance and sexual activity. This false “macho” stereotype, involves being sexually aggressive with little regard for the female participant or sexual partner (Quinones-Mayo & Resnick, 1996). Many male youth believe it to be their right to be violent, aggressive, and generally oblivious to the responsibilities associated with sexual activity. In contrast, true indigenous-based machismo is characterized by true honor, valor, courage, generosity, and a respect for others. The traditional machismo role encourages protection of and provision for the family, the pursuit of fair and just authority, and respect for the role of wife and children.

The belief of the Latino culture and the common misunderstanding of what constitutes true machismo is, arguably, at the root of the problem of positive fatherhood among Latinos and is an indicator of the multigenerational process of internalized oppression (Tello, 2003). Many poor Latinos consider childbearing to be the only way to prove themselves as socially productive and worthy of respect (de la
Vega, 1990). This widely accepted belief within the Latino community gives Latinas very little authority over the sexual act and can lead to domestic violence if condom use or birth control is suggested. Ultimately, widely held cultural beliefs and the lack of consistent birth control among this population leave young Latinos susceptible to unplanned or unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

**Curriculum Design: El Joven Noble (The Noble Young Man) Curriculum**

Informed by a strength-base-approach theoretical framework, Joven Noble aims to enhance protective factors. The 10-week curriculum aims to promote the character development of young men, while targeting the reduction and prevention of (a) unwanted or unplanned pregnancies, (b) substance abuse, (c) community violence and increase ability of youth to act in a responsible, and (d) respectful way in reference to their relationships.

To increase not only the knowledge of the staff, but also the delivery of the model, the 10 sessions were monitored in a number of ways. First, all staff participated in an intensive 3-day training course that reviewed the program philosophy and design. An additional 2 days where spent reviewing each curriculum lesson both in intent and delivery. Second, as the program was being implemented, weekly review sessions were conducted with staff to ensure delivery compliance and fidelity to the curriculum teachings. Third, one session was observed and monitored to further seek consistency across different program delivery sites.

The Joven Noble curriculum is divided into four core teachings (see the Appendix) of development: conocimiento (acknowledgment), entendimiento (understanding), integración (integration), and movimiento (movement). These four core teachings directly target four parallel risk areas that contribute to self-destructive behavior of Latino youth. It is designed to include the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects of each as a basis for direction. Each stage uses a mixture of activities and teaching experiences relating to a young person's self, family, and community while focusing on four main core teachings.

We summarize findings on Joven Noble and offer suggestions for future research and practice on prevention and early intervention which target substance abuse and HIV/AIDS among Latino youth.

**METHOD**

A pre- and posttest quasi-experimental design was applied to the evaluation of Joven Nobel. All male youth \( n = 683 \) involved in the evaluation study (were offered) participated in the full 10 sessions of the Joven Noble model. Participants were assessed before and after the full 10 sessions.

**Instruments**

For the purpose of this study, a demographic questionnaire was assembled to gather information on age, gender, and socioeconomics. Further, the demographics section gathered information on the participant's nativity, language spoken, and grade level,
which could be used as a proxy for acculturation (Corral & Landrine, 2008; Perez-Stable et al., 2001; Ruiz, 2007; Yu, Chen, Kim, & Abdulrahim, 2002). Pre- and postquestionnaires were developed and provided in both English and Spanish.

Aside from sociodemographics, the pre- and postquestionnaire included the following scales: cross-Site Sexual Behavioral, Opinions About Sexual Behavior, Questions Regarding HIV/AIDS, HIV/AIDS Knowledge, the Children and Adolescent Prevention Scale (CAPS), Attitudes Toward Abstinence (ATA), Cultural Esteem, and Hombres Jovenes Con Palabra. Because HIV/AIDS knowledge and CAPS scales measure several attributes, each scale was broken down into subcategories. The first scale was divided into Perceived Risk and Increased HIV Knowledge. The CAPS was divided into three parts: Talk, Comfortable Talk, and Cool Sex. Overall, these sets of questions assess common cultural stereotypes, myths, and misconceptions as part of the Joven Noble curriculum.

Furthermore, for purposes of the outcome analysis, scales were constructed based on risk and protective factors identified in the literature (Arthur et al., 2007; Chapman & Werner-Wilson, 2008; Hall Nagayama, Teten, DeGarmo, Stanley, & Stephens, 2005). Intermediate risk (Cross-Site Sexual Behavioral [CSB], and Attitudes Toward Safe Sex [ATSS], Perceived Risk, and HIV Knowledge), and protective factors (CAPS: Talk, CAPS: Comfort Talk, CAPS: Cool Sex, ATA, Cultural Esteem, and Hombres Joven Con Palabra) were conceived in this research project as those malleable behaviors or attitudes that mediate the relationship between the targeted behavioral outcomes (e.g., utilization of male reproductive services) and antecedent risk and protective factors such as age and family structure (Arthur et al., 2007; Chapman & Werner-Wilson, 2008; Hall et al., 2005).

Participants

The average age was $\bar{x} = 16.34$ with a standard deviation of 2.4. Also, 109 (17.9%) of the youth indicated they were foreign born; 501 (82.1%) reported they were born in the United States. The primary language spoken at home was Spanish for 376 (62.1%) of the participants; 221 (32.4%) indicated English, and 8 (1.3%) indicated “other.” Also, 515 (92.3%) of the youth reported they were Latino; 43 (7.7%) did not identify as Latino. On average, the grade level of participants was 10th grade (15.3%). Students ranged from 6th to 12th grade (middle to high school), plus 19 (3.2%) students were not enrolled at the time of their participation in the program. Participants were also unemployed, looking for work, and had an annual household income between 15,001 to 20,000 (Table 1).

In addition, the majority of adolescents in this study (64%) came from schools (middle and high school); the remaining 36% came from probation and community programs. However, when asked to rate the frequency of exposure to at risk behaviors a split case analysis did not show a dramatic difference between the two groups. The literature has shown that youth who reside in high risk communities, like our target population, tend to have difficulty in mainstream settings and multiple issues including substance abuse, gang involvement, school failure, and dysfunctional families. Therefore, the following are the top 10 most frequently endorsed items of the population as a whole and were reported to have happened within the last 2 years: (1) 66.6% stated problems at school, (2) 58.9% stated gang violence in their neighborhood, (3) 58.5% stated yelling occurred at home, (4) 57.6% acknowledged underage drinking, (5) 55% stated family was having money problems, (6) 53.3% stated their
parents had problems speaking English, (7) 50.8% stated they had a family member in jail, (8) 50.2% stated they had a friend in jail, (9) 48.8% stated they had used drugs, and (10) 42.9% stated they had been arrested. Among the endorsed items, drug and alcohol use were among the top 10 risky behaviors. Moreover, the engagement of drug and alcohol put them at-risk for HIV/AIDS infection.

Data Analyses

Reliability. A first step in the analysis was to generate estimates of reliability of the scales, which was determined using the Cronbach alpha statistic. Table 2, ranked strongest to weakest reliability, shows CAPS: Comfort Talk, CAPS: Talk and CAPS: Cool Sex to be at least 80% reliable. Perceived Risk, Cultural Esteem, and Hombres con Palabra, are at
least 70% reliable. Both HIV Knowledge and ATA have 68% reliability. However, one exception was noted. With 34% reliability ATSS was unreliable; therefore, it was not used in any of the outcome analysis. Overall, the acceptable reliability demonstrates that the survey provided psychometrically sound measures of these theoretical constructs.

Participant Engagement in Actual Risky Sexual Behavior

The next step was to examine what actual risky sexual behaviors the youth were engaged in and whether or not they changed as a result of participating in the program. A cross-tab chi square analysis and McNemar test was performed on five key questions that examined risky sexual behaviors (see Table 3 below).

As seen from the analysis in Table 3, youth exposed to Joven Noble demonstrated significant improvement related to high risk sexual behaviors. First, four of the five key questions examining actual risky sexual behavior were significant at the \( p < .05 \) level. For example, the number of youth who reported they were not drinking or using drugs before sexual intercourse increased by 20%. Also, by posttest the number of youth who had reported having sex for money, drugs, or another reason decreased

Table 2. Reliability Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>Sample (N)</th>
<th>% of Items</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAPS: Comfort Talk</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPS: Talk</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPS: Cool Sex</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Risk</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Esteem</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hombres Con Palabra</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV Knowledge</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATA</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATSS</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Results of Chi Square Analysis and McNemar Test on Five Key Questions That Examined Risky Sexual Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Pre-</th>
<th>Post-</th>
<th>( X^2 )</th>
<th>McNemar test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 Have you ever had sexual intercourse (vaginal, oral, or anal)?</td>
<td>No: 148, Yes: 94</td>
<td>No: 101, Yes: 141</td>
<td>6.83</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 During the last 30 days, have you had sex?</td>
<td>No: 73, Yes: 86</td>
<td>No: 91, Yes: 71</td>
<td>6.47</td>
<td>.036*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 If yes, did you or your partner use a condom?</td>
<td>No: 33, Yes: 42</td>
<td>No: 34, Yes: 41</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Did you drink alcohol or use drugs before you had sexual intercourse?</td>
<td>No: 90, Yes: 68</td>
<td>No: 121, Yes: 37</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>.001**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Have you ever had sex for money, drugs, or other things?</td>
<td>No: 82, Yes: 75</td>
<td>No: 144, Yes: 13</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\* \( p < .05 \); \** \( p < .001 \); \*** \( p < .000 \).
by 40%. Unfortunately, a higher percentage of youth reported being sexually active, increasing by 19%. The increase in sexual activity is likely the result of normal developmental change and youth being more forthcoming about this discrete personal behavior. However, youth reported a drop of 10% when they were asked if they had had sex during the last 30 days. Overall, the Joven Noble model served its purpose and aided youth to become aware of their attitudes and behaviors by communicating their risky patterns. At the same time they were acknowledging that they were reducing their exposure to sexual risk related attitudes and behaviors.

**Attitudinal and Behavior Outcomes**

A next step of the analysis was to test other attitudinal and behavioral outcomes considered as risk or protective factors. A paired $t$-test analysis was conducted after replacing the missing values with the series mean. Paired $t$-test values were then utilized in computing the effect size (Rosenthal, 1991). The results are presented in Table 4.

First, statisticians disagree about how to attach verbal labels to effect sizes, for example small, medium, or large. One expert, Cohen (1992) suggested that an effect size of 0.2 could be labeled small and an effect size of 0.5 could be labeled medium, but there is no consensus about these labels. As seen from Table 4, the largest effect sizes are for (a) HIV Knowledge (0.34), (b) ATA (0.25), and (c) Hombres con Palabra (0.23).

As seen in Table 4, this program had a highly significant effect on youths’ risky attitudes and behaviors. Out of eight measures seven yielded a significant paired $t$-test result. For six of those seven, the two-tailed significance level was $p < .001$. The only measure that did not yield a significance $t$ test was CAP: Comfort Talk with a significance of 0.572. In particular, findings indicate that there were significant differences in ATA with a $t = -6.83$ ($p < .000$). Other risk related scores were also significant. Perceived Risk, with a $t = -5.82$ ($p < .000$) showed that there had been an increase in perceived risk by youth. The intervention showed it could also increase HIV Knowledge, with a $t = -9.45$ ($p < .000$). The change in behavior was also significant for CAPS: Increase Talk and CAPS: Cool Sex. Additionally, the intervention aided youth in their understanding of how a Hombre Jovenes Con Palabras should behave and think ($t = -6.36; p < .000$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>Pre-Mean</th>
<th>Post-Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE Mean</th>
<th>$t$ Test</th>
<th>Effect size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIV Knowledge ($n = 683$)</td>
<td>6.01</td>
<td>6.81</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>−9.45***</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATA ($n = 683$)</td>
<td>20.89</td>
<td>22.23</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>−6.83***</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hombres Con Palabra ($n = 683$)</td>
<td>10.32</td>
<td>11.11</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>−6.36***</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Risk ($n = 683$)</td>
<td>14.27</td>
<td>15.24</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>0.165</td>
<td>−5.82***</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPS: Talk ($n = 683$)</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>−5.43***</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPS: Cool Sex ($n = 683$)</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>6.13</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>−3.39**</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Esteem ($n = 683$)</td>
<td>25.18</td>
<td>24.72</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>2.90**</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPS: Comfort Talk ($n = 683$)</td>
<td>8.17</td>
<td>8.08</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001.

Journal of Community Psychology DOI: 10.1002/jcop
DISCUSSION

The results of the evaluation indicate an increase in sexual abstinence, and significant improvement across a range of risk and protective factors among this high risk sample of Latino males. Additionally, the Joven Noble prevention intervention appears to promote abstinence among Latino male youth. The 10-week session of Joven Noble appears effective in shaping youth’s attitudes and beliefs. We did also observe that Joven Noble was less effective in changing youth’s perceptions about their cultural identity or sense of cultural esteem. Specifically, data suggest that the Joven Noble curriculum was able to deter the youth from future risky behaviors. Prevention and youth development program models that are “emic” (from the point of view of a cultural insider) and derived from core cultural strengths are sorely needed. With a number of promising programs and practices used in community based settings for Latino youth, few have been empirically tested in controlled evaluation studies. Although this does not represent a randomized controlled study, these findings make way for further studies of Joven Noble and make suggestions for other emic-based risk-related and youth development studies in communities of color. Our findings suggest that the core teachings of Joven Noble serve to make youth development and prevention messages more palatable and syntonic with Latino cultural values and beliefs.

Future Recommendations

Furthermore, working with these youth presented various challenges including that fact that many of these youth are exposed to at risk behaviors in their community, which made it difficult for many of these youth to complete the full program. In the future, evaluations should look at the difference, if any, between youth who received the full 10-week curriculum and youth who served as a control group, as well as the site of administration, whether it was a school, probation, or agency site.

Limitations

Although the Joven Noble prevention intervention appears promising, findings from this study should be used in a tentative manner. That is, because this study was limited to male youth only, Joven Noble may or may not be an appropriate prevention intervention for female youth. In addition, participants were recruited from the Southwest United States, and therefore may or may not reflect findings in other regions of the country.

REFERENCES


Journal of Community Psychology DOI: 10.1002/jcop
APPENDIX

Joven Noble Four Core Teaching Outline

1. Conocimiento: Acknowledgment and Positive Cultural Identity Development

Chicano/Latino youth live in a world where they have to balance two cultures and many times come from families who have experienced generations of racism, discrimination, and oppression (social/cultural detachment). Through these oppressive processes many youth have internalized a negative (false) self concept of who they are culturally and essentially have learned to “detach” (attachment disorder) from the true sense of who they are really in connection to themselves, their families, their relationships and their behaviors. Joven Noble focuses on a relationship based process, acknowledging youth from an indigenous, cultural perspective while reinforcing the true essence of who they are and reconnecting them to their true potential as Jovenes Nobles.

2. Entendimiento: Understanding of Their Sacred Purpose

In the indigenous beliefs of Latino culture every child is a blessing and has a “Sacred Purpose.” On the other hand through living in an oppressive society many Latino youth have come to believe they are high risk, delinquent prone,
and burdens to their families and society. Through generations of this thinking many youth have developed internalized oppressive ways of thinking and behaviors (attention deficit, aggressive/reactive behavior). A basic premise of healing, growth, and development is the ability of the individual to have a vision of their true Sacred Purpose. If a person only has a negative view of himself/herself, his/her history and his/her culture then he/she has no avenue for growth and development. He/she must understand the history that has led to the creation of his/her present situation and in this process (narrative reprocessing) and with the proper guidance he/she will be able to separate pain and dysfunction from the true essence and teachings that can lead him/her to manifest her/his “Sacred Purpose.”

3. Integracion: Integrating Bilingual/Bicultural Values

Due to the multitude of economic, social, and family stressors many youth live their life based on survival, getting by, getting over, and not getting caught. The clash between the values of the families and that of society often leave youth in the middle feeling stuck, not learning, not growing (depression), and not motivated to do anything else. On the other hand, positive values, a love for life and a circle of support (circulo de hombres) are the basis for learning, healing, growing and leading others. As times change, people must learn “new ways” (based on ancient teachings), be able to analyze and process the changing world’s demands without losing a sense of their culture and ethnic connection. Living with a sense of Spirit (spirituality) and ganas allows one to better deal with difficult and sometimes overwhelming pressures with a sense of hope and greater vision.

4. Movemiento: Safety, Security and Interconnected Trust

Fear is one of the greatest obstacles many youth face today. Living in dangerous neighborhoods, where gangs, drug use, and violence are prevalent creates ongoing insecurity and anxiety (anxiety disorders, posttraumatic stress) that many times spills into their relationships as well. Young people need ongoing adult mentorship and support to assist them to navigate their “rites of passage” into manhood/womanhood and to learn positive living skills that can help them in their day to day lives. At the same time they need ongoing resources (circulo de apoyo, circle of support: adult guides) where they can feel safe and where they can learn to develop pro-social problem-solving skills where they can release burdensome issues in their lives.