POSITIVE DEVIANCE: AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO RESEARCHING BREASTFEEDING DISPARITIES IN AFRICANAMERICAN WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES

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Presenter Disclosures

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The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No relationships to disclose

Overview

- Breastfeeding in African-American (AA) Women
- Positive Deviance (PD)
 - Methodology
 - Breastfeeding research examples
- "Breastfeeding experiences of African-American Women in the WIC program: A Positive Deviance Inquiry"
- Conclusion

Did you know the Positive Deviance Initiative is located at Tufts University here in Boston? www.positivedeviance.org

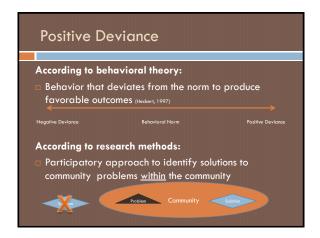


Gaps in the Literature

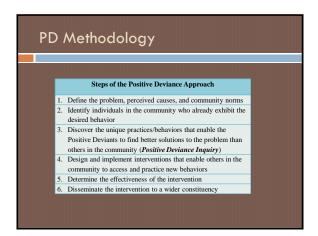
- □ Majority of the research is quantitative
- Few studies examine <u>actual</u> breastfeeding experiences of AA women
- Very few studies examine characteristics of breastfeeding AA women
- Qualitative methods useful for examining individual experiences

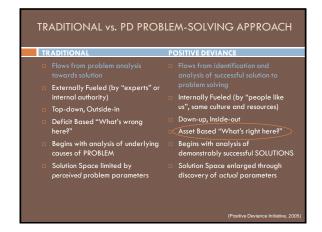
What enables some members of the community to find better solutions to pervasive problems than their neighbors who have access to the same resources?











Why PD and BF Disparities?

Traditionally focuses on resource poor communities

AA women, especially low-income, less likely to breastfeed, yet some are successful

Has been used to research BF internationally

Dearden et al (2002): assessment of barriers to exclusive BF in mothers of young children in rural Vietnam

Vani Sethi et al (2007): assessment of infant feeding practices in a relocated slum in Delhi, India

Only 1 published study on AA & BF (Ma & Margana, 2011)

Recommended qualitative methods to better understand characteristics of positive deviants among breastfeeding WIC mothers

Breastfeeding experiences of AA Women in the WIC program: A Positive Deviance Inquiry

Purpose: to explore the breastfeeding experiences of Iowincome African-American women using the Positive Deviance approach.

Research Questions

1. How did mothers form the intention to breastfeed during pregnancy?

2. What enabled mothers to initiate and sustain breastfeeding during the first few weeks after birth?

3. What enabled mothers to continue breastfeeding for 6 months or longer?



Focus Group Findings AA women & BF BF initiation/first weeks Slavery & wet-nursing ■ Pumping Vulnerability □ Grandma's guilt □ Pride & Body Image Long term BF: ■ Media ■ Stay at home moms ■ Cross-cultural counseling ■ Social Support During pregnancy: ■ Advocacy & legal rights ■ Benefits vs. duration ■ Privacy vs. public Last minute decision ■ Low knowledge





"I was like 1% of all the black people in my community that breastfed my child. We had one of the lowest breastfeeding rates for black women. It's like 1%. I was like the only one black women that breastfeeds in my county.... When I breastfeed I do think that helped his heart because I can't even tell that he has a heart defect. Even the doctors when he goes to his doctor for his checkups, he said he couldn't believe the improvements that he made in a year's time. It makes me feel great. I feel like I have really succeeded in parenting by breastfeeding." -Mariah, mother of 1

Public Health Implications

African-American women are breastfeeding
Remember historical and sociocultural complexities

Positive Deviance:
Challenges how BF in AA women is addressed as a 'problem'
Encourages focusing on existing community solutions & opportunities to address disparity
Informs design & implementation of culturally appropriate BF interventions.



