Preliminary Quantitative Analysis of STAR Training Effectiveness in Minnesota

Donna L. Minter, PhD, Founder & Executive Director
Minnesota Peacebuilding Leadership Institute
Kathleen Harder, PhD, Director, Center for Design in Health
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Introduction

▶ Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience (STAR)—
a 4.5 day research and practice supported training integrating:
+ Neurobiology
+ Trauma healing
+ Restorative justice
+ Nonviolent conflict transformation
+ Resilience

▶ **FOCUS of STAR:** Address psychological trauma, break cycles of violence, and build resilience to bring peace back into individual lives and communities after trauma strikes

▶ Since 9/11/2001—over 6000 individuals domestically and internationally trained in STAR

▶ Since 2010 in Minnesota—966 individuals trained in STAR and STAR-related concepts to fulfill the vision of Making Minnesota the Peacebuilding Power State

▶ To date, minimal investigation of the efficacy of the STAR Training

▶ Research Question: Does the STAR Training effectively increase subjects' confidence to address psychological trauma, break cycles of violence, and build resilience?

Literature Review

- Yoder, M., *(2008) Evaluation of an Ecological Intervention Targeting Helpers in the Aftermath of Disasters,* (PhD dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, used pre/post questionnaires (N = 42) and a longitudinal questionnaire (N = 58) found:

  + Significant increase in trainees' STAR concept knowledge/attitudes
  + Significant decreased psychological distress
  + Significant increase in use of STAR-related skills up to 5 years post-STAR

- Ann McBroom, (2006) *Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience [STAR], An analysis of evaluations returned by STAR participants, 2002-2006,* Eastern Mennonite University used post-training evaluations (N = 451) found:

  + 95% of trainees rated STAR 6 or 7 on a 7-point Likert scale
  + 97% stated STAR will have substantial impact on their future trauma work.
  + Responses to open-ended questions supported the highly positive ratings.

- Potter, A. & Jantzi, V. (2004) *STAR Formative Evaluation Report*, The Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, Eastern Mennonite University used immediate and longitudinal post-training evaluations (N =105) found:

  Overwhelmingly positive responses with respect to STAR content and methods, its personally and professionally transformative potential, its applicability to trainees' work, and their desire to stay connected to STAR.

Methodology Used to Investigate STAR Efficacy

▶ Daily pre and post surveys were administered to assess the change in subjects' level of confidence of the STAR Training's conceptual and strategic topics

▶ Each survey had 2-3 questions (12 questions total) using a 7-point Likert scale

▶ 57 subjects from 2014-2016

▶ Paired sample two-tailed t-test used to analyze the data to determine statistical significance of subjects' responses.

Results

Survey Question

1. I am confident in my capacity to name at least five types of trauma and the systems they impact.

2. I am confident in my capacity to describe why some individuals, families, and communities do not "just get over" trauma.

3. I am confident in my capacity to identify at least one common longer term trauma reaction following a traumatic event from each of the following areas: physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, spiritual, and societal.

4. I am confident in my capacity to provide psychological and emotional first aid to individuals, families, and communities.

Results: Pre to Post Assessment

1. 2.47 mean increase in confidence; SD: 1.36; $p < 0.00001$

2. 1.46 mean increase in confidence; SD: 1.23; $p < 0.00001$

3. 2.41 mean increase in confidence; SD: 0.90; $p < 0.00001$

4. 2.21 mean increase in confidence; SD: 0.98; $p < 0.00001$

Results

Survey Question

Results: Pre to Post Assessment

5. I am confident in my capacity to recognize cycles of violence associated with unhealed trauma.

6. I am confident in my capacity to identify at least three strategies of trauma acknowledgement from the STAR model.

7. I am confident in my capacity to identify at least three strategies for reconnecting with the "other" from the STAR model.

8. I am confident in my capacity to identify at least three basic questions of the restorative justice process.

5. 2.18 mean increase in confidence; SD: 0.86; $p < 0.00001$

6. 3.41 mean increase in confidence; SD: 0.97; $p < 0.00001$

7. 3.29 mean increase in confidence; SD: 0.99; $p < 0.00001$

8. 2.65 mean increase in confidence; SD: 1.08; $p < 0.00001$

Results

Survey Question

Results: Pre to Post Assessment

9. I am confident in my capacity to identify the four primary ways individuals and groups respond to violence and conflict.

9. 2.47 mean increase in confidence; SD: 0.90; $p < 0.00001$

10. I am confident in my capacity to use the STAR model as an assessment tool for myself and community.

10. 1.91 mean increase in confidence; SD: 0.89; $p < 0.00001$

11. I am confident in my capacity to identify at least three factors of resilience in my own life.

11. 1.72 mean increase in confidence; SD: 0.78; $p < 0.00001$

12. I am confident in my capacity to use self-care assessment tools to address my self-care needs.

12. 2.16 mean increase in confidence; SD: 0.80; $p < 0.00001$

Summary

Findings in Minnesota strongly suggest that the STAR Training effectively increases subjects' confidence to address psychological trauma, break cycles of violence, and build resilience.

Future Research

▶ Larger sample size

▶ Longitudinal research to assess sustainability of the STAR Training's effectiveness

▶ Assess transfer of STAR concepts into subjects' spheres of influence

Acknowledgements

▶ Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience - STAR is a program of the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, VA.

▶ The Minnesota Peacebuilding Leadership Institute (aka MN Peacebuilding) is a 501(c)(3) non-partisan public charity nonprofit organization.

▶ Its mission is to instigate, train, and support racially, sexually, culturally, ethnically, religiously, and economically diverse individuals and organizations to become trauma-informed, resilience-oriented, and restorative-focused empowering communities in Minnesota, the USA, and around the world.

Minnesota Peacebuilding Leadership Institute

Transforming psychological trauma into nonviolent power.
 www.mnpeace.org