



# YAYA FACT SHEET

March 2008

No. 4

## Research Synthesis

### Reductions in HIV Risk among Runaway Youths

**Authors:** Rotheram-Borus, M., Van Rossem, R., Gwadz, M., Koopman, C., & Lee, M. (1997)  
University of California, Department of Psychiatry, Division of Social and  
Community Psychiatry, Los Angeles, CA.

#### **Description of Intervention: StreetSmart**

This intervention was based on Social Learning Theory, using small groups (a) as practice and role-play opportunities, (b) to mobilize and reinforce positive behaviors, and (c) to maintain support networks. The intervention consisted of 10 group sessions on a rotating basis, three times per week, repeated every four to six weeks, and one individual counseling session. Sessions were led by trained counselors in shelters for runaway youths in the New York City area. The intervention had four primary components:

1. **HIV-related knowledge.** Activities included video and art workshops where youths developed soap opera dramatizations, public service announcements, commercials, and raps about HIV prevention, and they reviewed and discussed commercial HIV/AIDS prevention videos.
2. **Social skills.** Training on assertiveness and coping skills, including use of a "feeling thermometer," were employed to develop skills for use in HIV-risk situations.
3. **Access to resources.** Participants visited a community-based comprehensive health and mental health center.
4. **Personalized beliefs, attitudes and norms.** Participants had a private counseling session during which they could assess individual barriers to practicing safer sex and discuss their own attitudes and behavior patterns. Dysfunctional attitudes and behavior patterns were targeted.

Incentives included food and \$1 for carrying condoms and arriving to the program on time.

**Intervention Goal:** To determine the effects of a small group intervention to reduce HIV-related sexual and drug-related risk behaviors

**Intervention Setting:** Shelters for runaway adolescents.

**Population:** Of the 312 runaway and homeless youths who enrolled in the study, 51% were male and 49% were female; 57% were African-American; 22% were Hispanic; 16% were white or of other racial/ethnic groups; and race/ethnicity was unknown for 5%. The average age of the youths was 16 years.

**Comparison Condition:** Usual services available in the runaway shelters.

**Behavioral Findings:** Adolescents who participated in the intervention reduced both the number of unprotected sexual acts and their substance use significantly more than adolescents in the comparison shelters.

**Source:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Divisions of HIV/AIDS Prevention. National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention. Compendium of HIV Prevention Interventions. Reductions in HIV Risk among Runaway Youths.

Retrieved February 28, 2008 from [http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/resources/reports/hiv\\_compendium/section1-23.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/resources/reports/hiv_compendium/section1-23.htm)