

The Impact of Drug Use on Perceptions of Credibility in Indigenous Outreach Workers

The authors conducted an investigation of perceptions of outreach worker credibility using the social network members (N = 20) of indigenous outreach workers in an HIV/AIDS prevention intervention. The network members included in the study received semistructured interviews following the program's completion. Outreach workers who were not actively using illicit drugs were more likely to be described as credible than were those who were using drugs. In general, drug use negatively affected perceptions of credibility via damaged trust in the outreach worker's relationship with his or her network member. Results indicate the complexity of using indigenous drug users as outreach workers, the potential negative perceptions concerning hypocritical behavior, and the need to evaluate social interventions from the standpoint of indirect participants.