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Using Cellphone Technologies in Fatherhood Programs and Research

October 6, 2016

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Who is FRPN?

Jay Fagan, Ph.D.
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Overview of FRPN

- Five-year, $4.8 million cooperative agreement to Temple University/CPR
- Funding by U.S. DHHS, ACF, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, October 2013-September 2018
- Targets fatherhood researchers & programs serving low-income fathers (OFA and non-OFA grantees, state fatherhood commissions, CBOs, programs funded by TANF, child welfare & child support)

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#1 Promote Rigorous Evaluation

#2 Build Evaluation Capacity

#3 Disseminate Information

Why a Webinar on Using Cellphone Technologies to Engage, Service, and Collect Information From Hard-to-Reach Groups?

- In 2013, 91% of the US population over the age of 18 had a personal cellphone, and over half had smart phones
- Smart phones have been used in research to collect data, health behaviors and results and to track program participants geographical locations and social networks
- Cell phones have been used in health disciplines for sharing health information, engaging patients in self-care, supporting smoking cessation, encouraging positive health behaviors, appointment reminders, and other health-related interventions
- Cell phones have been found to increase engagement in health services
- Few studies have tested the impact of cell phone technologies on engagement and retention
- No research on engagement & retention with fatherhood program participants

Today's Speakers

Lindsey Zemeir, Agent Associate, Food Supplement Nutrition Education (FSNE) Program

"Engaging low-income parents in school nutrition through the use of text messaging"

Naomi Sugie, Assistant Professor, Department of Criminology, Law and Society, UC Irvine

"Promoting real-time information sharing and peer support through online job clubs: The Newark Smartphone Reentry Project"

Kenn Harris: Director, New Haven Healthy Start and President of the National Healthy Start Association

"Using Cellphones to Engage Fathers: The Healthy Start Experience in New Haven, Connecticut"

Anna Hayward, Associate Professor, Stony Brook University School of Social Welfare

"Using Cellphone Technologies to Engage and Retain Men in Responsible Fathering Services."

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Engaging Low-Income Parents in School Nutrition Through the Use of Text Messaging

Lindsey Zemeir

Maryland SNAP-Ed

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Maryland SNAP-Ed (FSNE)

- Target audience is low-income (SNAP-eligible) families in Maryland
- Lower income audiences (<$30,000 per year) use cell phones and text messaging services (Pew, 2015)
  - 84% own a cell phone
  - 13% are smartphone-dependent
- Text messaging is the most widely-used smartphone feature among users (Pew, 2015)

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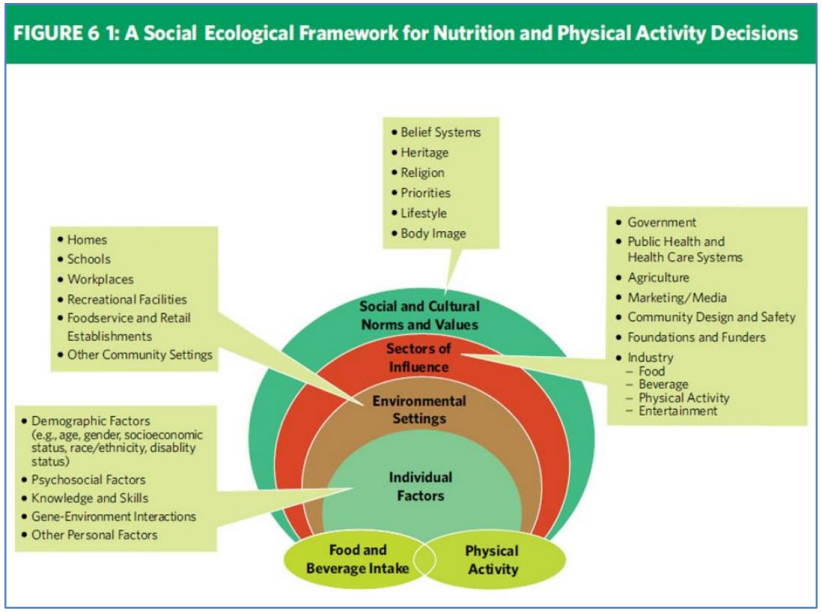
FSNE Interventions

- FSNE reaches the target audience through multi-level interventions, including direct education, newsletters, grocery store tours, educational text messages, etc.



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Text2BHealthy

- Reaches parents of elementary school children
- 2 community-specific text messages per week
- Purpose is to promote nutrition and physical activity, connect parents to school/community nutrition resources and events, and reinforce key messages taught in classroom-based nutrition education in the home
- Program objectives:
  - Increase fruit and vegetable consumption
  - Increase the variety of fruits and vegetables consumed
  - Increase daily and weekly physical activity

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- Elementary schools can help us to know about….
  - Retail
  - Recreation
  - Libraries
  - Weather
  - School schedules, testing, events
  - Lunch menus
  - Local events

    …..without even knowing the parent's name!

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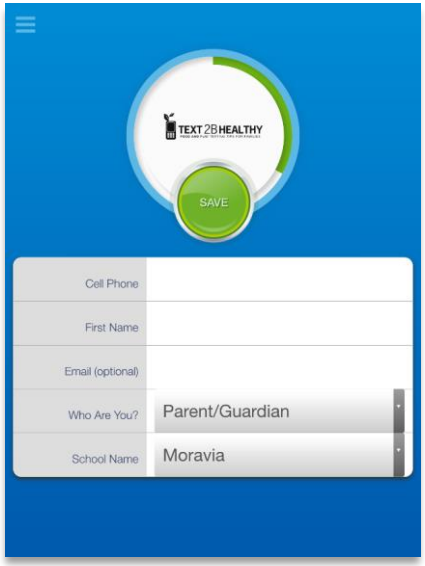
Program Recruitment

- Flyers
- Posters
- In-person events
- Website
- School channels to promote
  - Newsletters, robocalls, parent nights, etc.



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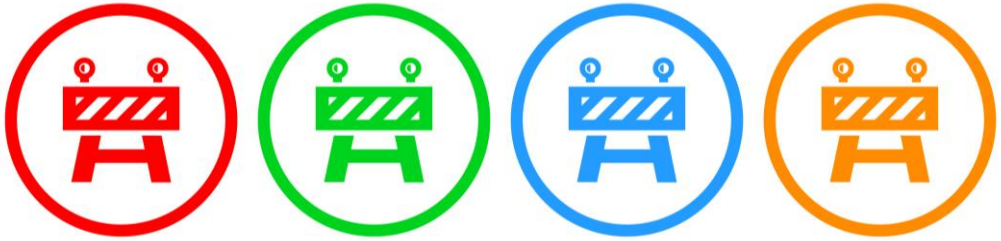
Enrollment Barriers

- 26% of non-participants reported not knowing how to enroll or unsuccessful attempts to enroll
- Concern about cost of texting
- Apprehensive about program content
- Disabled short codes
- Knowledge of how to send a message to someone not in address book
- Enrollment of non-targeted individuals
  *Consider Drop-Outs



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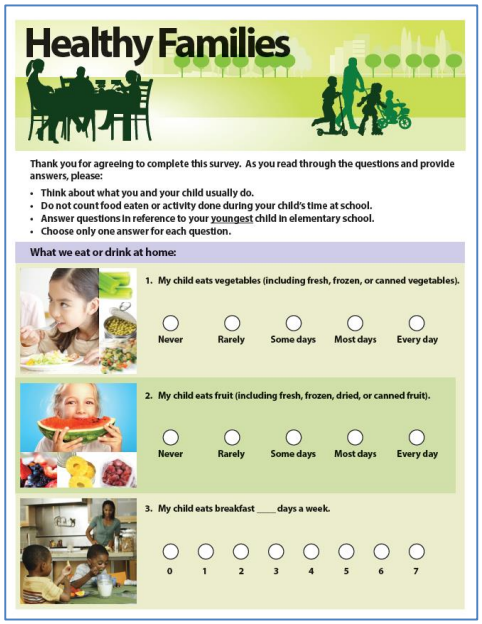
Text2BHealthy Evaluation



Healthy Families

Thank you for agreeing to complete this survey. As you read through the questions and provide answers, please:

- Think about what you and your child usually do.
- Do not count food eaten or activity done during your child's time at school.
- Answer questions in reference to your youngest child in elementary school.
- Choose only one answer for each question.

What we eat or drink at home:

1. My child eats vegetables (including fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables).

Never | Rarely | Some days | Most days | Every day

2. My child eats fruit (including fresh, frozen, dried, or canned fruit).

Never | Rarely | Some days | Most days | Every day

3. My child eats breakfast ____ days a week.

0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7

- School-wide pre then post survey
  - Pre-then-post tool (September and May)
  - Mailed/online surveys
  - Eating behaviors, physical activity behaviors, food availability/accessibility, role modeling
- Texted questions
- Focus groups
- Non-intervention/control schools

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- 69% of participants felt the information in texts applied to their lives most or all of the time

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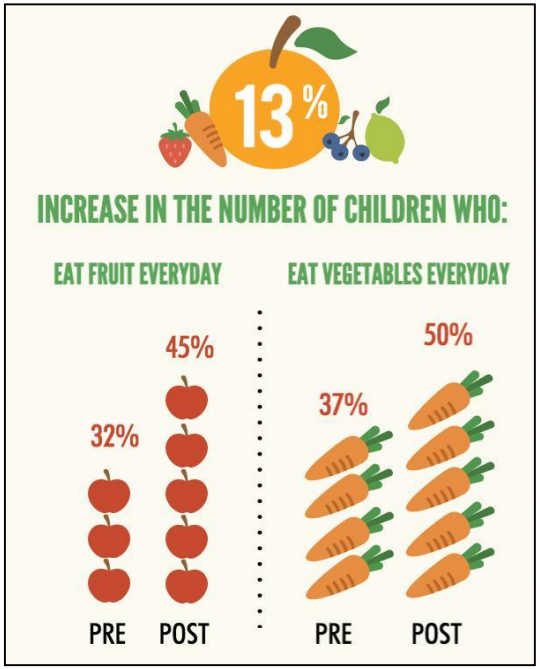

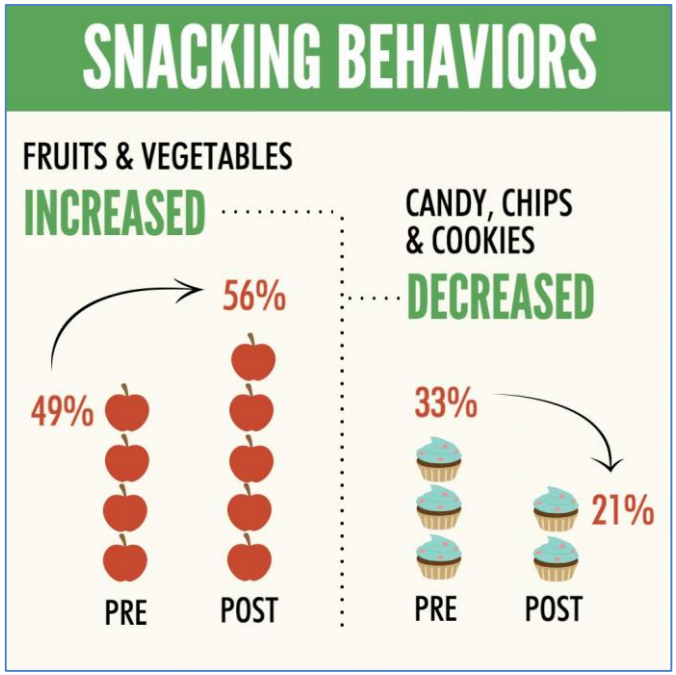

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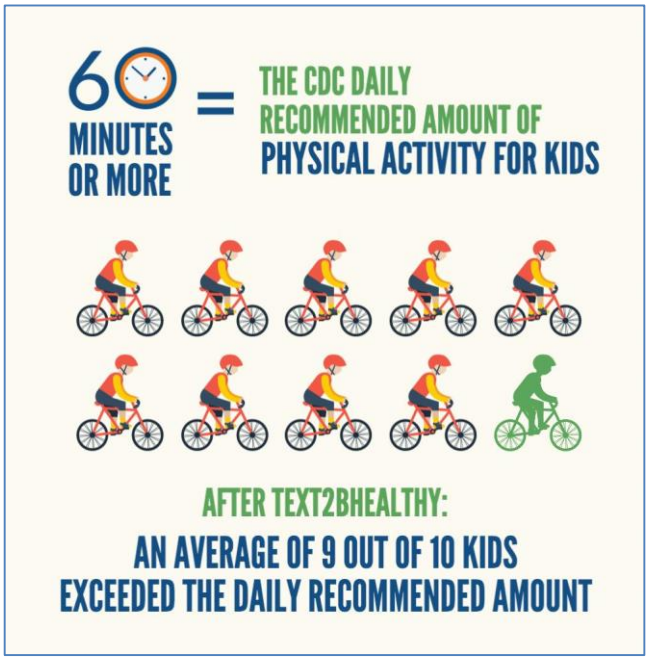

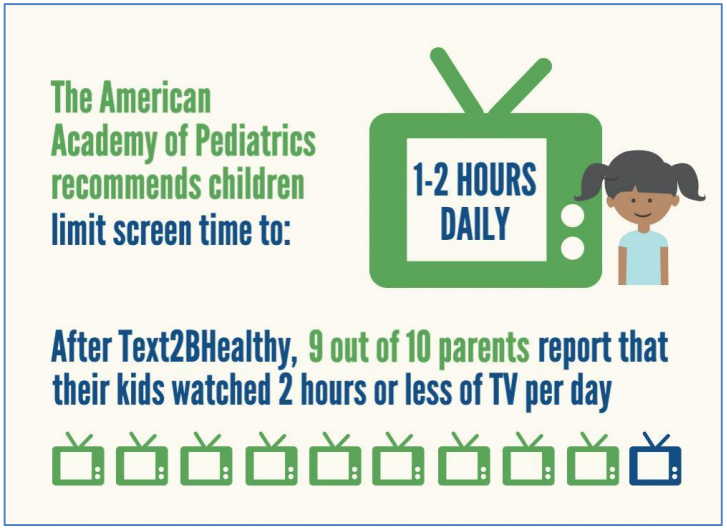

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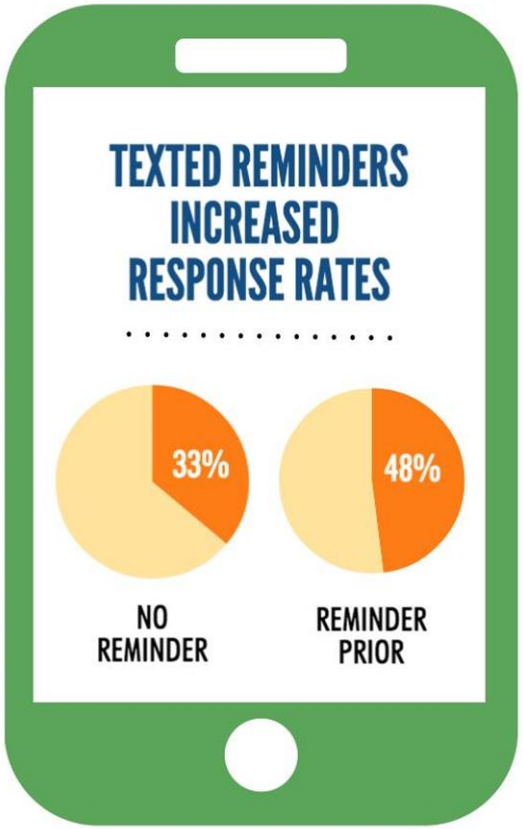

- **Reminder text**:

Text2BHealthy checking in again! We will be texting you a question in about 10 minutes. We want to hear from you!

- **Evaluation question:**

Last week, we texted about sharing family meals, even during the holiday season. Did you sit down & eat a meal with your child this past week? Reply YES or NO.

- **Follow-up question:**

That's great! How many days did your family eat a meal together? A. 1-2 days, B.3-4 days, C. 5-6 days, D. Everyday

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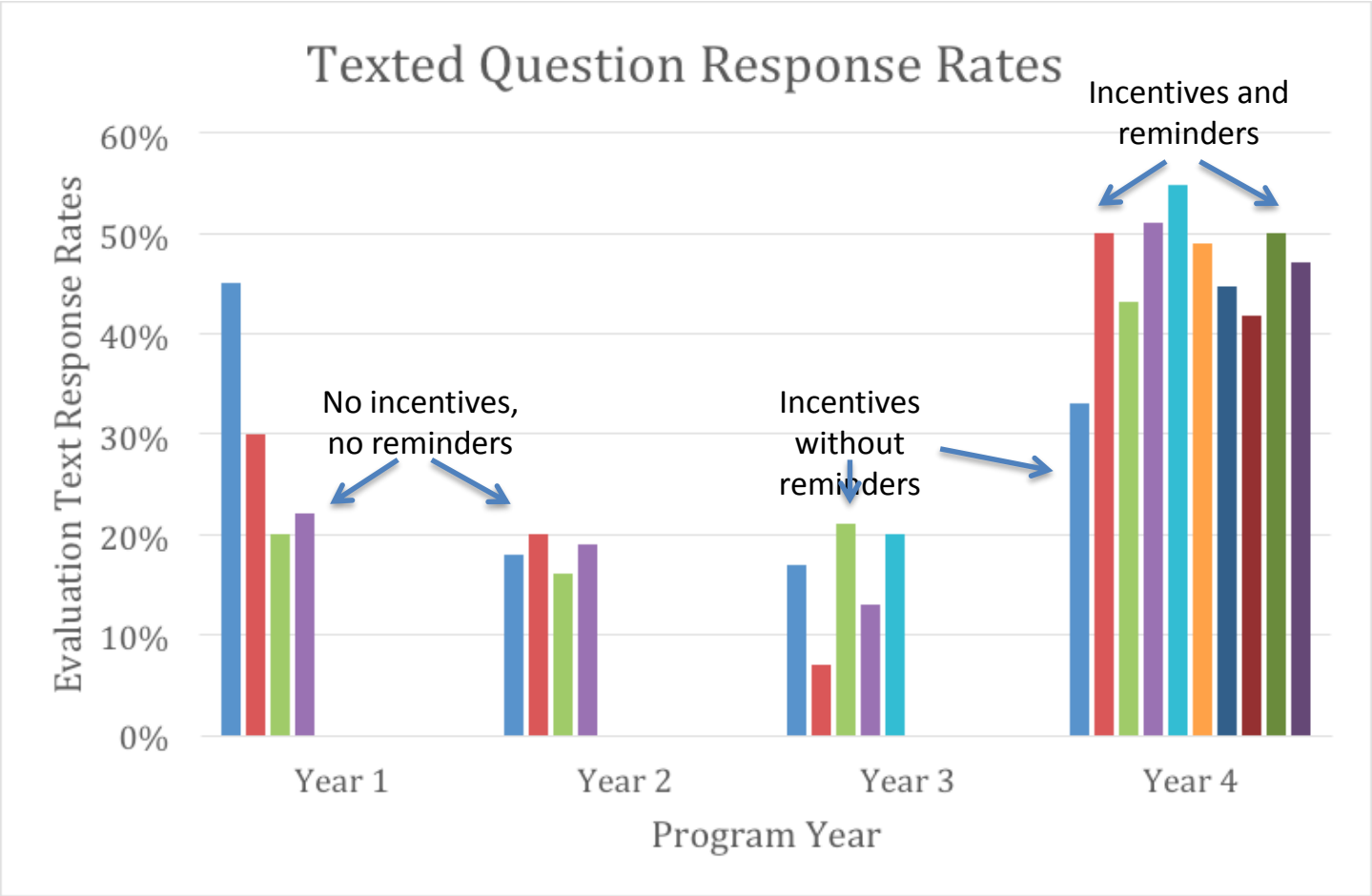

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Recommendations for Implementation

- Seek substantial buy-in from partners
  - Can help reach audience, promote and incentivize enrollment, and connect program to other activities
- In-person enrollment is critical!
  - Offer to collect mobile phone numbers and manage enrollment for parents; have alternatives
- Test materials and messages via focus groups
  - Widespread use of cell phones (smartphones, in particular) and text messaging
  - Suggestions for appropriate messages (no textisms, personalized)
  - Preferences for timing of messages

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Promoting Real-Time Information Sharing and Peer Support Through Online Job Clubs: The Newark Smartphone Reentry Project

Naomi Sugie

Assistant Professor

Department of Criminology, Law and Society

University of California, Irvine

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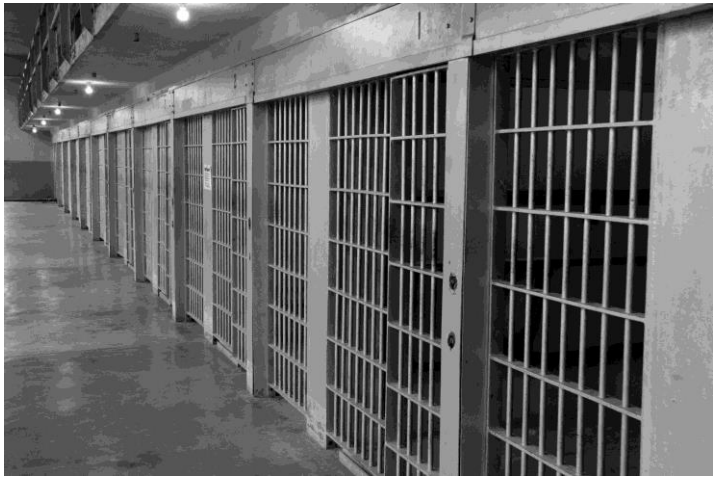
Motivations for Using Smartphones to Study Reentry From Prison



- General advantages:
  - Participation and retention rates
  - Representativeness / large N
- Advantages that are specific to employment and reentry
  - Fine-grained detail on job search activities and all types of employment
  - Social networks
  - Geographic locations
  - Interventions: peer-based text messaging group or “Online Job Club”

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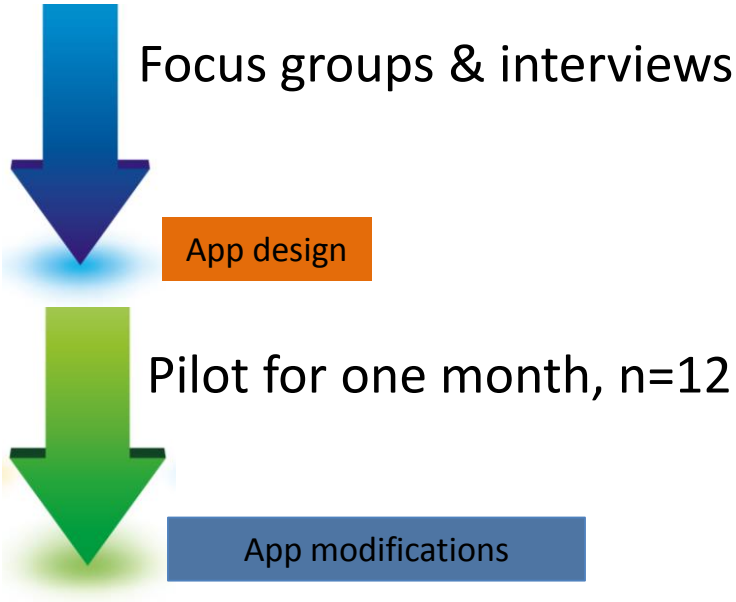
Planning the Project



Full study, each participant followed via phones for 3 months, n=135
(Comparison group interviewed every two weeks, n=21)

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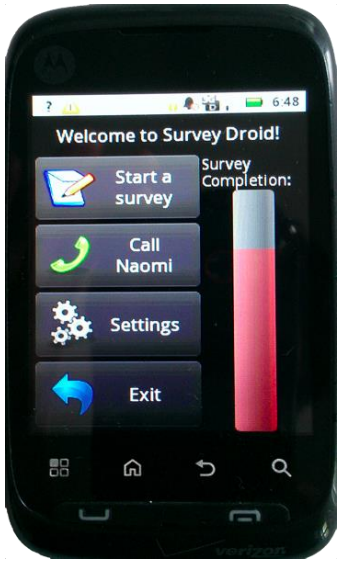
“Survey Droid” Android Application”



Code is available on github.com

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"Survey Droid" Data Collection Functions

- Automated surveys
  - Daily survey at 7pm
  - Random survey between 9am & 6pm
  - Survey after call/text received from a new, unique phone number
- Participant-initiated surveys
  - Job interview or offer
- Passively-collected information
  - GPS locations every 15 minutes between 8am and 6pm
  - Call and text logs (encrypted)

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Project Design

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Online Job Club

- Design:
  - Anonymous
  - Groups of 10-15
  - Moderator
  - GroupMe platform: easy to monitor and communicate using a computer

- Aims:
  - Information sharing
  - Social support:
    - Motivation to act
    - Words of encouragement
  - *Redirect focus and attention to job search and employment

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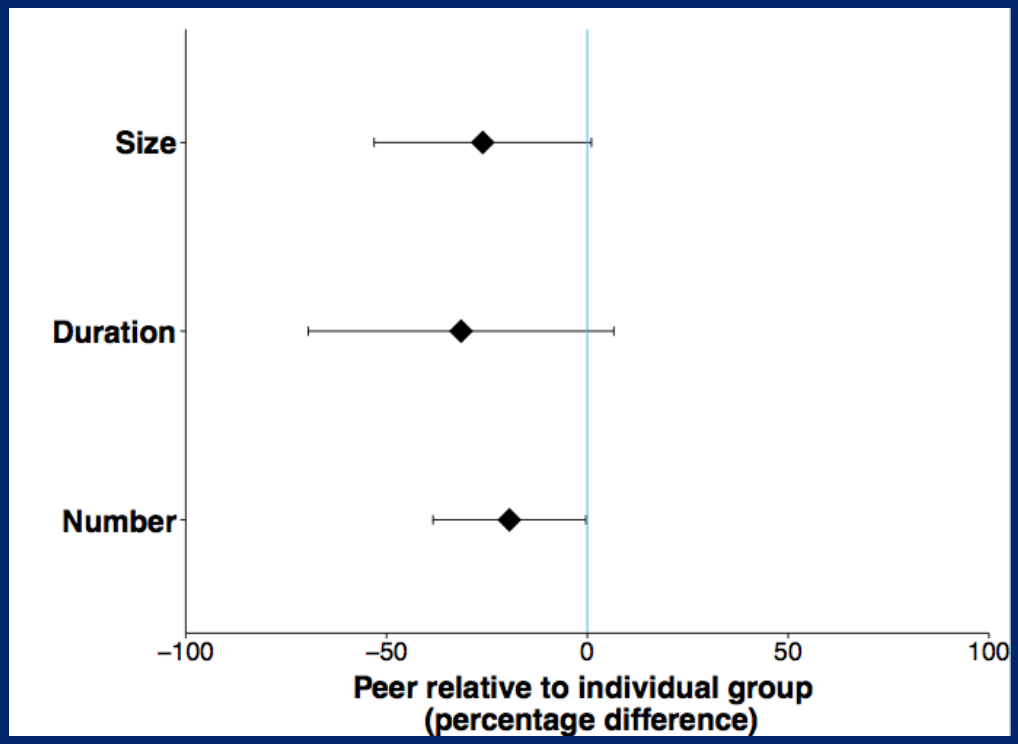
Effect of Online Job Clubs on Other Personal Communication



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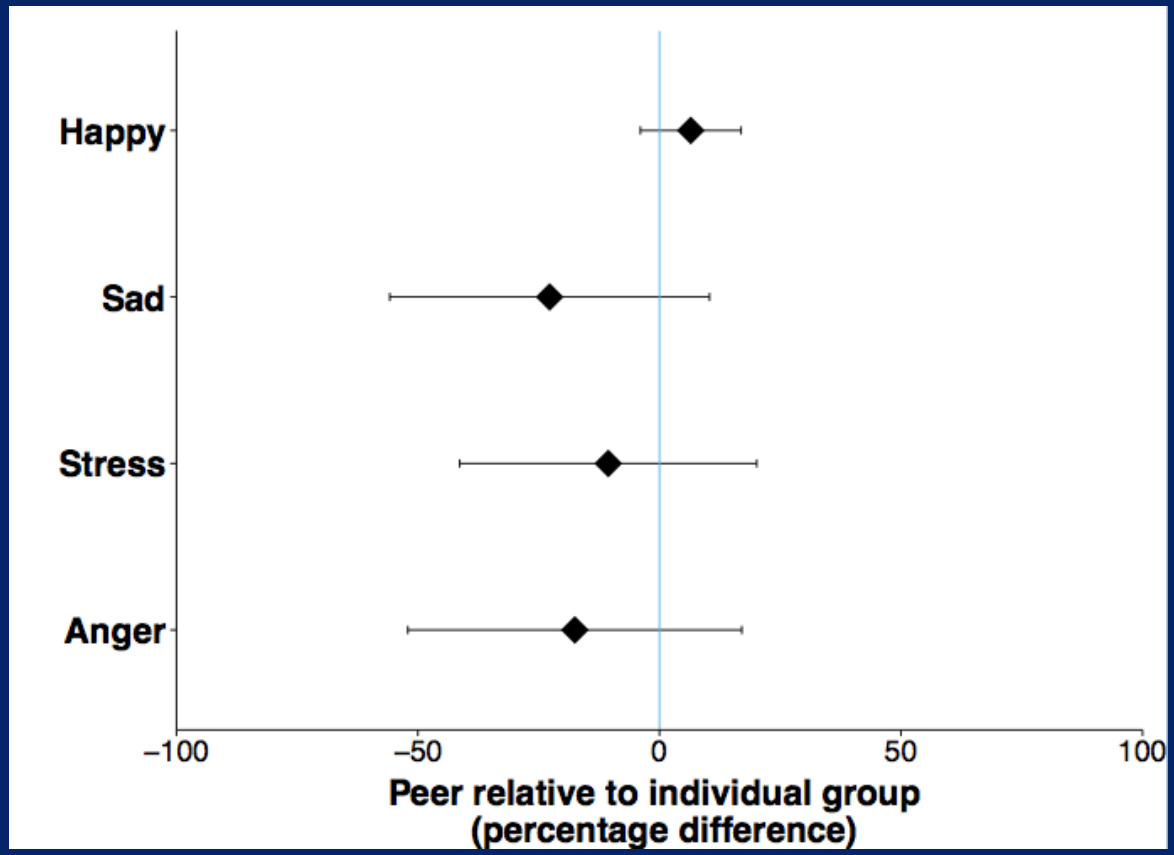
Effect of Online Job Clubs on Emotional Wellbeing



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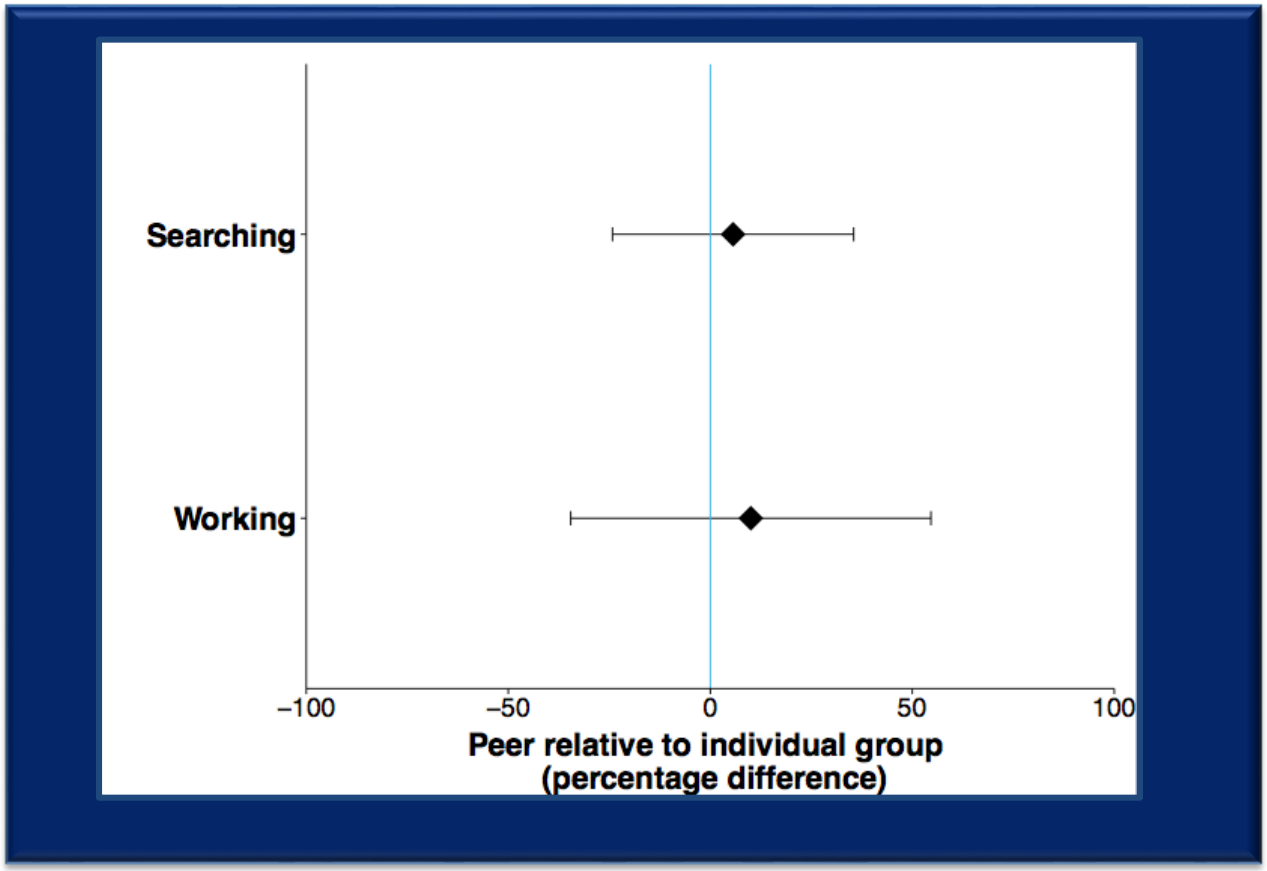
Effect of Online Job Clubs on Job Search and Employment



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Lessons Learned: Advantages of Smartphones

- Smartphones can increase the initial participation rate and retain more participants over time
  - The majority of participants preferred smartphone surveys (66 percent) because of convenience, privacy, and less stress
- Smartphones can collect new and novel types of data: self-reports and observed behaviors in real time
- Smartphones open up a world of possibilities for interventions

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Lessons Learned: Challenges

- Certain topics lend themselves more easily to smartphone survey formats
- Missing data are more common

Good smartphone designs should consider:

- Adopting measures to protect privacy and confidentiality
- Incorporating strategies to gain participants' trust
- Addressing heterogeneous technology skills of participants
- Planning early for the logistics of phones, phone plans, and smartphone data collection tools

LESSONS LEARNED

Sugie, Naomi F.
"Utilizing Smartphones to Study Disadvantaged and Hard-to-Reach Groups."
Sociological Methods and Research.
Online first access: Jan 2016.

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Thank you to the New Jersey State Parole Board, the Newark parole officers and administrators, the study participants, Devah Pager, Sara McLanahan, and Matthew Salganik. Austin Walker and Tony Xiao helped develop the application. Wade Jacobsen (Newark) and Dallas Augustine (Irvine) assisted with data collection.

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MALE INVOLVEMENT WhereDadsMatterInitiative

NATIONAL HEALTHY START ASSOCIATION

NEW HAVEN healthy START

A program of The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven

Using Cellphones to Engage Fathers: The Healthy Start Experience in New Haven, CT

Kenn Harris, President of National Healthy Start Association, Washington, DC and Director of New Haven Healthy Start, The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, CT

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Goals for This Presentation

- Provide brief description of the NHSA *Daddy Delivery* texting program and the Healthy Start fatherhood program in New Haven
- Share "early learnings" on texting program
- Present findings from focus groups with fathers about receiving texts on their phones helped keep them engaged
- Lift up "practice" that seems to be promising (connecting the intervention with a program)

NEW HAVEN healthy START

A program of The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven

MALE INVOLVEMENT WhereDadsMatter Initiative

NATIONAL HEALTHY START ASSOCIATION

MHN Men's Health Network www.menshealthnetwork.org

Mr. dad

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Promote father involvement ***Improve parenting (co-parenting)***

Men's Health → **BEFORE** → **DURING** → **AFTER** → **BEYOND**

connection & engagement

NHSA CAM© Model for Fatherhood/Male Involvement based on **A Community Perspective on the Role of Fathers During Pregnancy: A Qualitative Study** - Amina P. Alio, Cindi A. Lewis, Kenneth Scarborough, Kenn Harris and Kevin Fiscella, BMC, Childbirth and Pregnancy, 2013

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Texting for Dads

Educating and Keeping Dads Connected

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MHN Men's Health Network

NATIONAL HEALTHY START ASSOCIATION

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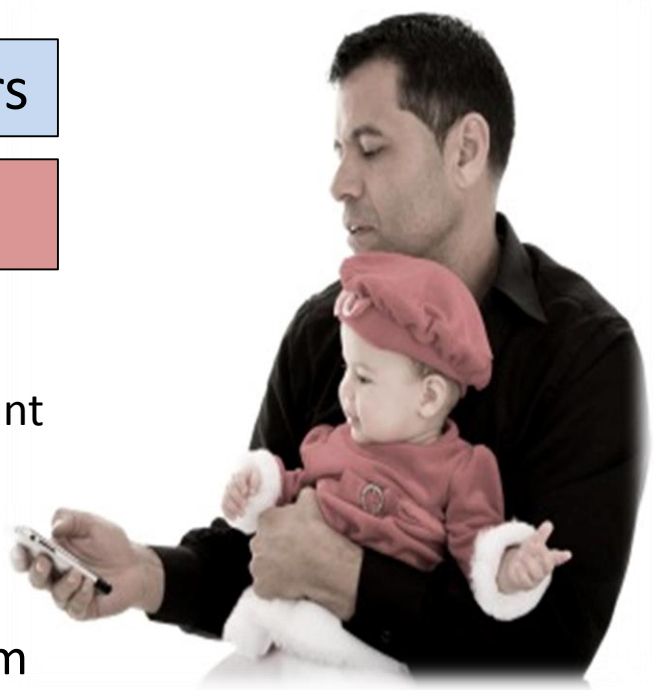
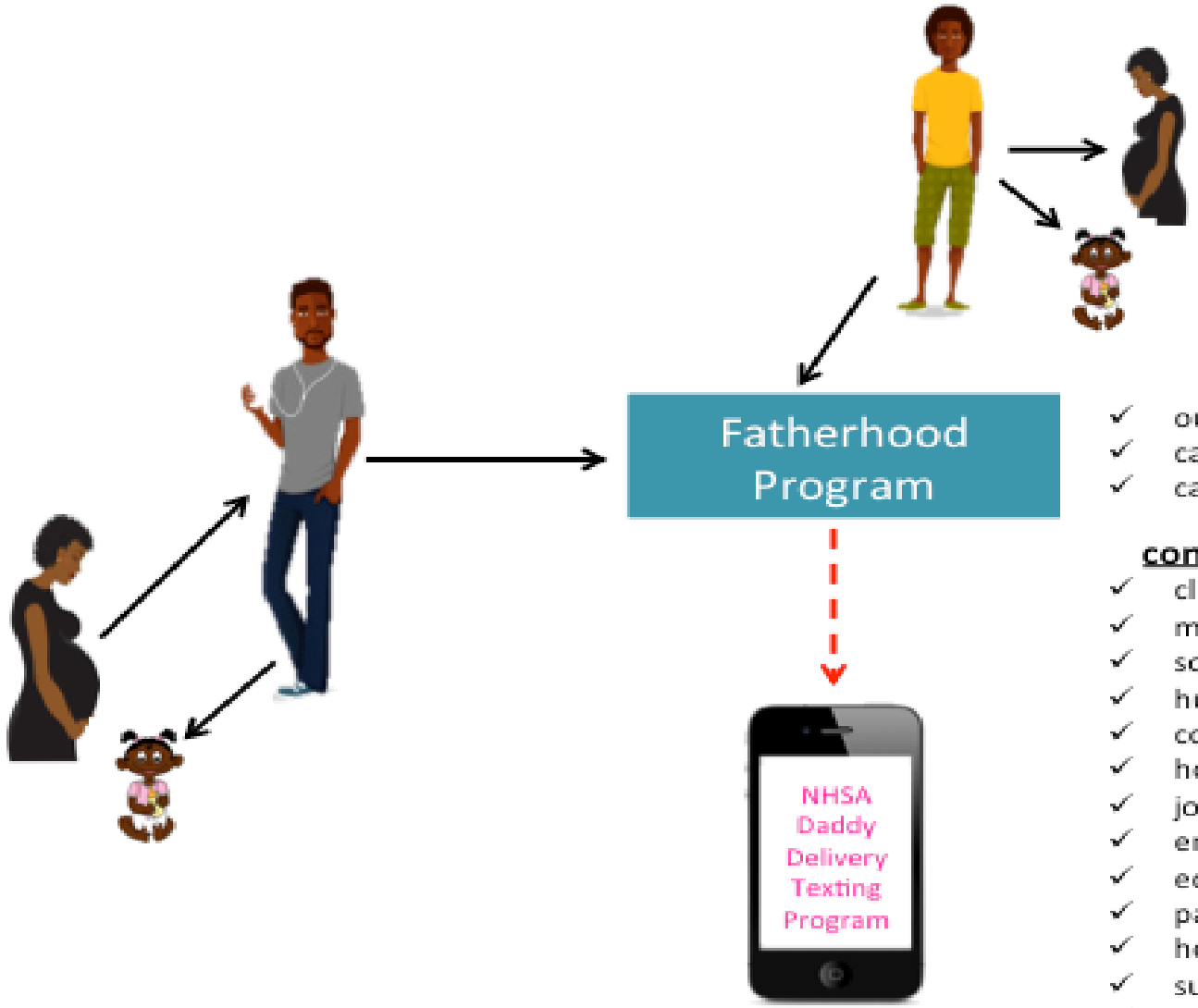
Framework of Daddy Delivery Texting Program

Prenatal	Post Partum	Early Years
Across 3 Years		

- ✓ Two messages per week/ 114 messages per year
- ✓ Message aligned with stage of development of infant

Message content: pregnancy, support for mom, development of baby; and health message for him





- ✓ outreach & recruitment
- ✓ case management
- ✓ care coordination

connection services:

- ✓ clinical
- ✓ medical services
- ✓ social services
- ✓ human services
- ✓ court support
- ✓ housing
- ✓ job readiness
- ✓ employment
- ✓ education
- ✓ parenting/co-parenting
- ✓ healthy relationships
- ✓ support group
- ✓ health education workshops

addressing basic needs

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Results – Early Findings

Who enrolled?

- 51 low income African American males
- 18+ years
- Some first-time dads, many with multiple children/ multiple partners

What happened?

- All 51 fathers assessed and served through 2 NHHS Fatherhood programs and The Men's Consortium support group
- 53% (n=27*) enrolled in/graduated from 24/7 Dads Program©, 6-week class
- 29% (n=15*) enrolled in/graduated from Dads and Diamonds are Forever, 11-week program
- 47% (n=24) were partners to women enrolled in NHHS

Results – Early Findings

What did they say in the focus group?

- Most reported increase in knowledge about pregnancy, infant development and men's health
- Some sought out medical treatment and followed up with PCP
- Asked if they found the texting program useful and found it helpful to be connected with a fatherhood program, most answered "yes"
  - "My other needs were being met/addressed"
  - "I was able to connect with other resources"
- Asked what was most valuable
  - "The support helped to be connected with other men dealing with the same issues"
  - Case Management
  - Classes

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Conclusions

1. Men feel better connected to pregnancy with the texting
2. It was good to require texting program be connected with a fatherhood program because men needed that support
3. The cell phone kept them connected but the services keep him engaged authentically where there is a potential benefit to him, to her, to pregnancy and to baby
4. Follow up with NHHS partners about their impressions
   - 8 mothers interviewed did say that they felt more supported by the father during the pregnancy
5. Much more to learn as we continue to follow these fathers

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Innovative Strategies to Engage and Retain Men in Responsible Fathering Services

Dr. R. Anna Hayward-Everson
Stony Brook University School of Social Welfare
Suffolk County Fatherhood Initiative

Stony Brook University

Suffolk County FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE

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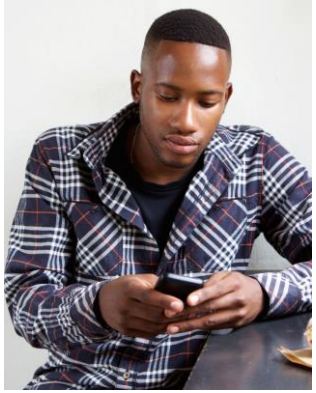
Background - Need for Study



- Suffolk County Fatherhood Initiative (SCFI)
  - DHHS ACF Healthy Marriage Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) funded program (2011-2015 & 2015-2020)
  - Served over 800 low-income fathers in Suffolk County over 4 years
  - Significant issues with retention in the program & evaluation protocol

Enrolled in Program (2011-2015)	Completed Baseline Assessment	Completed 12 Week Closing Interview	Completed 24 Week Follow up Interview
806	688	248	122
%	85%	36%	18%

- "Obama phones," temporary residences, and other barriers to maintaining contact with participants
- FRPN funded research (2016-2018) to explore the use of cell phones and texting to increase participation, engagement & retention

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Our Goals – Current Study

- Determine the impact of text messaging intervention on program engagement, participation and retention for low income fathers enrolled in a HMRF program.
- Does text messaging increase program engagement, participation and retention compared to two groups:
  1) Control group (services, incentives & reminders as usual)
  2) Increased incentive group (services, incentives & reminders as usual PLUS additional incentive tied to program participation)
- Establish feasibility of texting intervention for fatherhood programs
- Understand participant and staff experience with intervention

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Measures

Outcome	Measured by	When
Participation	Program contacts (count)	6 weeks; 12 weeks
Engagement (primary outcome)	Researcher developed measure of client engagement Based on Yatchmenoff (2005)	6 weeks; 12 weeks
Retention (primary outcome)	Authorized activity enrolled & completed; Closing & follow-up interviews conducted.	6 weeks; 12 weeks
Father involvement	FPRN father engagement, Inventory of Father Involvement, other father involvement measures	Entry, 6 & 12 weeks

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Random assignment into 3 groups (N=310)

All groups receive services, incentives, reminders as usual

1 Control Group

2 Cell phone group
Cell phone and/or minutes
Text messages 2x week for 12 weeks
Reminder phone calls.

3 Increased incentive group
Increased monetary incentive $25 at each data collection point
Tied to program participation

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Twice Weekly Text Messages

Week of Services	Sample Text Message
Week 1	"Welcome to the Suffolk County Fatherhood Initiative (SCFI). Congratulations on taking the first step!" "We are looking forward to working with you for the next several weeks. You can expect to receive text messages from this number for the next 12 weeks."
Week 2	"Hi this is SCFI. If you have questions about program services, your casemanager can be reached at the SCFI main office 1+631-761-8518)
Week 3	"Hi this is SCFI. How are things going? Do you have any questions about the program?" "Remember to do your best every day"
Week 5	"Hi this is SCFI. Remember to do your part in creating a safe space. Don't feed into negativity" "We will be contacting you for your 6 week interview next week please call 1+631+509+DADS to schedule your interview with Kevin"
Week 8	"Healthy communication is the cornerstone of a healthy relationship" "Transportation an child care assistance may be available through SCFI – ask your casemanager for details 1+631-761-8518"

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- Implement random assignment
- Refine content of text messages (if needed)
- Solicit feedback from participants (at 12 week interviews)
- Qualitative component at end of services
  - Use of program provided cell phone (participants & staff)
  - Perceptions of text messages

Questions?

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Questions

Call (888) 567-1602 and tell the operator you have a question for the FRPN webinar.

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