



Relationship-Building in Philadelphia’s Communication Infrastructure: Integrating Youth Participatory Action Research with Community-Based Organizations and Local Media Groups



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1. What is YPAR?

- Youth participatory action research (YPAR) is “a form of community-based participatory research in which youth are trained to identify and analyze problems relevant to their lives” (Ozer, 2017, p. 174)
- In the Netter Center’s mental health YPAR program, health communication researchers support high school interns in identifying a health issue in their community and then creating a health campaign to address this issue
- The purpose of this study is to increase distribution of program-created campaigns by connecting the Netter Center’s mental health YPAR program with local media groups and community-based organizations (CBOs) in Philadelphia’s communication infrastructure

2. Research Questions

1. What are the facilitators and barriers within Philadelphia’s communication action context (CAC) that impact the ability for the Netter Center’s YPAR mental health programming to develop connections with these power bases?
2. What are potential wise practices in communication strategy to ensure sustainable connections within Philadelphia’s communication infrastructure so that YPAR mental health findings continue to be shared with power bases and thus a wider community audience?

3. Methodology

- 8 in-depth, semi-structured interviews
 - 2 interviews with youth participants in the Netter Center’s mental health YPAR program
 - 3 interviews with representatives from youth mental health CBOs
 - 3 interviews with journalists from local media groups that report on youth mental health
- Thematic content analysis based in Grounded Theory and Framework Analysis using NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software (Green & Thorogood, 2014)

References & Acknowledgements

- Ozer, E. J. (2017). Youth-Led Participatory Action Research: Overview and Potential for Enhancing Adolescent Development. *Child Development Perspectives*, 11(3), 173–177. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12228>
- Green, J., & Thorogood, N. (2014). Developing Qualitative Analysis. In *Qualitative Methods for Health Research* (3rd ed., pp. 233–254). Sage.
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4. Findings

- Youth Participants
 - Facilitators: trust in the Netter Center; advertising through in-school events and social media
 - Barriers: mental health stigma; distrust of the media; prohibitive cost of mental health resources
- CBOs
 - Facilitators: trained psychological clinicians; text lines
 - Barriers: fear of inauthentic social media interactions; decentralized CBO landscape in Philadelphia
- Local Media Groups
 - Facilitators: collaborative culture in mental health reporting; partnerships with schools; youth interns
 - Barriers: fear of encroaching on youth spaces, especially on social media; lack of funding for school programs

5. Discussion

- Resource Map
 - Illustrates communication hotspots and community comfort zones
- Recommendations
 - The Netter Center as a mediating hub for mental health resources
 - Local media groups and CBOs should advertise on social media and focus on educating about their respective services
- Implications
 - Increased youth empowerment
 - Communication infrastructure as a social determinant of health

