

Perceptions of Pediatric Obesity in the Rural Community Setting

Kathryn Smith, DNP(c)

PROBLEM/BACKGROUND

In the United States, pediatric obesity remains an unresolved epidemic. Locally, children in the rural Mississippi community of Houston suffer from pediatric obesity or being overweight. The Mississippi Kids Count (2019), reports that 13.1% of children ages 10-17 are overweight and 26.1% of children ages 10-17 are obese.

PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to apply Callista Roy's Adaptation Model to improve the overall health and wellness of the pediatric population in the rural church setting over the course of four weeks. The target group will consist of children from the ages of 7-12 in the rural church setting.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

The project is best supported using Callista Roy's Adaptation Model (RAM). RAM emphasizes that in order for one to become successful, they must first adapt and adopt recommended guidelines and recommendations. The theoretical framework involves adaptation, health, environment and quality of life to obtain a healthy life. The model also promotes an active physical life as opposed to living a sedentary lifestyle (Rogers & Keller, 2009).

METHODOLOGY

The pediatric wellness camp is a four-week virtual camp where children the ages of 7-12 will become more knowledgeable about health, wellness and physical activity. The camp is designed to utilize the Mississippi Obesity Action plan in the presence of virtual learning during the pandemic. Campers will attend weekly 60-minute virtual sessions for four weeks. Objectives for the wellness camp are to increase both parent and child awareness of pediatric obesity, improve overall health and educate parents and children on nutrition, diet, physical activity and mindfulness.

IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of this project yielded an increase in pediatric obesity awareness and its prevention. Camp consisted of health and nutrition sessions and incorporated dance/ Zumba sessions to increase physical activity. Activities consisted of food and health jeopardy games and weekly journaling of exercise and diet. The campers also completed quizzes throughout the camp to evaluate effectiveness of module content.

EVALUATION

The campers and parents were asked to complete pre and post implementation surveys using a multiple choice and open-ended questionnaire with the option for additional comments for feedback on the camp. Stakeholders too completed evaluative feedback through an evaluative survey to rate the overall camp's effectiveness and delivery.

RESULTS

Results of camp implementation were very positive. Campers thoroughly enjoyed camp and inquired about a second session of camp. The one-week camp follow up revealed that 86% of campers were exercising daily and that 100% of campers reported eating more fruits and vegetables daily. The four-week camp follow up revealed that 100% of camp surveys continued to exercise 30 minutes daily or more and were eating more fruits and vegetables. Overall, greater than 50% of campers reported an increase in their physical activity.

100% of stakeholders agreed that camp was appropriate and effective. Stakeholders were interested in hosting another wellness camp for the pediatric population. Stakeholders were also interested in partnering together to develop a yearly wellness camp for the adult population.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Camp results were consistent and yielded positive results in the expected direction. Implications for practice consist of potentially partnering with local churches, communities and schools to implement innovative changes throughout rural communities. Possible partnerships also include encouragement from local clinics, hospitals and health care providers to promote attendance to the wellness camp for additional education and counseling for parents and children. Implementation for practice also included the implementation of the Mississippi Obesity Action Plan to extensively educate parents to adapt to its recommended guidelines. The Mississippi Obesity Action Plan is implemented in the public school system but should however, be advocated for in the home setting as well. In addition, the aforementioned implications, I would also like to expand the participation of camp to potentially reach many of Mississippi's counties and hopefully become a statewide event. Camp expansion would include consideration of grant acquisition and/or fitness companies/programs to potentially fund an increased number of participants potentially in multiple locations.

REFERENCES

- Mississippi Kids Count (2019). 2019 Factbook kids count. Retrieved from https://kidscount.ssrc.msstate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2019.MS_KC-Factbook_web.pdf
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Keywords: Health, wellness, adaptation, quality of life and health literacy.

Team Leader: Dr. Ellen Buckner Team Member(s): Latisha Copeland- youth minister and Co-Pastor Kathy Smith