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Constructing and Implementing a Summer Wellness Curriculum: Bridging the Gaps at YES

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**Constructing and Implementing a Summer Wellness Curriculum:
Bridging the Gaps at YES**

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Introduction: Youth experiencing homelessness lack learning experiences during the summer months, potentially leading to delinquent activities and hazardous situations. The project created and implemented a summer wellness curriculum at Youth Emergency Service (YES) that aimed to identify gaps in and educate the youth on various health and wellness topics. Daily exercise actively promoted physical wellbeing.

Methods: The curriculum aimed at a mixed group of adolescents facing homelessness integrated various educational and/or physical activities with wellness activities by YES staff and Title I programming. Activity description, cost, location, time and date, and number of attendees were recorded in a logbook. Qualitative analysis described reception of the activities and was compared to cost and number of attendees. Title I programming, YES wellness activities, field trips, and activities after 7/26 were not included in analysis.

Results: The most attended activities with greatest apparent interest cost money (Power of Words, Tie-Dye, and Skyzone) or supplied a monetary incentive (Haven House). 16 youth learned about HIV and participated in HIV testing. The most successful inclusive free activities were yoga, cooking, and water balloon games, as both males and females participated and were consistently engaged throughout; males predominated attendance

of other physical activities. Creating the Heart Smart poster and vision boards were the least popular.

Conclusion: Youth at YES tended to be motivated by special activities or monetary incentives; more of these activities should be incorporated into future programming. Individualized input from female youth should be utilized to elicit greater participation during physical activities next year.