Educating the Public about Ecstasy:
Comparing Two Forms of Research Dissemination

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Background

• The Institute for Community Research
• “MDMA and STD/HIV Risk Among Hidden Networks of Ecstasy-Using Young adults” Study
• Literacy Level in Hartford
  – 41% of Hartford citizens are at a 4th grade reading level or lower
  – 73% of people living in Hartford are of Level 1 or 2 literacy
Research Question

• How do people interact differently with panels versus a video as a vehicle to convey information to the broadest spectrum of people within the Hartford community about MDMA use and abuse?
Relevant Literature

• Lots of research on the use of “new media” and movies as dissemination.

Participants

• 2 sites, 3 focus groups
  – Trinity College (1) and Trinfo Café (2)
• 21 participants total
• Average age= 25, with a range from 18 to 62
• 52% female (11 participants) and 48% male (10 participants).
Participants

Self Reported Racial Composition

- Caucasian: 43%
- Hispanic: 24%
- Other, Not Specified: 24%
- African American: 9%

Self Reported Occupation

- College Student: 71%
- Parent: 19%
- Other: 5%
- Educator: 5%
Methods

• Verbal consent
• Participants looked at panels and filled out survey
• Focus group about panels
• Movie
• Focus group about movie
• Focus group comparing panels and movie
• Transcribed focus groups & coded
The Panels

• Focus on the spread, use and consequences of Ecstasy and Dust in Hartford
• Findings from approximately 1999-2006
• Portrayed through comic book characters, photographs and quotations from youth in the study area
• Thirteen 9 x 3 foot panels, chose 7 related to Ecstasy
• Target Audience- youth in Hartford
The Movie

• Created using quotes with messages which match the messages on the panels
• Important to be true to media
  – panels vs. movie format
• Re-recorded stories to protect confidentiality
• Stories told against background of pictures from different Hartford neighborhoods
Key Findings…

• The panels and the movie shared a similar message but served different purposes
• The two forms of dissemination, when used together, had the greatest impact.
• Research dissemination as a catalyst for two-way conversation
• Necessary to engage the community through multiple mediums.
Interaction with the Panels

• Engaging and interesting
  – Colors, storybook nature

• Easy to relate to
  – Photographs, range of material to relate to

• Well-rooted in research and data
  – Empirical data, graphs and web

• Drawback: Lots of text
Interaction with the Movie

• Eye-opening nature
  – Through voices and stories
• Easy to relate to
  – Photographs, voices
  – Not preachy- told stories of experiences
• Drawback: No faces
Comparing Movie vs. Panels

• Shared message
  – Do not use Ecstasy, Ecstasy is dangerous

• Different Purpose
  – Panels: informational
  – Movie: personal/emotional connection
Implications

• Further research is necessary on the subject of effective research dissemination
• Co-production and analysis of data/findings
• Power of integrating community in decisions and analysis — membership and ownership of study
Conclusion

• Different interaction and experiences for panels and movie
• Best dissemination is combined
• Cater to as many learning styles, backgrounds, educational levels, etc in order to reach the most people.
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