

# Crossovers & Conversations: A Basketball-based Positive Youth Development Program that Promotes Meaningful Health Discussions

Shane Fuentes

Alexander Diamond, Clare Park DO, Eric Rose BS, Justin Cannon, BA



## INTRODUCTION

Health literacy has many implications to the health of individuals and communities.<sup>1</sup> It is estimated that more than 43 million people in the United States have inadequate health literacy, and it is well documented that adolescents with poor health literacy are at an increased risk for STIs, obesity, and lack of health-promoting behaviors.<sup>2</sup> Improving the health literacy of adolescents has the potential to overcome generational health inequities by making young people better able to engage with health information and health services to make healthy decisions.<sup>3</sup> Youth who participate in positive youth development (PYD) programs, have been shown to make healthier choices, have reduce rates of teen pregnancy and STIs, and have increased health literacy.<sup>4</sup> PYD programs have used sports as a medium to empower youth and promote life skills,<sup>5</sup> however, there is a lack of sports-based PYD programs that intentionally aim to promote health literacy.

## COMMUNITY PROJECT

Crossovers & Conversations (C&C) is a PYD program created by URM medical students in partnership with the CoRDR. In February 2022, a free week-long basketball camp for teen males occurred with the aim of engaging teens in health discussions to improve participants' health literacy. The curriculum uniquely utilizes teens' interest in basketball and lived experiences to emphasize that the social emotional skills learned in basketball are applicable to everyday life, and vice versa. Each lesson emphasizes confident decision making and empowerment through knowledge acquisition and community resource utilization. Data were collected via *Post Lesson Surveys* and *End of Camp Surveys*. Likert Scale-style questions were scaled 1-5 (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree).

### Daily Themes and Health Topics

Day 1: Grind and Sacrifice  
Decision Making & Safe Strength Training  
Day 2: Grit  
Substance Abuse (Smoking, Drinking, Vaping)  
Day 3: Resilience  
Imposter Syndrome & Mental Health  
Day 4: Communication  
Safe Sex & Consent  
Day 5: Execution  
Internet Literacy & Health Resources in Roc

### Daily Schedule

9:00 AM	Word of the Day
9:05 AM	Morning Basketball
11:00 AM	Health Lesson(s)
12:00 PM	Lunch
1:00 PM	Afternoon Basketball
2:55 PM	Camper of the Day Award(s)

## CONCLUSIONS

Participants became more knowledgeable about health topics discussed, more likely to utilize local health resources, and found each health lesson useful. This program was popular among participants and has potential to benefit participants and the community.

Limitations include subjectivity of Likert-Scale surveys and lack of follow-up. In future iterations, pre- and post-lesson surveys could be administered to better assess knowledge acquisition. In addition, follow-up surveys could be conducted to assess for behavioral changes that participants believe are linked to camp.

## SUSTAINABILITY AND FUTURE

The C&C team and our community partners agree that this week-long camp is a valuable asset to the community and should be continued annually, with other programming throughout the year. Future program leaders have been identified who will continue this work in future years.

Currently, the C&C team is working with CoRDR, HM, and CP to improve the camp curriculum for the upcoming April 2023 camp.

## REFERENCES

1- CDC. (2022). What is Health Literacy? Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/learn/index.html>  
 2- Park, A., Eckert, T. L., Zaso, M. J., Scott-Sheldon, L. A., Vanable, P. A., Carey, K. B., Ewart, C. K., & Carey, M. P. (2017). Associations between health literacy and health behaviors among urban high school students. *Journal of School Health, 87*(12), 885–893. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.12567>  
 3-Gibney S, Bruton L, Ryan C, Doyle G, Rowlands G. Increasing health literacy may reduce health inequalities: Evidence from a national population survey in Ireland. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.* 2020;17(16):5891. doi:10.3390/ijerph17165891  
 4- Youth.Gov. (2020). *Effectiveness of positive youth development programs.* Effectiveness of Positive Youth Development Programs. <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/effectiveness-positive-youth-development>  
 5- Ho, F. K., Louie, L. H., Wong, W. H.-sang, Chan, K. L., Tiwari, A., Chow, C. B., Ho, W., Wong, W., Chan, M., Chen, E. Y., Cheung, Y. F., & Ip, P. (2017). A sports-based youth development program, Teen Mental Health, and Physical Fitness: An RCT. *Pediatrics, 140*(4). <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2017-1543>

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- City of Rochester Department of Recreation R-Centers (CoRDR), a network of community centers who provide recreational activities for Rochester youth. The Community Sports Complex caters to adolescent athletes. They provided the venue, lunches, and transportation, and assisted with the development of the curriculum.
- Hoop & Motivate (HM), a basketball training business operated by three RCSD graduates. They aided in curriculum development and program implementation.
- CannonProductions (CP), a skilled Rochester-based artist, created advertising for the program and provided participants with content captured during the week for personal use.

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

- 21 males aged 13-17 registered for the program, with a waitlist of interested teens.
- 18 registrants attended all 5 days of camp, while 3 others attended at least 1 day.
- Participants reported approval of coaching style, acquisition of knowledge about basketball and health topics, and appreciation of the safe and friendly atmosphere.
- Parents reported that camp served a distinct need in the city and provided useful life education in a unique way that connected with camp participants.
- Teens agreed that they would recommend this camp to others (4.78/5 average Likert Scale response on *End of Camp Survey*).

### Post Lesson Survey Results

