

Impact Of Self-Regulated Use Of Computer-Based Social-Emotional Learning On Rural Adolescents At Risk For Alcohol Abuse

Kristin M. Bass, Ph.D. and S. Marshall Perry, Ph.D., Research Associates, Rockman et al.,

Alice Ray, MBA, Principal Investigator, and Sarah Berg, Research Coordinator

Author note: This study was one of a series of six concurrent evaluations funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse of the National Institutes of Health, SBIR Fast Track Grants R44 DA13325-01A1, and R44 DA013325-03. An Institutional Review Board approved the study. Preliminary summary findings of the group of studies were presented as a poster at the May 2007 Annual Meeting of the Society for Prevention Research.

ABSTRACT

High rural dropout rates and alcohol abuse persist despite efforts to reduce them. Adolescents at risk for these problems often resist preventive services. A real world, randomized controlled trial of Ripple Effects computerized, social-emotional learning intervention examined whether a) adolescents would comply with group requirements, and options for personal use of the software intervention; and b) if they complied, it would result in positive internal and external outcomes. 107 rural 8th and 9th graders participated. The intervention was self-regulated completion of 42 multimedia tutorials over seven weeks. Sixty-three percent of treatment group students who had access to the technology were compliant. Among those who complied, 95% also opted to explore selfselected content. ANOVAs indicated these students had significantly greater gains in perception of norms and risks about alcohol, and positive trends for marijuana. They were significantly less likely to attribute outcomes to Self, an unexpected finding for “ruggedly individualistic” rural students. T-tests indicated no significant differences between groups for GPA, absenteeism or discipline referrals. School structure, technology limits, and lack of adult monitoring contributed to intervention attrition.

KEY WORDS: rural; adolescent; alcohol; locus of control; computer-based training; self efficacy