

How Does RealTalkDC Reach DC Youth? – Video Transcript

(Highlights from Carmel Pryor's Presentation at the "Taming the Media Monster" Conference,
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13:53:31;01 Carmel Pryor: ...does anybody know the kind of the similarity between DC, the nation's capital, and Uganda, country in Africa? The HIV prevalence rate is pretty much the same. Uh, a few months ago in March the Washington Post came out with a report from the CDC that three percent of DC residents live with HIV. ... Nine percent of infants born with HIV are born in DC in the United States...seventy percent of HIV positive people are late-testers. ... if people find out they're positive later, it can actually be a lot more difficult to treat them and to keep their viral loads so that they don't actually become an AIDS diagnosis. Also uh, it disproportionately effects the black community. ...So uh, I want to tell you about a solution that we are trying with social media and to reach out to the primary demographic, which is African-Americans uh, and youth. It's called, the "Real Talk, DC, Campaign." I'm not sure if anyone has seen these ads on the buses yet, but I'm really excited about. ...So what is Real Talk and how does this connect to the campaign? ...We wanted to find something that was within a lifestyle that a lot of DC youth could pick up on and understand and want to find out more about, find out more about it. And uh, when we were speaking with youth coming up with a name, they said, "You know what? We hear a lot of things about these statistics. We hear about, you know, this and that. There's a lot of myths and we just want to know the truth. We just want real talk about talk." And so that's what Real Talk is...The goals are obviously to get more people tested; to get more people educated and for people to use condoms—those are the general goals of the campaign.

...So I'll go in depth uh, about the text message campaign. So what you'll get is this prompt. It'll say, "Text, Real Talk one, to find free clinics and condoms in your area. Text, Real Talk two, to learn about Real Talk, DC, events in your area. Text, Real Talk three, to play the Get Real about HIV quiz." So we actually don't have a staff member uh, that's sitting there having to answer back the questions. It's automatic. So what I'm gonna focus on today is Real Talk one because that's a really cool feature. So Real Talk one, what will happen is it'll ask you where do you live. So if you live in DC obviously you would say, "Hey. I live in this quadrant or that quadrant." So then you would text the number next to the quadrant you live in whether that's southeast, northeast, northwest or southwest. Once you do that, you will receive a text that says, "Well, click the number next to the clinic that you want to find out more information about." Then once you click that number then it'll actually give you all of the information that you need to get tested that day. It'll give you the address, the phone number, the web site, the hours that they're open, the Metro stop that it's closest to. So there is no excuse. Once you're armed with this information, you can get tested. ...through our marketing with the bus ads, which is really awesome in DC, we have over five hundred buses that are displaying our ads, either on a bus king outside of the bus or with an interior card. So this is the main way that we are direct marketing the campaign. But the main component for me in terms of marketing is actually getting out there and letting youth know that this is a service that they can use. And the way that we do that is through events in the community. And we have these events mainly at rec centers. We have a great partnership with the Department of Parks and Recreation, where we have free events with free food, live DJ, workshops and so, you know, people hear about it in the community like, "Oh, wow. They have food over there. They have a DJ. Let me find out about it." They get there and then we actually say, "You know what? While you're here would you

like to get a free HIV or STD test?" And we actually test them at the site so they don't actually have to come into our clinic uh, and get tested. And they with the HIV test, find out the results in twenty minutes. With the STD test, pee in a cup, really easy. Uh, we collect their information and we call them in two weeks with the results. So my Real Talk Reps, uh, this is what makes us so great. Uh, if it were myself or anyone else on staff going out there saying, "Text Real Talk, six, one, eight, two, seven," a lot of the youth in DC would be like, "Man, whatever. I'm not listening to you." So you have to have their peers go out and give this information to them. So we have about ten peer educators. Here's four wonderful people and with their text Real Talk, six, one, eight, two seven shirts on and they are just so innovative and creative with different things that they want to do in the community...without them we definitely wouldn't be able to reach as many people as we do. ...when we did our evaluation of uh, the last run of the campaign last summer ninety percent of those who got tested said that they were motivated by the campaign to get tested. Ninety percent of those who got tested and saw the campaign materials, said that they were motivated to get tested, which is huge. Exposure to different campaign elements increases the motivation. So from the posters to the web site to the texting the more that you are bombarded with these messages in these different campaign elements, the higher your motivation. The campaign increased testing among youth. So just within our organization, Metro Teen Aids, our testing increased a hundred and forty-eight percent. ...And we've received over forty-five hundred text messages so far to date since June of last year

...and I wanted to just tell you a very brief story. Uh, Fairabee Hope is a rec center in southeast uh, very near the Maryland line and we had an event there and we had Real Talk materials there. They actually heard about the campaign because of Real Talk. We do know that information and uh, there was this young man and he found out that he was positive that night, at the event.

Usually when that happens uh, which it doesn't happen often uh, we've actually our uh, average rate of positivity at our organization is really only five. It's very low for HIV. It's much higher for STDs, but uh, most of those uh, living with HIV are over the age of twenty-five. Uh, so we usually don't find a lot of teenagers with HIV. But uh, he obviously was in a state of shock. Our uh, counselor on site spoke with him uh, and for at least over an hour and said we have to connect you to Care right away. You are now, you know, our baby. You're our responsibility and we want to make sure that you're healthy and so you have to stay in contact with us. He said, "Well, I'm really scared because there's really no way for you to contact me. I don't have a cell phone. I live at home, but I don't want my parents to know." And so we were able to give him a cell phone that night because as an incentive to get people tested, we have different door prizes like cell phones and gift cards and things like that. So we were able to give him a cell phone and that also has twenty dollars' worth of free minutes on it. And so he said, "Well, I have a phone now. Here's my number. Contact me." We talked to him throughout the entire weekend, connected him to Care that Monday and he still is a case of ours. We're still working with him and have uh, connected him to other resources in the city as well. But what's important with that is uh, through his social network and uh, talking to his sexual partners, we were able to find three more positives. Yeah. So uh, it's still a success story though because, you know, they're young and we're able to say, you know, because you know now and you were able to find out now, you can live healthy.