



# Strong African American Families Program: SAAF

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THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

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## Overview of Rural African Americans in the South

- Several million families live in small towns and rural communities
- Poverty rates among the highest in the nation
  - 50% live below federal poverty standard
  - another 25% live close to the standard



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## Community Partnerships

- Focus groups
- Community liaisons
- Family ambassadors



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## SAAF's Goal

To build on the strengths of African American families that make their children less likely to get involved in problems that face today's youth.

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## A Randomized Prevention Trial of The Strong African American Families Program (SAAF)

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## The Strong African American Families Program (SAAF)

- **Based on over a decade of research**
  - rural African American children
  - longitudinal pathways
    - competence
    - psychological adjustment
    - use of alcohol and other substances

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## The Strong African American Families Program (SAAF)

- **Using data from this research**
  - prevention targets identified
  - program designed
  - efficacy evaluated using culturally sensitive measures

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## More About SAAF

- Builds on other programs
- family centered
- enhances competence
  - Parents
  - Youth
- designed to prevent use of alcohol and other substances

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## SAAF Intervention: Implementation and Fidelity

- **Weekly meetings**
  - 7 consecutive weeks
  - at community facilities
  - two separate, concurrent, 1-hr sessions
    - parents
    - youth
  - joint parent-youth session, 1 hr
  - 14 hrs of prevention training provided

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### Randomized Prevention Trial

- **667 African American families**
  - mothers
  - 11-year-olds
- **from rural Georgia**
- **369 participant families**
- **298 control families**

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### Randomized Prevention Trial

- **Assessments**
  - Pretest
  - Posttest
    - 3 months after intervention ends
  - Follow-up
    - 24 months after intervention ends
  - Data collection
    - in-home using laptop computers

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### How is SAAF Unique?

- Highlights strengths of African American families and communities
- Celebrates the diversity of African American families
- Builds Black Pride
- Grounded in 10 years of research with African American families

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### Elements of SAAF Implementation

- Funding
- Facilitators
- Location
- Recruitment
- Childcare
- Transportation
- Incentives
- Meals or Snacks
- Scheduling
- Registration and Fees
- Equipment
- Certificates

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### Youth Creed



We are strong, young African  
Americans.



We are making good decisions so we  
reach our goals.

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### Youth Session Goals (1-4)

-  Visualize dreams for the future
-  Understand the importance of avoiding drug use
-  Understand normal development and learn how to deal with temptation for early sex
-  Identify risky situations and how to deal with pressures and temptations

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## Youth Session Goals (5-7)

- 👂 Learn specific steps for handling peer pressure and understand concerns of parents/caregivers
- ⏰ Learn skills for acting assertively in difficult situations
- 👨👩👧👦 Understand the qualities of good friends and SAAF Session review

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## Youth Activity Demonstration

Session 1 – Future Orientation

### **Treasure Maps**

Session 5 – Peer Pressure Resistance

### **Road Signs and Situation Cards**

Session 5 – Family Communication & Relationship Quality

### **Why Parents/Caregivers Do the Things They Do**

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## Parent Creed



African American parents and caregivers are strong and caring.

We show love and set limits.

We are helping our children become responsible young adults.

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### Parent Session Goals (1-3)

- 📖 Identify goals for youth and how best to support them as they become more independent
- 📖 Understand the value of consistently enforcing household rules according to severity of behavior
- 📖 Clarify the importance of everyday routines and encouragement of good behavior

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### Parent Session Goals (4-7)

- 📖 Learn ways to help youth succeed in school
- 📖 Understand the prevalence of risk and how to protect against risk involvement
- 📖 Discuss ways to handle discrimination and build positive racial pride
- 📖 Focus on
  - 🔄 Maintaining closeness as youth grow
  - 🔄 Using community resources to raise strong youth

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### Parent Activity Demonstration

Sessions 2 and 3 – Family Routines  
**Task and Reward Jar**  
Session 5 – Family Communication  
**Who, What, When and Where**  
Session 6 – Racial Socialization  
**Matching Views to Actions**

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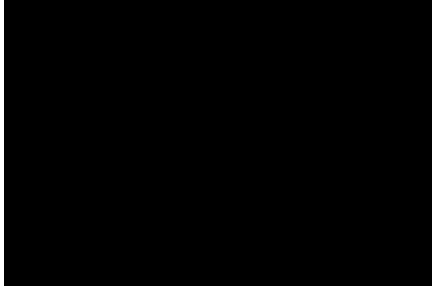
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Who? What?  
When? Where?



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## Family Creed

African-American families care about  
each other and have fun together.

We are making a difference in the world.



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## Family Session Goals (1-3)

- Focus on building positive relationships and enhancing parental involvement
- Develop a shared understanding of family rules and values
- Understand how to increase communication about sex and understand stress that family members face

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### Family Session Goals (4-7)

- ☞ Identify ways to cope with stress and work toward goals
- ☞ Develop a family plan for handling temptation and peer pressure
- ☞ Discuss potential situations involving racism and identify strengths of African American families
- ☞ Work to understand family strengths by creating a family tree

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### Family Activity Demonstration

Sessions 2 – Family Communication and Values

#### **Family Shield**

Session 5 – Future Orientation

#### **Dreams and Expectations Letter**

Session 6 – Racial Socialization

#### **Family Discussion on Difficult Situations**

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### Who Can Implement SAAF?

- ✓ Schools
- ✓ Churches
- ✓ Youth groups
- ✓ Family agencies
- ✓ Community groups that work with families

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## Who Can Implement SAAF?

### Primary Qualifications

- Experience working with youth & families
- Completed post-secondary education (Associate's or Bachelor's degree, or technical training)
- Ability to adopt a strength-based orientation
- Comfort discussing race-related issues and ability to help others feel comfortable

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## Who Can Benefit From SAAF?

- Families with African American or mixed-ethnicity children
- Single-parent families
- Two-parent families
- Blended families
- Foster families
- Families with grandparents as caregivers

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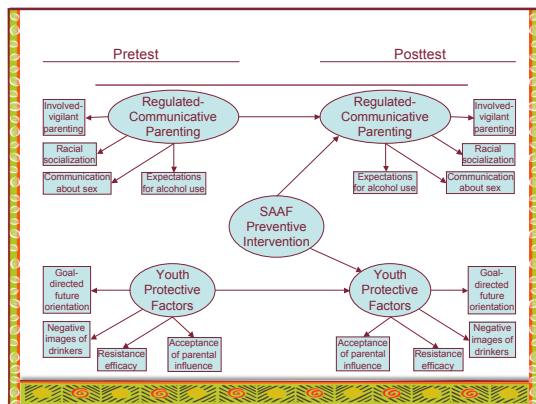
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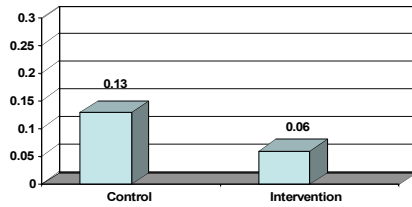
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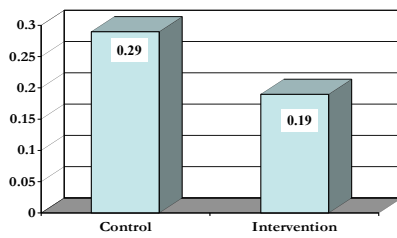
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### New User Proportions for Alcohol Use at Posttest by Experimental Condition



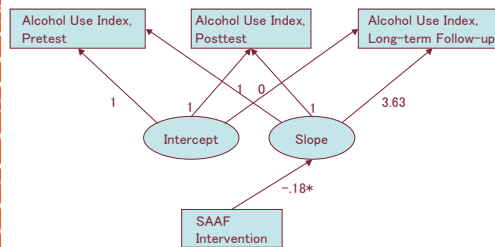
Z-score for testing proportions: 2.23 with  $p < .05$ . Relative reduction rate: 56.41

### New User Proportions for Alcohol Use at Long-term Follow-up by Experimental Condition

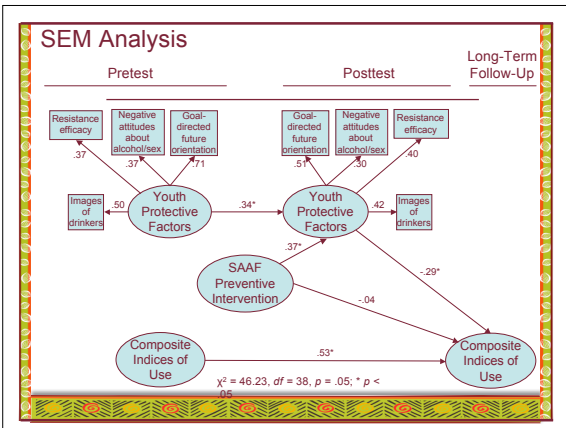


Z-score for testing proportions: 2.16 with  $p < .05$ . Relative reduction rate: 36.93

### Conditional Growth Curve Models, Alcohol Use



\* $p < .05$




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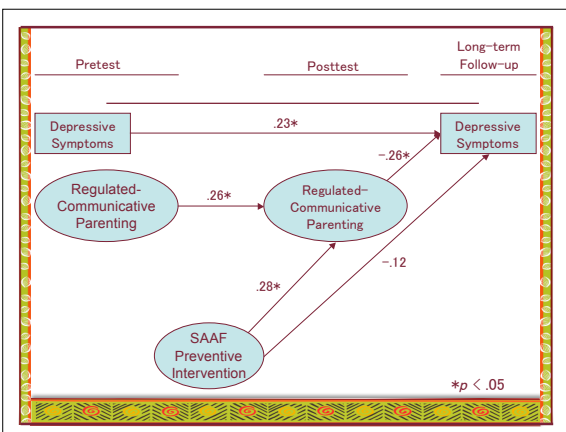
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### Closing

- Next steps in SAAF research
- CFR's commitment to dissemination
- Q/A

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THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

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