



Empowering Youth Workers: A Systematic Review of Training Programs Designed to Respond to Youth Mental Health Struggles

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Introduction

- 1 in 7 adolescents experience some form of mental disorder.¹
- Adolescent mental illnesses contribute to detrimental outcomes in several domains of everyday functioning.²⁻⁸
- Fewer than 30% of adolescents receive professional help for their disorders.⁹
- Adolescents prefer talking with informal sources of support, such as close family, friends, and trusted adults.¹⁰⁻¹¹

Background

- Maladaptive coping with stressful life transitions leads to mental health issues.¹²⁻¹³
- Adult leaders of youth activities are among the first that youth express their mental health struggles to.¹⁴⁻¹⁵
- Training/education programs for youth workers increase mental health literacy and confidence in care referral.¹⁶⁻¹⁷
- **Purpose:** evaluate the effectiveness of existing training programs for youth workers to identify and respond to anxiety and depression in adolescents



Methods

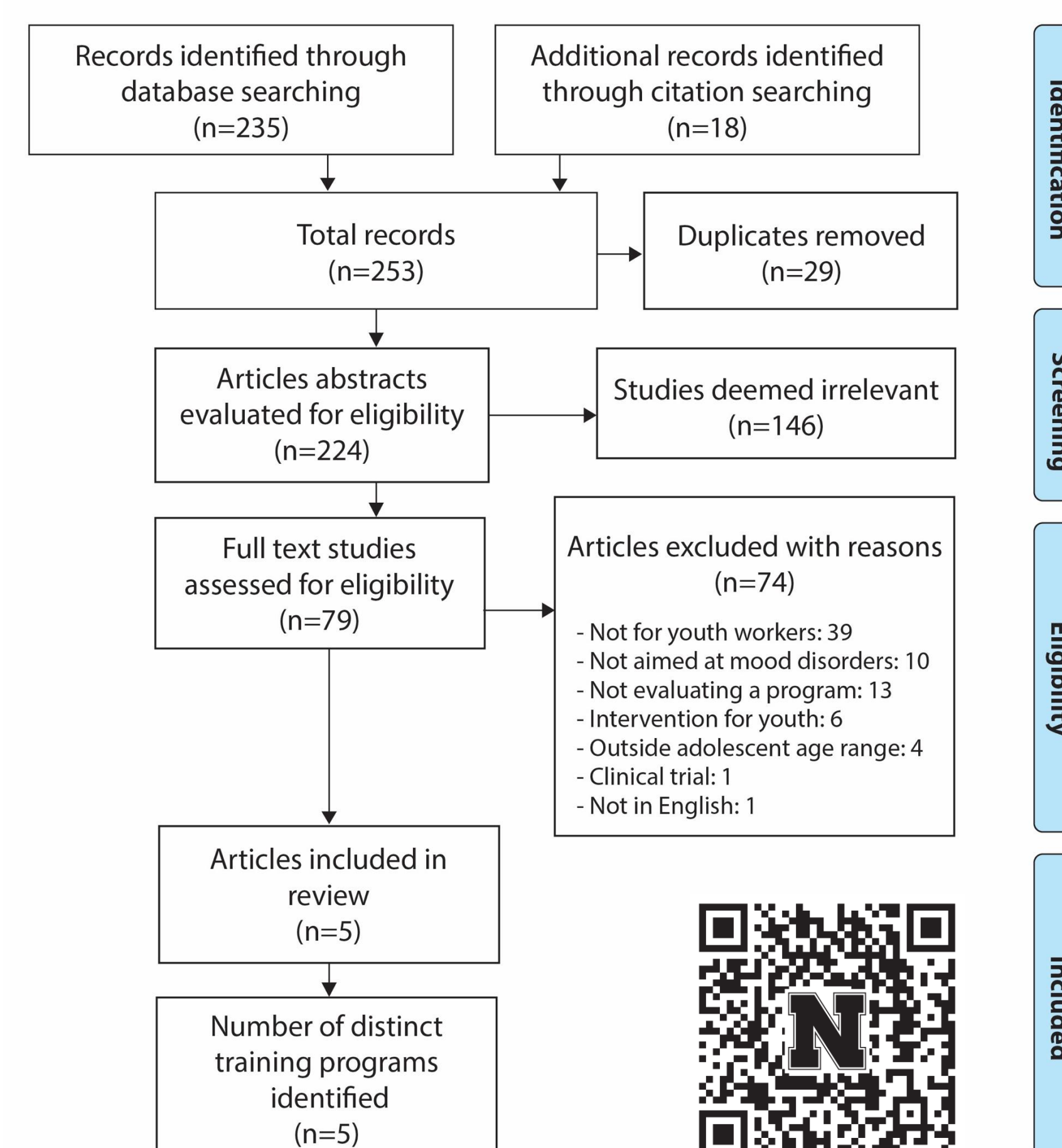
- Searched six research databases using keyword combinations
 - Google Scholar, PubMed, PsycInfo, Cochrane CENTRAL, Web of Science, Scopus

- Inclusion criteria

- Training for youth workers
- Measures outcomes relating to stigma, knowledge, or confidence

- Exclusion criteria

- Outside of youth age range (10-19)
- Not peer reviewed
- Not in English
- Not for anxiety or depression



Results

- 5 studies were eligible for inclusion.¹⁸⁻²²
 - All studies used pretest/posttest designs, questionnaires, and self-report surveys
- 5 distinct training programs were identified: Read the Play, AGMy, Mental health promotion program, AA-YMHFA, K-YMHFA
- **Mental health stigma** decreased/increased positive attitudes
- **Mental health knowledge** increased from pretest to posttest
- **Confidence** increased from pretest to posttest

Results

- Participant satisfaction and suggestions
 - Positives: felt it was relevant to their work, helpful and informative
 - Helpful: quality of trainer, engaging and variety of content
 - Suggestions: tackle stigma first, shorter sessions, continued support and resources for leaders, inclusivity

Discussion & Conclusion

- Ideal training programs should be based on comprehensive elements
- Training programs can reduce stigma, and increase knowledge and confidence
- Address stigma first
- Positive mental health promotion
- Ongoing support for youth workers
- **Limitations:** no results for changes in helping behaviors or youth mental health

Future Work

- Create an ideal training program based on evaluation of relevant studies
- Include youth workers' input in the development of training programs
- Use valid measures and methods to evaluate the effectiveness of programs