



**The Strong African American Families Program:
Supporting Families for Optimal Youth Outcomes**

Blueprints Conference
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This presentation will include:

- Description of the SAAF Program
 - *Demonstration of select activities*
- Brief overview of the SAAF research trial
- Overview of current dissemination efforts



The Strong African American Families Program (SAAF)

The goal of SAAF is to build on the strengths of African American families that protect youth from engaging in risky behaviors.



SAAF Core Values

- Strengths Orientation
 - *Families already possess many of the skills needed to promote success.*
- Collectivism
 - *Unity in purpose and helping each other fosters healthy families and communities.*



SAAF Core Values

- Ownership
 - *The lived experiences of African American families are relevant and valuable.*
- Social Justice
 - *Safe spaces must be created for historically marginalized communities.*



Program Development




SAAF Content



Youth Sessions

Session 1
Youth think about and visualize their dreams and goals for the future.

Session 2
Youth identify their own positive qualities and compare to characteristics of users.

Session 3
Youth identify reasons young people get involved in sex and learn ways of dealing with temptation.

Session 4
Youth discuss the various temptations that young people face and practice resisting temptation.

Session 5
Youth focus on peer pressure and learn specific steps for resisting peer pressure.



Caregiver Sessions

Session 1
Caregivers identify desired goals and qualities for their children as well as their fears as caregivers.

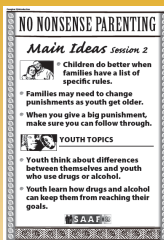
Session 2
Caregivers discuss family rules and punishment for everyday and serious misbehaviors.

Session 3
Caregivers discuss everyday routines, encouraging independence and good behavior.

Session 4
Caregivers discuss helping their youth succeed in school.

Session 5
Caregivers discuss ways to protect their youth from dangerous behaviors.

Session 6
Caregivers discuss ways of handling racism and encouraging racial pride in their youth.



SAAF Program – Family Session

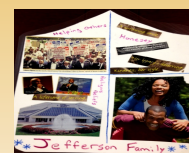
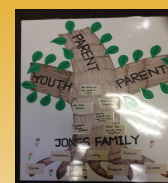
Session 1
Families discuss goals and play a game to determine how well they know each other.

Session 2
Families discuss their family values and create a Family Values Shield to depict their values.

Session 3
Families have a discussion about sex and play a game to understand each other's stress.

Session 4
Families discuss stress and play a game about working together to reach their goals.

Session 5
Families discuss peer pressure and caregivers help youth practice their resistance skills.



Session 6 Activities



Youth Session

- Introduction
- Passive, Aggressive & Assertive Behavior
 - Mouse, Monster, Me
 - Mouse, Monster, Me Collage
- Practicing Assertive Behavior
 - Mouse, Monster, Me Role Plays
- Closing



Youth: Mouse, Monster, Me

Mouse	Monster	Me
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passive Gives in Tries to please the other person Thinks only of what the other person wants Scared of what people will think 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aggressive Thinks only of what s/he wants Will do anything to get it Critical Demanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assertive Sticks up for his/her rights Respectful of others Honest

Caregiver Session

- Introduction
- Dealing with Discrimination
 - Experiencing Discrimination
- Ways of Responding to Racism
 - Matching Views to Action
- Building Black Pride
- Closing



DIFFERENT WAYS OF RESPONDING TO RACISM

Don't Rock the Boat

- * Ignore a situation involving racism.
- * Want to look and act like mainstream society.
- * Think others make too big a deal about racism.

DIFFERENT WAYS OF RESPONDING TO RACISM

Stick to our Own

- * See the world as racist and unfair.
- * Try to stay separate from other races.
- * Don't trust people outside of their race.

DIFFERENT WAYS OF RESPONDING TO RACISM

Stand Up

- * Have pride in being African American.
- * Understand that racist and discrimination still exist.
- * Act strong and assertive when dealing with racism.
- * Emphasize dealing without being discouraged.

Family Session

- Icebreaker
- Family Discussion on Difficult Situations
- Strengths and Resources for African American Families
- Strong African American Families Game
- Closing



Family Discussion – P/C

DISCUSSION ON HARD SITUATIONS

PARENT/CAREGIVER • QUESTION 1

What hard or unfair situations do you notice at school?

How do you think the person should handle it?

DISCUSSION ON HARD SITUATIONS

PARENT/CAREGIVER • QUESTION 2

Are there some students at your school who are bullies or who are mean to other students?

What would you do if a friend of yours was mean to someone?

Family Discussion - Y

DISCUSSION ON HARD SITUATIONS

YOUNG PERSON • QUESTION 1

What hard situations did you face when you were my age?

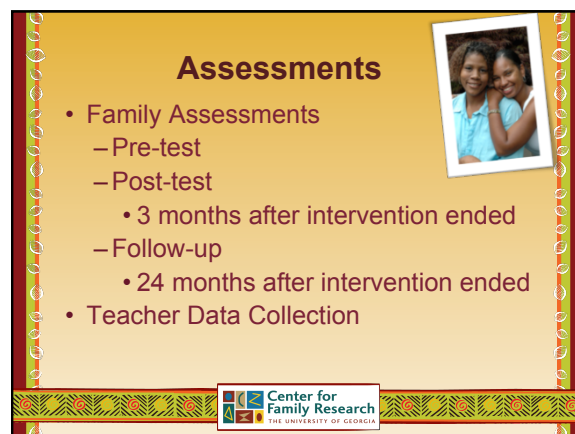
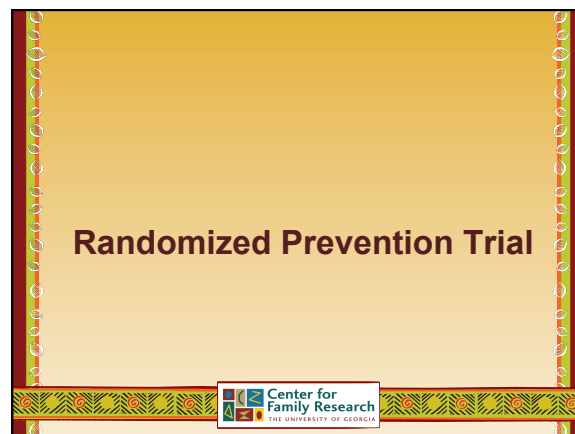
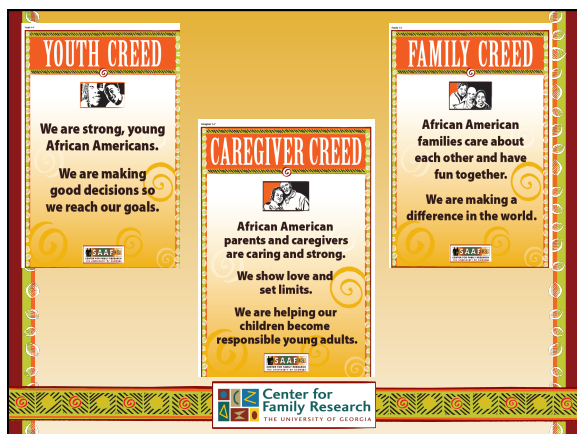
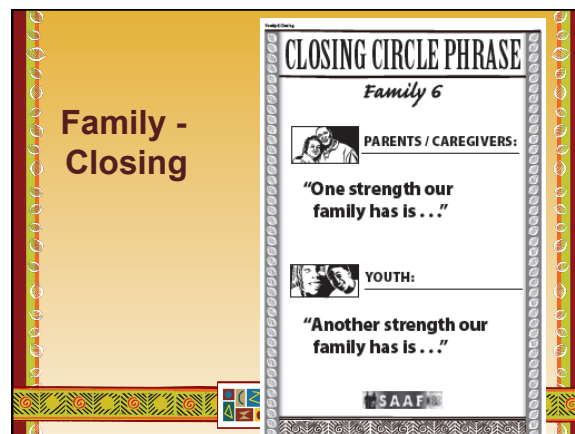
How did you deal with them?

DISCUSSION ON HARD SITUATIONS

YOUNG PERSON • QUESTION 2

What hard or unfair situations do you face now at work or away from home?

How do you deal with them?



SAAF Implementation

- Facilitators
- Community/Family Engagement
- Weekly meetings
 - 7 consecutive weeks (ideally)
 - held at community facilities
 - two separate, concurrent, 1-hr sessions for Caregivers and Youth
 - joint caregiver-youth (family) session, 1-hr
- Booster Sessions



SAAF Findings

- Compared to youth who did not participate in SAAF, SAAF youth:
 - Demonstrated fewer conduct problems
 - Were less likely to start using drugs
 - Delayed onset of sexual behavior
- Other outcomes affected by families' participation in SAAF:
 - Decreased levels of maternal depression
 - Increased positive racial identity



Current Dissemination Efforts



Trained SAAF Sites

Organization	Location	Date
Senate Bill 94	Aurora, CO	2008
Iowa State Cooperative Extension	Waterloo, IA	2010
University of Pittsburgh Medical Center	Pittsburgh, PA	2011
Community Education Group	Washington, DC	2012
Johnson County Social Services*	Iowa City, IA	2013
Cedar Rapids Community Schools*	(Cedar Rapids, IA)	2013
Polk County Decategorization*	(Des Moines, IA)	2013
Holcomb Behavioral Health Systems*	Media, PA	2014

Organization	Location	Date
Stark Social Worker's Network*	Canton, OH	2015
Coming Together Stark County*	Canton, OH	2015
Crossroads United Methodist Church	Canton, OH	2015
Senate Bill 94 & Aurora Public Schools	Aurora, CO	2015
Holcomb Behavioral Health Systems*	Media, PA	2015
Be Ready Community Development Corporation*	(Wilmington, DE)	2015
Western Tidewater Community Services Board	Suffolk, VA	2015
Amachi Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh, PA	2015
Mercer County Communities that Care	Mercer, PA	2015

Adopting SAAF: What Works

- Collaboration
- Pre-identified "Target population"
- Initial funding AND a plan for sustainability
- Incorporating SAAF into the organization's program options
- Intentional selection of facilitators



Adopting SAAF: *What Works...less effectively*

- Trying to make SAAF universal
- Lack of adequate planning
 - Implementation
 - Recruiting
- Failure to “improve” and adjust
- Lack of organization/community support



Common Issues/Concerns *Addressed during training*

- Race of facilitators
- “Selling” the program to non-African American decision makers/stakeholders
- Implementing with bi-racial families
- Appropriate modifications/adaptations
- Current race-related issues



Common Challenges *As reported via SAAF Tracking*

- Administrative (funding, staff turnover)
- Marketing Program/Recruiting families
- Implementation Logistics
 - Families with multiple children – caregivers splitting their time between children
 - Childcare for younger children
 - Families arriving late/not committing



2016 SAAF Update

- Video Updates
- Changes/Additions to Activities
- Content Changes/Additions



Thank you!

Please contact me for additional information:

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