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ASU Global Center for
Applied Health Research
Arizona State University



**Mantente REAL:
The cultural adaptation &
effectiveness of an evidence-
based prevention program**

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A Culturally Grounded Approach to Prevention

Places the culture and social context of the participants at the center of the intervention



“La cultura cura”

Integrates the strengths that come from culture of origin and avoids the deficit model

Increases identification and effectiveness
“This program is for me”

Marsiglia, F. F., Kulis, S., & Lechuga-Peña, S. (2021). *Diversity, oppression, and change: Culturally grounded social work*. New York: Oxford University Press.



School-Based Interventions

- Many societies around the world are concerned about the extent to which children and youth experience poor academic achievement, school dropout, high rates of early substance use, and violence
- **Schools provide a critical opportunity for changing societal behavior** because almost all children are engaged in this institution
- **Schools play a central role** in the prevention of mental disorders and the promotion of behavioral health and well-being.

(Greenberg, 2010)

Program Rationale



Build

- Build a prevention program around the cultural strengths & communication styles of youth/children who do NOT use drugs.

Acknowledge

- Acknowledge the importance of culture in youth substance use and prevention models to reflect the identity and learning styles of students.

Provide

- Provide an alternative to standard prevention messages that enforce the dominant cultural values and rely on stereotypical representations of culture of origin and ethnicity.



The REAL Strategies

Refuse

Say "NO" without giving an explanation

Explain

Say no with a reason or story

Avoid

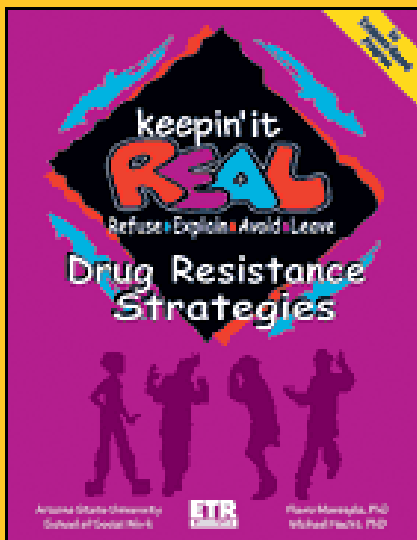
Avoid situations or places where there may be risks

Leave

Withdraw or leave situations where there are risks

keepin'it REAL (kiR)

- KiR is a legacy (SAMHSA) model substance abuse prevention program originally developed and tested with Phoenix's youth
- It was funded by multiple awards from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).



kiR is licensed by Arizona State University. Its 1st (2005) and 2nd (2023) editions are published and distributed by ETR.

<https://www.etr.org/store/curricula/keepin-it-real/>



keepin' it REAL

Culturally-grounded & evidence-based substance use prevention program

Implemented in the schools by trained classroom teachers

Strengthens life skills, specific resistance strategies, anti-drug norms and attitudes, effective decision making and communication skills

Interactive activities, classroom discussions, and videos

Demonstrated efficacious with youth ages 12-15

One of the top 3 most cost-effective programs in the U.S.

keepin'it REAL: USA Efficacy Study (N=6,036)

RCT in Phoenix-AZ : 35
public middle schools
N = 6,036 (55% Latinx)

Significant effects in:

Effects maintained
over time: at 6, 12
& 18 months

- Delaying initiation and
reducing substance use
(alcohol, tobacco, and
marijuana),

- Increasing attitudes that
support not using drugs,
strengthening norms that
support healthy choices

- Increasing the adoption
of the REAL strategies.



keepin'it REAL (kiR): Cultural Adaptations



- The urban American Indian youth version of kiR is now known as “*Living in Two Worlds*” (L2W).



- The culturally adapted version of kiR in Spanish-speaking countries is called “*Mantente REAL*.” Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Spain, and Uruguay have their own linguistically tailored versions.



- Feasibility and cultural adaptation studies of kiR are underway in Sub-Saharan Africa (Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, & South Africa)



Dissemination

- Few evidence-based prevention programs have been implemented and proven efficacious in Latin America
- School-based interventions originally developed in the U.S. have been tested in Latin America, producing mixed results
- There is a need to adapt U.S.-based interventions before they are broadly implemented in new cultural contexts.

Adaptation of interventions to different cultural contexts



- Intervention research increasingly recognizes adaptation as an imperative process to ensure that programs are responsive to the cultural and contextual needs of minority and international communities (Castro, Barrera, & Martinez, 2004).
- Successful cultural adaptation keeps the core elements of an intervention unchanged, while integrating cultural components and nuances to enhance the participants' understanding of, identification with, and receptiveness to those core components (Marsiglia & Booth, 2015; Marsiglia et al., 2019).

Mantente REAL-Mexico Cultural Adaptation & RCT(N = 5,522), 2015-2022

Data collection and analysis supported by
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National Institute
on Drug Abuse

UNIVERSIDAD DE GUADALAJARA
Red Universitaria de Jalisco



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- Taught in the classrooms by regular teachers after receiving a 2-day training.
- Culturally adapted version integrates the connection of substance use risks to gender norms and violent social contexts.



12 sessions

- New kiR videos (shot in Mexico)
- Teamwork
- Individual work & Homework

Randomized controlled trial

- Population-based sample of 36 public middle schools in Mexico's three largest cities: Mexico City, Guadalajara, Monterrey
- N = 5,522 seventh-grade student respondents

Conditions

- *Mantente REAL* (MREAL) (culturally adapted)
- Control (treatment-as-usual)

Student self-administered questionnaires

- Pretest (T1)
- Posttests at 8 (T2), 19 (T3) and 26 (T4) months

Key results

Compared to controls, MREAL students reported:

- Expanded use of effective drug resistance strategies
- Less growth in alcohol use, the most widely used substance and in binge drinking
- Less use of cigarettes and hard drugs (low use rates)
- Less perpetration of violence (especially bullying)-taught alternatives
- Less violence victimization: REAL strategies address conflict resolution

Discussion

MREAL was effective in teaching and motivating students to incorporate and utilize an expanded repertoire of drug resistance strategies, a central objective of the intervention.

MREAL students relied on these strategies more than control students. The effects persisted from 7th grade into 8th and 9th grade, and later effects built upon earlier effects.

Longitudinal analyses confirmed that increasing use of the REAL drug resistance strategies ultimately led to less frequent use of alcohol in 8th and 9th grade.



Recommendations & Implications for Dissemination & Implementation Science

In Mexico:

- Consider the inner and outer contexts
- Identify and allocate resources for further dissemination
- Preparing a sustainment national study in Mexico (R01)
- There is a willingness to incorporate prevention programs in schools
- Some states are successfully implementing the program on their own (i.e., Sonora)

In other Latin-American countries:


- Nurture opportunities for collaboration
- Identify local champions at all levels
- Start small, feasibility and acceptability, pilot studies
- Contribute to the evidence
- Create capacity and support true participation
- Opportunities for binational collaboration
- Learn from successful international efforts



Conclusion

The results of the MREAL studies to date:

- Highlight the value and importance of culturally adapting efficacious prevention programs, and
- Support the continuous engagement with in-country partners to advance prevention science in Latin America.



Thank You!
Questions or comments?

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