Developing Youth Participatory Research

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Outline

- What is Youth Participatory Research?
- Application to Child and Adolescent Health Literacy
  - Kids SIP*smart*ER Study
- Challenges of Youth Participatory Research
- Best Practices and Resources to Get Started

What is Youth Participatory Research?

Research process that draws equally upon the expertise and resources of researchers and youth community members.

Youth and adults recognize each other's unique strengths, and combine knowledge and action to improve the conditions of young people's lives and communities through research

Key Principles

- Youth opinions are solicited, respected, and applied.
- Youth identify their own issues, problems, and possible solutions.
- Youth initiate project ideas, carry out goal setting, planning, and action.
- Youth drive the process and are involved in all states of decision-making.
- Youth teach and empower other youth.

http://yparhub.berkeley.edu/

Benefits of Youth Participatory Research for Health

- Civically engaged youth are less likely to partake in health-damaging behaviors
- Including the youth voice results in more appropriate youth-focused health prevention and intervention programs
  - Especially communities facing stark inequities, skepticism to outside programs, and unique cultural determinants
- Youth engagement in participatory research projects build skills in strategizing, critical thinking, leadership, communication, and sense of community responsibility

Application to Child Health Literacy

"*Tapping into the child's perspective is irrefutably valuable, in the sense that children's own unique social worlds, experiences, opinions and understandings are acknowledged and respected, which can inform supportive healthcare practices and meaningful health promotion interventions*"

--Velardo & Drummond, 2017

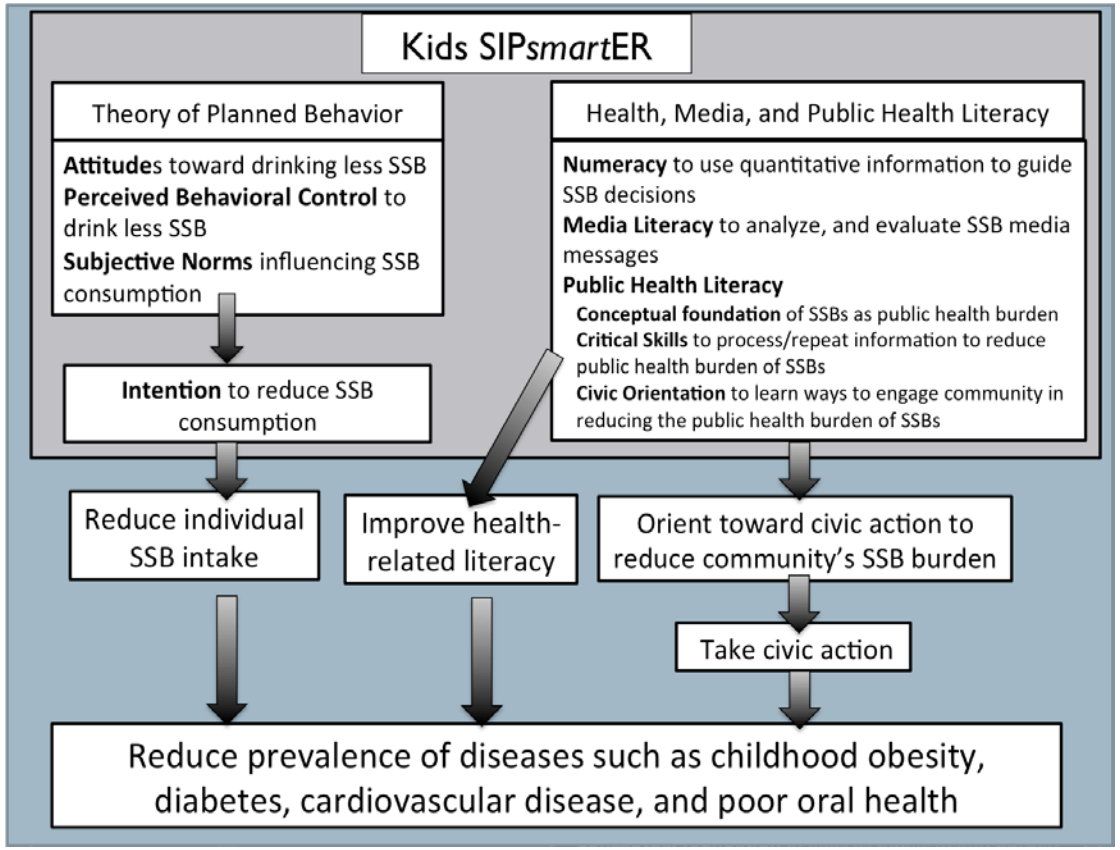
Benefits of Youth Participatory Research for Advancing Child Health Literacy

1. Participation as researchers builds health literacy skills
2. Partnering with young people helps us stay relevant
3. Young people can help us design age-appropriate measures
4. When young people drive the data, adults listen

Kids SIP*smart*ER Study

- **Background:** Children and adolescents in Central Appalachia consume three to four times the amount of sugar sweetened beverages as the average American; yet, few intervention efforts have been attempted there.
- **Objectives of Youth Participatory Research Study**: To engage children in a participatory research process to build local capacity for SSB-focused programs and adapt an existing health literacy-based curriculum for adults
- **Sample:** Nine rising 6th-8th graders in a small Central Appalachian Virginia community

Kids SIP*smart*ER Framework and Learning Objectives



Conceptual Foundations

- Understand that most kids drink too many SSBs but Appalachian kids drink disproportionate amounts
- Recognize public health, social, academic, environmental costs of SSBs

Critical Skills

- State messages for friend/family member about harms of SSBs

Civic Orientation

- Define and recognize being healthy role models to family and friends

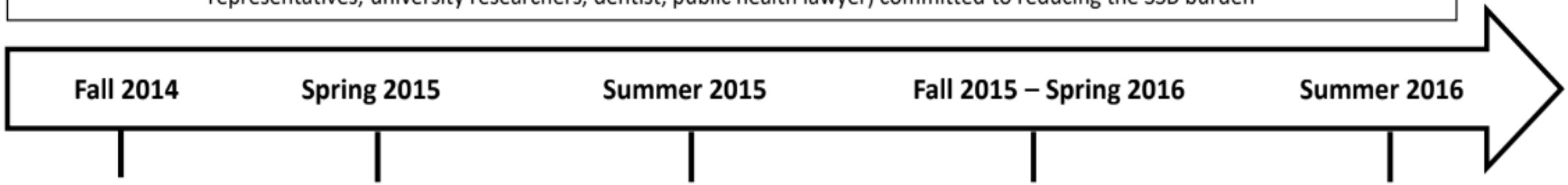
Media Literacy

- Recognize that the beverage industry directly targets rural teens with untruthful advertisements
- Demonstrate using various persuasive techniques based on target audiences

Lane et al (2018). *Health Promotion Practice.*

Kids SIP*smart*ER Timeline

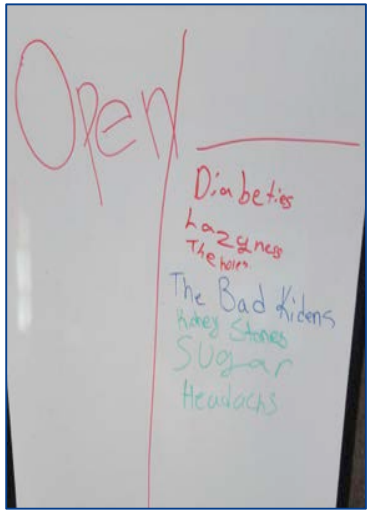
Adult Community Advisory Board Meetings (CAB)
Board is made up of approximately 12 regional stakeholders (several health department, school board, and youth-serving organization representatives, university researchers, dentist, public health lawyer) committed to reducing the SSB burden

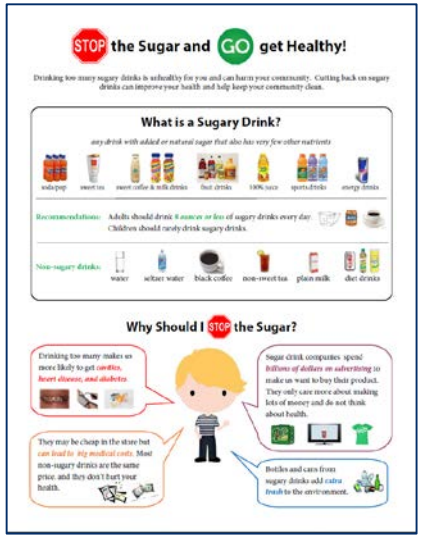


- CAB prioritizes educating young adolescents and as primary SSB-related community need
- Principals and community officials recruit ambassadors for summer camp to adapt SIP*smart*ER
- 9 ambassadors attend **Kids SIP*smart*ER camp** and ask to continue participation
- Adaptations made to program based on youth feedback
- Ambassadors assist with **Kids SIP*smart*ER** feasibility testing in one middle school
- Ambassadors plan and execute **community advocacy event**
- Ambassadors testify to adult CAB for continued resources and support

Lane et al (2018). *Health Promotion Practice.*

Kids SIP*smart*ER highlights





1. Participation in research builds health literacy skills

- Build skills targeted by the intervention/programs
- Exposure to importance of healthy behaviors and costs of unhealthy behaviors for both individuals and community
- Build capacity for problem-solving, communication, leadership, public speaking, time management, conflict resolution, research methods
- Become advocates for others

Kids SIP*smart*ER Ambassadors' Public Health Literacy

Conceptual Foundations (Prevalence of the Problem)

"Here, some people that's all they drink like they don't want water and they don't want anything else."

"I realized how much people drink pop and how bad it is for you because everybody drinks it"

Civic Orientation (Efficacy for Action)

"I would like to go to the school and ask [principal] if we can like go into the auditorium or something and like tell the whole school all of these effects."

Civic Orientation (Lack of Inevitability)

"You know what I would like to see one day? After we have made a change, I'd like to see still a lot of pop [at the store] cause like nobody's buying it and like not very much water cause everybody's getting all the water."

Kids SIP*smart*ER Ambassadors' Public Health Literacy

"Before we done everything, I wasn't really heard on my opinion and no one like really cared, but when they [VT] came…like everyone was asking me questions, like, how am I supposed to find out much sugar is in this drink…and I now I can tell them."

Critical Skills (Communicating with Others)

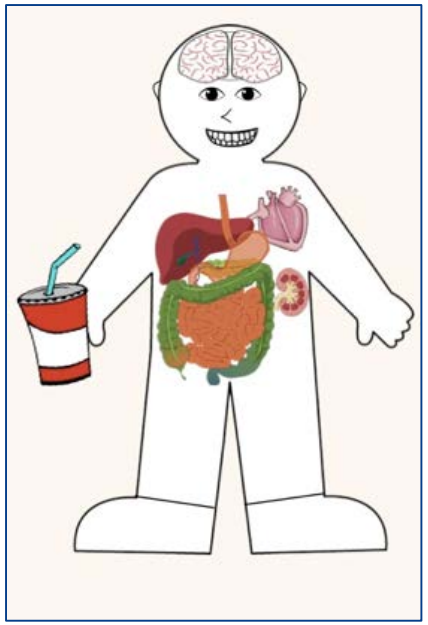
"You know what the highlight of my day was? I was talking to one lady and her daughter. They had like a bunch of pop in their cart and then I started talking to her and handed her the flyer and I saw her reading it…she said her daughter had just got diagnosed with diabetes…then when I saw her later she had put back a bunch of the pop!"

"With this program I've learnt ways that you can stop people from [drinking SSBs], or help people to stop drinking so much."

Civic Orientation (Efficacy for Action)

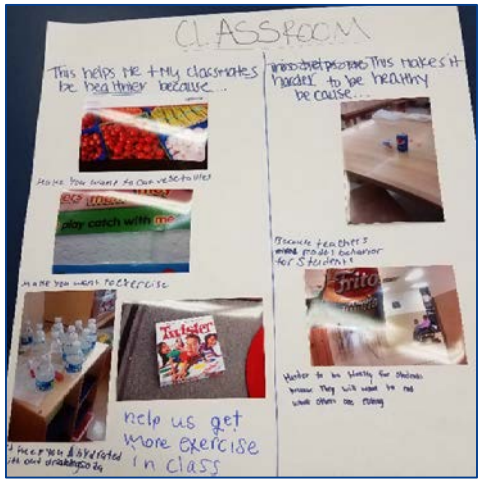
2. Partnering with young people helps us stay relevant

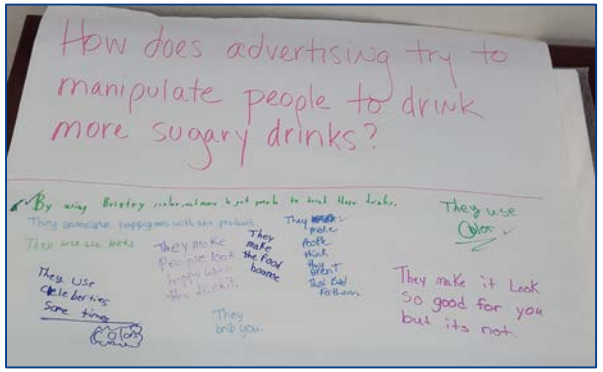
- Ensures that materials reflect reality in a fast-changing world, are interesting, and combat misinformation
- Generates “hype” to recruit participants
- Helps with fidelity and engagement



3. Young people can help us design age-appropriate measures

- Ensures tools are relevant, understand and measure what is intended
- Provides creative ideas to improve readability and make data collection more fun
  - Common techniques for young people: Photo Voice, apps, reflection journals, mapping, community surveys
- When a data collector is their peer, youth respond with more enthusiasm and answer more honestly



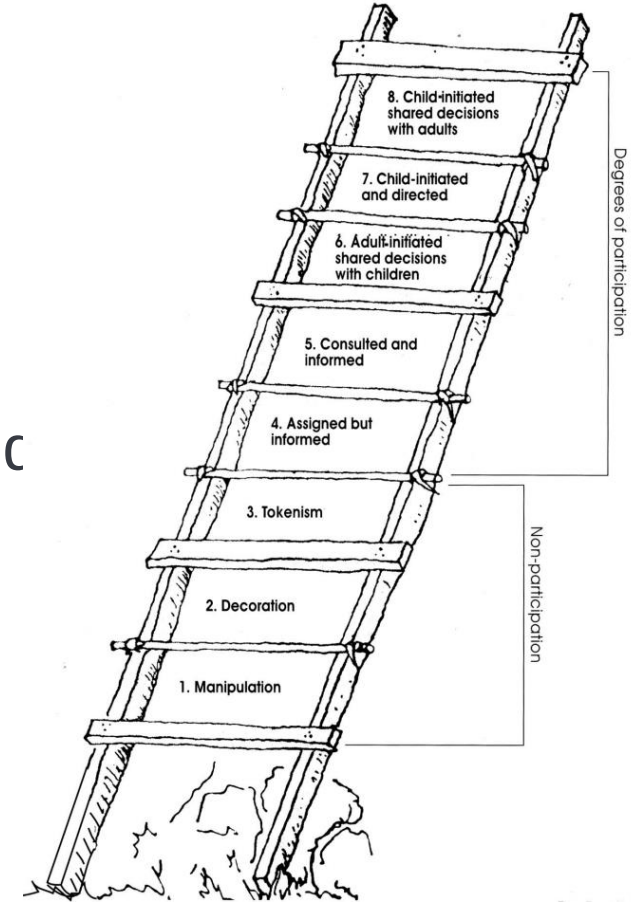


4. When young people drive the data, adults listen

- Increases relevance of data interpretation and ensure that information is shared
- Improves relationship, respect, and trust between youth and adults
- Expands reach of ongoing initiatives
- Increases belief that programs should be expanded and institutionalized or well-funded

Challenges of Youth Participatory Research

- Time and resource-intensive to scale
- Difficult to get started and sustain
- Children get older
- Inadequate representation of youth with highest neec
- Authenticity vs Tokenism



Hart (1992)

Best Practices

- Understand the readiness of the community organizations that will be involved
- Make sure research team members are well-trained in YPR principles, and that you have a plan in place to deal with anticipated turnover of adult staff
- Be realistic about your time frame based on your budget, age group, location, and priorities, and be transparent if things are going as planned
- Offer youth multiple ways to participate and be clear on specific tasks
- Monitor the implementation process, make adjustments if necessary, and share your successes!

LPC Consulting Associates, Inc (2012)

Reading List

- YPAR Hub: http://yparhub.berkeley.edu/
- Velardo S and Drummond S. Emphasizing the child in child health literacy research. *Journal of Child Health Care.* 2017;21(1):5-13.
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- Langhout, R. D., & Thomas, E. (2010). Imagining participatory action research in collaboration with children: An introduction. *American Journal of Community Psychology,* 46, 60-66. doi:10.1007/s10464-010-9321-1

Questions?

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