

Depression Is Real: Developing a Health Communication Campaign in an Urban African American Community

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What Is the Purpose of the Study?

- To describe the use of Boot Camp Translation, a community-based participatory method, in designing a health communication campaign on depression in a predominantly African American community.
- To describe the “Depression Is Real” health communication campaign and its effectiveness in improving the use of depression screening and treatment services in a predominantly African American community.
- To discuss lessons learned from using the Boot Camp Translation method in developing a health communication campaign.

What Is the Problem?

- Depression is a main cause of disability worldwide and in the United States.
- African Americans have higher rates of depression and experience more serious depression and disability than other racial/ethnic groups.
- Public awareness campaigns on depression often lack community input and are not always responsive to minority populations’ unique cultural needs and preferences.

What Are the Findings?

- Boot Camp Translation offered a structured process for engaging diverse community stakeholders.
- Boot Camp Translation enabled the development and dissemination of a culturally tailored health communication campaign addressing depression in an urban African American community.
- Boot Camp Translation activated community members to become health champions/advocates.
- Depression is still stigmatized in the African American community, including faith communities.

Who Should Care Most?

- Community members.
- Community leaders.
- Mental/behavioral health professionals.
- Faith leaders.
- Researchers and academics interested in Community-Based Participatory Research, mental health, and health disparities.

Recommendations for Action

- Public health practitioners and researchers should establish collaborative partnerships between community members and other stakeholders to develop culturally informed health communication campaigns or interventions.
- Efforts to address depression in the African American community should actively engage the faith community.