Presenter's Guide

Pacific Islander Teen Health Spa Curriculum

Healthy = Beautiful

Developed by San Mateo County
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Acknowledgements

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Introduction

The *Pacific Islander Teen Health Spa (PITHS)* was developed in response to an unusually high overweight and obesity prevalence rate of low income Pacific Islander (PI) children in San Mateo County. The *PITHS* is a 9 hour, six lesson, interactive nutrition and physical activity program, focusing on behavior change, designed for girls 12-17 years to benefit from the power of group education as they have fun and learn in the company of their peers. The *PITHS* was adapted from San Mateo County Public Health Nutrition's *Teen Health Spa* which was first introduced in 2001.

The *PITHS* program is based on the concepts of motivation for behavior change and cultural tailoring. Research shows that many teens can recite the benefits of healthy eating and physical activity, however, it is difficult for them to personalize this information. Generally, few have intention of actually making behavior changes in the immediate future because the teens do not relate to the concept of chronic disease prevention. Teens are more concerned with the-here-and-now. Message research shows instead that linking a desired behavior to a strong motivator, such as appearance, beauty, and glamour in the case of teen girls, will increase the likelihood of the teen successfully adopting the desired behavior. Additionally, the growing body of literature indicates that 'cultural tailoring' (the adaptation of an intervention, strategies, messages, and materials to best fit the needs and characteristics of a target audience) shows promise in the reduction of obese minority children.

The highly interactive *PITHS* sessions focus on the importance of fruits and vegetables, water, calcium, breakfast, physical activity, sleep, nutrition label reading, and limiting sugar and fat in the diet. However, each health message is interwoven with a 'Spa' or beauty activity – facials, hand scrubs, nail treatments – all designed to incite interest in the teens and motivate the behavior change process.

Cultural tailoring enables the teens to quickly bond, share common experiences, and foster a sense of cultural pride. The PI cultural component is integrated into the curriculum. PI recipes, culturally appropriate foods, and beauty treatments are included throughout each lesson. Curriculum materials display borders of traditional PI tattoo art. Culturally appropriate music and decoration suggestions are included.

The behavior change component is introduced in the first session. The teens develop an individual action plan outlining their goals for improving eating habits and physical activity with a focus on barriers, solutions, and small steps for long term results. The behavior change process is reinforced in each session thereafter via a 'check-in' and reflection exercise to share strategies and provide support. The program also explores Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS), a health issue common in PI women, and delves into the issues of body image, self-esteem, and cultural pride.

The curriculum includes 6 lesson plans with accompanying handouts, recipes, packing lists, decorating tips, outreach flyers, 2 PowerPoint Presentations, and evaluation tools. The *PITHS* program is specific to PI, but with some simple modifications, this curriculum can serve as a template for adaptation to any ethnic group.

Before Getting Started

Staffing

The Teen Health Spa can be done with limited staffing, but the more support you have the easier and smoother the spa will run. At least two staff members are recommended for implementation of the Teen Health Spa, and recruiting one or two more staff or volunteers is ideal for lessons one and six which are more intensive. A majority of the help needed is for packing, set-up, lesson transitions and clean up, but it is also important to have a strong presenter for the nutrition and beauty information.

Tip for Success!
Recruit volunteers to help you out. These can be girls who have previously attended the Teen Health Spa, high school or college students, or colleagues who want to get out in the field.

Finding a Presenter

Tip for Success!
The nutrition information needed is provided in the curriculum so a health background is not necessary. Look for a presenter who can best relate to the Pacific Islander teen girls.

If possible, recruit a Pacific Islander from the community, who will be able to relate to the adolescent girls, to present the Teen Health Spa program. The nature of the spa, and its culturally relevant information, will be better delivered and responded to if the girls feel connected to the presenter. The curriculum is designed to provide the basic information needed for the nutrition component so your presenter does not need to be a nutritionist or have a health background. The presenter is encouraged to study the handouts on the given nutrition topic to become familiar with the pertinent information.

To further research any nutrition information presented in the curriculum, see the References and Resources section.

Recruiting your participants

Fliers and sign up sheets are included in the General Materials and Handouts section.

The Teen Health Spa is best implemented with 10 to 20 participants between the ages of 12 and 17.

Tip for Success!
Over-recruit up to twice as many participants to account for scheduling conflicts and attrition.

It is best if your presenter recruits the teen girls to the program to begin developing a relationship with them. Distribute or post fliers (with permission) at Pacific Islander churches, schools, libraries, or local gyms or sports programs. Have the girls provide phone numbers, addresses, and emails when signing up for the spa, and have them indicate which form of communication they prefer. This is crucial for follow-up and reminder phone calls, emails or text messages.

The best results may come from working with an existing group, such as an after-school program or church youth group. This will greatly reduce recruiting efforts.

Finding a Location

If your participants are coming from an existing group, the organization you are working with may be able to provide a location. Otherwise, check with the local community to find a central location that is easily accessible by public transportation, or offer the spa at a time when parents are likely to be able to drop off and pick up the participants. Also, remember to take into consideration conflicting events such as sports, church or after-school programs.

Before reserving a site, make sure that it has:

- Desks/tables and chairs for each person
- Electrical outlets
- A sink and running water in the room or nearby
- A microwave (optional)
- Space for up to 40 people
    - For the Teen Health Spa, you will need space for 10-20 girls
    - For the Pacific Islander Health Spa, the girls will bring guests so you must accommodate up to 40 people (you may need to use a different room for this final spa)

Scheduling your Teen Health Spa

Depending on your location, population, and whether or not you are working with an existing group, you may choose to hold your workshop after school, in the evening, during the weekend, or while the girls are on a school break.

If your program is held right after-school, or during a natural eating time, you may want to provide healthy snacks for the participants. This can also be an effective way to garner participation in a healthy way.

This program was designed to be conducted as 5- 1 ½ hour sessions, and 1- 2 hour session, given over 6 consecutive weeks. The first four sessions each cover different health, nutrition and beauty topics. The fifth session is a review and preparation for the spa for which the girls get to invite a mother, role model or friend to attend. The sixth session is the Pacific Islander Health Spa which gives the girls the opportunity to present what they have learned as they lead the spa, and it is also a celebration for the girls and their guests.

The benefit of providing the lessons over this time frame is that you can provide feedback and assistance on the behavior change process, but this requires much more preparation and packing. Although not tested for this specific Pacific Islander population, the program has also been given as a full day workshop. With one full day, you can do all your preparation and packing once, but there will be less support over an extended time for healthy behavior change.

Gathering Materials

For each lesson, look over the packing list to see what you will need to gather or purchase. Some food items can only be purchased the day before or the day of the event, others can be gathered before the Teen Health Spa begins if you have adequate storage space.

General Set-up and Decorations

Creating a spa-like atmosphere is important for the ambiance and mood of the Teen Health Spa. You should allow about 30 to 60 minutes for set-up and decorating. When the girls enter the room you want to have:

- Decorations up
- Lesson materials ready
- Music playing
- Soft lighting
- A cup of water for each participant (a different "flavor" is given each week)
- A folder for participants to keep materials and handouts
- Snacks (optional)

This curriculum includes suggested decorations and tips that can enhance any room and create a soothing feel. Depending on your location, you may use fewer or different decorations to create your spa-like atmosphere. Many of the decorations can be created, bought, or borrowed. Even the participants can bring in their favorite music, cloths, or decorations for the room each week.

Possible decorations:

- Coconut shells
- Straw Mats
- Ethnic fabrics
- Music
- Tablecloths
- Flowers
- Inspirational quotes

See photos in the Appendix.

Tip for Success!
Even the best planned Teen Health Spa is useless if there are no participants. Call, email or text each girl one or two days before each session to remind them of the spa and provide one small reminder of what they will be doing that week to get them excited to attend.