

PMI Demonstration Sites

Key Guidelines for Implementing the Evaluation

Randomization means that youth from the target audience are randomly assigned to one of the two evaluation groups (Immediate or Comparison). The purpose of randomization is to ensure that youth who participate in a workshop immediately are similar to youth who will participate in a workshop four weeks later. When the youth in these two groups are similar, differences found in survey results can be attributed to the workshop and not to other factors in the community.

INDIVIDUAL RANDOMIZATION

Ideally, each youth participant will be assigned at random into either the Immediate or Comparison group. Random assignment can be done by compiling an alphabetized roster of individual teen recruits at a given time, and alternately assigning them to the Immediate or Comparison group. Flipping a coin or pulling written names from a hat can also be done to achieve individual randomization.

GROUP RANDOMIZATION

In cases when individual randomization is not possible, group randomization should be used. The process for group randomization is described below:

1. Matching groups

The first step of group randomization is to match two similar groups. All intact groups recruited for the workshops – either from schools or community groups – should be matched in pairs according to the following considerations as much as possible:

- ◆ Flexible schedules. Matched groups must have flexibility in order to be assigned randomly to the workshop schedule. Ideally, intact groups would have a four-six week window available for scheduling a workshop. (See *Timing of the surveys* below).
- ◆ Demographics of teens in the groups. This category includes many factors that you may or may not have information about, such as age, gender, ethnicity, income, or educational level. To the extent possible, consider these factors when identifying and matching groups.
- ◆ Number of teens in each group should be as similar as possible.

2. Randomizing groups

Once two similar groups have been matched together, flip a coin to determine which group will participate as the Immediate or Comparison group.

Key Guidelines for Implementing the Evaluation – continued

3. Timing of surveys

The postsurvey for the Immediate group should happen on the same day as, or as close as possible to, the presurvey of the Comparison group. In the table below, the survey points that should happen at the same time frame are highlighted:

	<i>2 groups take surveys around same time</i>		<i>2 groups take surveys around same time</i>	
Immediate Group	presurvey	full workshop	postsurvey	follow-up survey 4-6 weeks later
Comparison Group (delayed)			presurvey	follow-up survey (second presurvey) 4-6 weeks later
				full workshop

4. When advance randomization and scheduling is not possible

There will be times when it will not be possible to identify and match two groups in advance. For example, a community group requests a workshop within the next two weeks, and therefore cannot not serve as a Comparison group. In this case, assign this group to the Immediate group, and then search for a similar group to match as the Comparison group. Since this approach is not true randomization, the Site Evaluation Coordinator will make note of groups that are recruited in this way. This form of recruitment should be used only when advance recruitment and scheduling is completely impossible for an intact group. Please be sure that only a portion of randomization for the evaluation is conducted in this manner at your site.