

Measuring SEL Outcomes with Innovative Methods: A Pilot of the Revised Teen Outreach Program® Survey

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Introduction

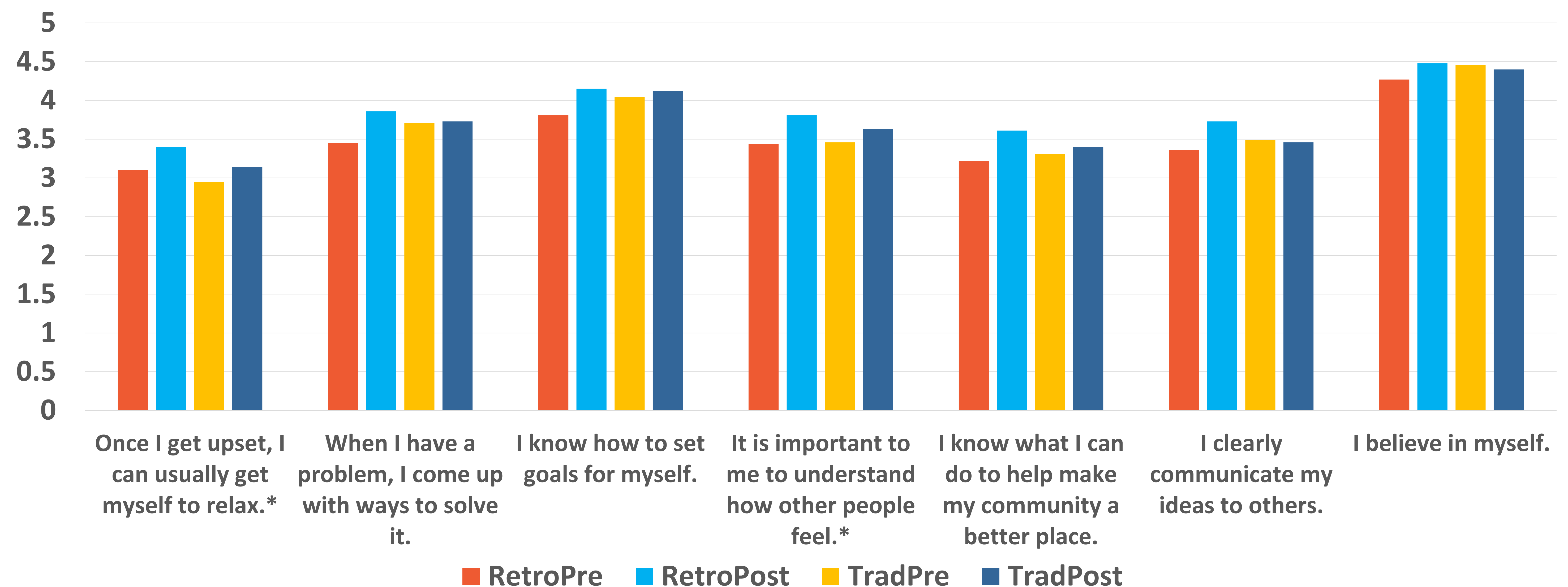
The Teen Outreach Program® (TOP®) is an evidence-based, positive youth development program for 6th – 12th graders with over 60 implementing Partners nationwide. Each program year, partners measure youth academic and sexual health outcomes with a traditional pre and post survey. Given recent updates to the TOP Curriculum that deepened social and emotional learning (SEL) content and updates to the TOP Logic Model to specify SEL outcomes, the survey needed revision to ensure more robust measurement of SEL. Wyman’s Research & Learning team spearheaded the work to revise the TOP survey.

Methods

- Initial survey drafts were reviewed by Wyman’s internal TOP staff and external experts, including researchers with expertise in adolescence and youth development. Youth feedback was gathered via focus groups from Wyman’s TOP teens after pre-survey completion.
- Two versions of the revised pre and post surveys were piloted: a traditional survey and a retrospective survey. The retrospective approach asks respondents at the end of a program, training or intervention to reflect back and rate their skills/attitudes/knowledge before the program began and then rate them again now, at the end of the program.
- A retrospective approach has been recommended by TOP researchers (McBride, Chung & Robertson, 2016) and other evaluators who work in the youth development field (Young & Kallemeyn, 2019). An advantage of this approach over a traditional pre-post is its usefulness in addressing “response-shift bias”.

Results & Conclusion

Retrospective and Traditional Pre-Post SEL Results from Survey Pilot



- Pilot surveys were tested in Missouri, Florida and New Jersey with middle and high school TOP teens. Pre-surveys were collected from 1,363 teens and post-surveys from 1,313 teens, which yielded 934 matched pre/post sets.
- The matched sample was 58% middle school aged students, 42% high school aged students; 56% female; 42.0% African American, 36.0% Latinx, 8.3% Multi-Racial, 5.7% Other, 5.4% White, 1.2% Asian, 1.1% American Indian or Alaska Native and .2% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander.
- All items using the retrospective approach improved from pre to post at a significant level, $p < .001$. Significant pre to post changes using the traditional approach are noted in the chart: * $p < .05$.
- The chart reflects the subset of SEL items that were retained on the final survey based on pilot results. Retrospective items on the final survey measure: **emotion management, problem-solving, goal-setting, empathy, community connection, communication, and sense of self**. Retrospective items to measure decision-making, self-efficacy and hopefulness were also added to the survey.
- The final set of SEL items align with the TOP Curriculum, the TOP logic model and CASEL’s core SEL competencies. The updated survey was disseminated to Wyman’s national TOP partners for use in the 2019-2020 program year.

W Y M A N

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For more information about TOP, go to www.teenoutreachprogram.com
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