

Supporting and Engaging High-Risk Families: Understanding the Complex Barriers Families Face and Improving Marketing Strategies



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INTRODUCTION

- Home visitation (HV) programs have become a promising approach for prevention of child abuse and neglect.
- HV services provide prenatal and early childhood interventions to families in need of support. By engaging families in home-based services early in the child's life, providers are able to improve family functioning through enhancing parenting skills, social support, coping skills, and linkage to community resources.
- It is also among the highest risk group where the potential impact of HV services is greatest. However, home-based parenting service efforts are hindered due to challenges in enrolling high-risk families in parenting services.
- Application of the Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency (BIAS) approach to marketing programs focused on HV has potential benefits.
- The BIAS approach focuses on using a behavioral economics framework to design solutions for problems.
- The BIAS problem solving approach has been used in a variety of settings including reducing barriers in engaging and serving vulnerable families living in poverty.

METHODS

- Participants
 - Individuals identified as eligible for HV services (N=145) that were randomized to one of the three marketing strategies (leaflet, website, commercial).
- Procedure
 - Interviews focused on marketing strategies utilizing a leaflet (49 interviews), website (51 interviews), and commercial (45 interviews).
 - Individual interviews lasted approximately 20 minutes and were conducted by a trained qualitative interviewer.
 - Interviews transcribed and cross-checked for accuracy.
 - Structured interview guides addressed potential marketing bottlenecks.
- Analysis
 - Qualitative data analysis of the transcriptions were conducted using NVivo 10 software.
 - Content analysis was used to identify core constructs and themes emerging from the data.

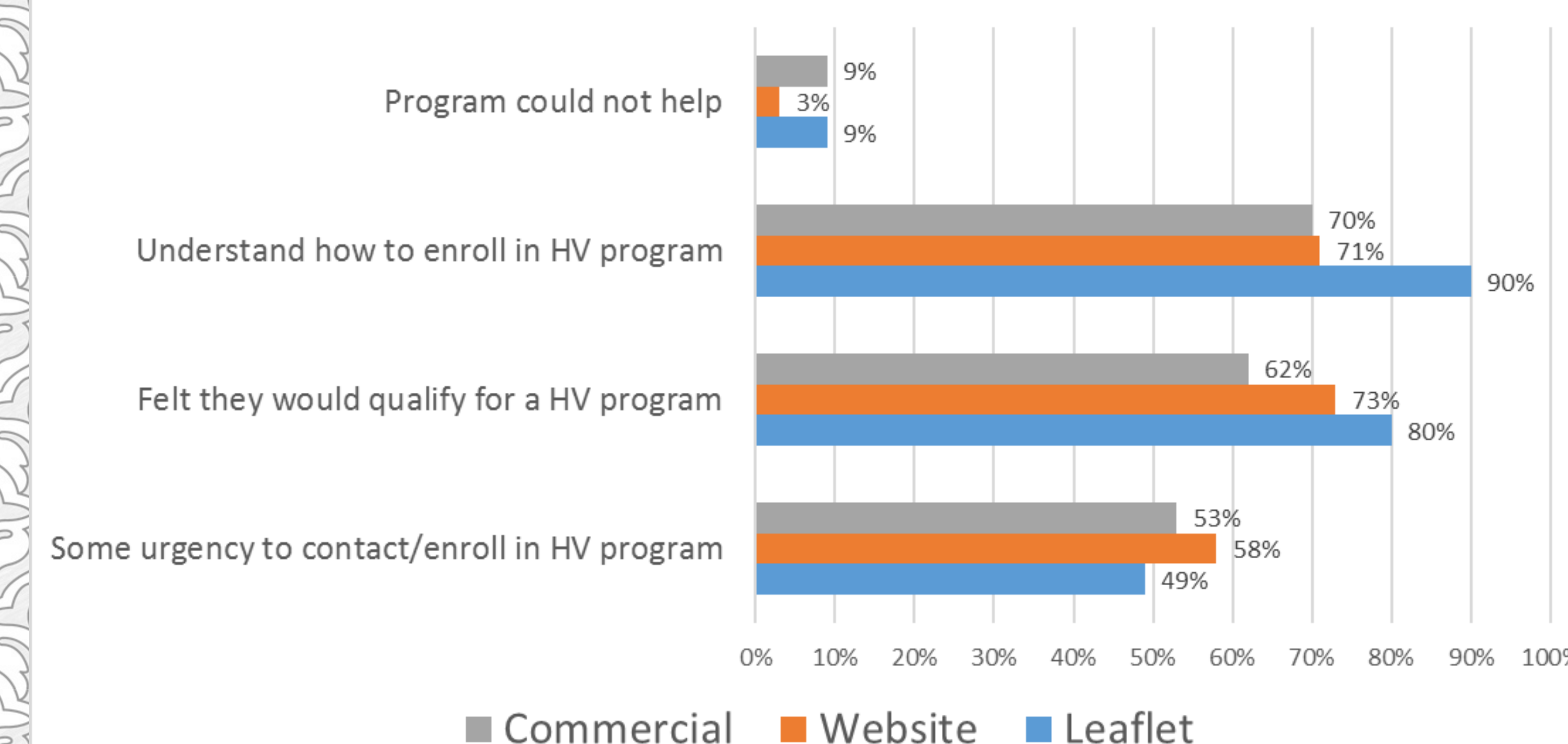
RESULTS

- The BIAS approach was used to identify potential key problem areas or “bottlenecks” to engaging high-risk families in HV marketing material. These included four bottlenecks that were tested in the current project.
- It is important to note that despite increased marketing efforts, the percentage of families exposed to marketing material prior to the study was low (28% commercial, 17% website, 17% website) with all families reviewing marketing materials (commercial, website, leaflet) at the time of the current study.
- Potential Bottleneck 1:
Parents do not think that a home-based parenting program is necessary for their family.
 - Very few participants felt that a program could not help them (9% commercial, 3% website, 9% leaflet)
 - Participants explained that they felt a program could:
 - Provide information on a variety of topics including parenting skills
 - Provide support to parents
 - Reduce stress
 - Provide parenting activities
 - Assist in the home
 - Assist in reducing conflict
 - Connect family to professionals
 - Provide help for young mothers
 - Provide childcare/respite resources
- Potential Bottleneck 2:
Parents do not understand what the marketing strategy is suggesting they do.
 - Most families reported understanding how to enroll in a parenting program (70% commercial; 71% website ; 90% leaflet)
- Potential Bottleneck 3:
Parents think they would not qualify for a parenting program.
 - Most participants reported they felt as if they would qualify for a parenting program (62% commercial, 73% website, 80% leaflet)
- Potential Bottleneck 4:
Parents don't realize the urgency of contacting HV programs.
 - Parents reported some urgency to enroll in a parenting program with:
 - 53% of participants reporting urgency after watching the commercial
 - 58% of participants after reviewing the website
 - 49% reporting urgency after reviewing the leaflet
 - Suggests emphasizing urgency may help increase enrollment.

DISCUSSION

- Overall, percentage of individuals being exposed to marketing material prior to the current study was low (28% commercial, 17% website, 17% website). Researchers should consider other ways to spread marketing material given the limited exposure high-risk families had to marketing material. Specific ideas are to use social media and electronic messaging to ensure that families are being exposed to parenting program marketing material.
- Positive results include very few participants feeling that a program could not help them (9% commercial, 3% website, 9% leaflet) which means marketing benefits of program involvement are being received.
- After reviewing material most families reported understanding how to enroll in a parenting program (70% commercial, 71% website, 90% leaflet). Next steps are to understand if participants desire to enroll and possible barriers to enrollment.
- Parents reported some urgency to enroll in a parenting program with only 53% of participants reporting urgency after watching the commercial, 58% of participants after reviewing the website, and 49% reporting urgency after reviewing the leaflet. This suggests that messages emphasizing urgency may be more successful at recruitment. This hypothesis is being tested now in a follow-up study.

Potential Bottlenecks



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