Using Service Learning to Increase Depression Awareness on College Campuses

Dr. Linda Mays, DNP, PMHNP-BC
Assistant Professor of Clinical
Using Service Learning to Increase Depression Awareness on College Campuses

Linda Mays, DNP, PMHNP-BC, ARNP

At the end of this presentation:

- Identify key stakeholders involved in developing a college based service learning project.
- List challenges and opportunities in implementing a depression service learning project.

The University of Miami funded my research and travel here. I have no nonfinancial relationships to disclosures that would be a potential conflict of interest with this presentation.
An alarming number of college students experience depression

33% of US college students reported suicidal thoughts (Reetz et al, 2015).

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death in persons 15-29 years old across the globe. (WHO, 2017)

Though widespread, depression can be treated successfully in most settings.
Depression is not routinely addressed with college students

Professional nurses often discuss depression with patients and communities.

Nursing students have limited experience teaching peers about depression.

Peer teaching can develop clinical skills and self confidence.

Service learning can convert to “real world” learning and benefit peer groups or the community.
What is Service Learning?

- Addresses needs of a target community.
- Apply nursing concepts in a real life setting.
- Student centered, faculty facilitated.
- Self-reflection is vital to student learning.
Who are the Stakeholders?

- Target community
- Students
- Faculty
- Staff
- Community partners
Service Learning Project - National Depression Screening Day

- Reflective practice
- Lectures by experts and patients
- Student-designed project
- Weekly discussions
- Students engaged with stakeholders
Results-Community

- Students thanked the nursing students.
- Stopped an engaged in conversation.
- 218 students completed the survey that week.
- 183 students completed the survey due to the project.
Results-Students

- Reported a positive impact from the activity.
- Reported increased empathy.
- Reported increased competency psychiatric assessment skills.
- Reported a positive civic experience.
Benefits

- Addresses an unmet need.
- Students recognize the power of peer influence.
- Students normalize mental illness.
- Students lead their learning experience.
- Results in long-lasting learning.
Challenges

- Buy-in from all stakeholders.
- Student expectations for learning.
- Maintaining momentum.
Future Implications

- Use peer influence to increase awareness.
- Increase professional growth.
- Increase engagement in mental illness.
- Practical and unique way to teach nursing.

