

Proposal to address VIOLENCE

ASSESSMENT

Definition of the Public Health Problem/Issue

The consequences of violence make it important to public health societies to reduce violence-related injuries and death. Being a victim or witnessing violence has been shown to have adverse effects on an individual's physical, emotional, and social well-being. (Healthy People 2020) According to Healthy People 2020, 51,000 people die a year due to violent attacks. Risk of injury due to a violent attack depends on many social, economic, and environmental factors. Violence is a serious issue although there is evidence of promising reduced rates of violence and crime with education, economic development, and housing.

Without intervention the people who will be most affected are older adults and children. "While older adults and children are most vulnerable to sustaining an injury that requires medical attention, Americans of all ages are susceptible to injury and violence" (Healthy People 2020). In the United States in 2000, 16 to 19 year olds were more likely to be victims of violent attacks than any other age group. This indicates that there are more violent crimes in high schools. According to The Community Guide, "rates of arrest for violent crimes peak in the late teen years". Violence affects friends, coworkers, family, employers, and communities, as well as the victim.

Some agencies involved with the issue of violence prevention are The American Bar Association, and the American Medical Association. The American Bar Association provides useful information for anyone wishing to learn more about violence as well as support for victims. They have many useful Web sites to give users easy access to other organizations and resources related to "domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and trafficking" (American Bar Association). The American Medical Association, in compliance with the National Advisory Council on Violence and Abuse, produce many reports about violence and abuse. They also advise others about "effective strategies and programs to eliminate family violence in our society" (American Medical Association).

Description of Successful Programs/ Interventions

According to the Community Guide the most effective intervention of prevention of violence is home visitation during early childhood. However, a lot of the interventions they researched and tested concluded there was insufficient evidence to determine the effectiveness of home visitation in reducing violence. The evidence was deemed insufficient because there were not enough studies included in the reviews to report a

statistically significant effect on the interventions. These interventions studied violence against children, intimate partner violence, violence by a visited parent, and violence by a visited child (against themselves or against others including violence in school).

The only intervention with sufficient evidence of effectiveness was reducing violence in adolescents with programs involving specific and special training of foster parents. According to the Community Guide, “early childhood home visitation is effective in reducing child maltreatment by approximately 39%.” The programs using paraprofessionals were less effective than those that used mental health workers or nurses. This is considered a therapeutic foster care program where adolescents unable to live at home are placed in homes with foster parents trained to teach emotional and social skills. Some components of therapeutic foster care include, but are not limited to, providing strong support services for parents undergoing treatment, providing a liaison to the child’s teachers, counselors and other school personnel, and providing medical services to the child. The children studied in therapeutic interventions were those with chronic delinquency, and those with severe emotional disturbance. In the children with severe emotional disturbance, there was no sufficient evidence in the effectiveness of reducing violence because, like the other interventions, there were not enough studies conducted to support adequate evidence of effectiveness.

Identified barriers to program success

Some barriers that hinder the success of violence prevention are social influence, financial issues, and unwillingness. Speaking up as a victim of a violent attack may be hard to do if an individual is attacked by someone they know. Generally children are sexually molested by someone close to them and the child trusts this individual so they do not tell someone else for fear of losing the relationship with the molester. Also men are less likely to speak up about attacks because they feel embarrassed to appear so weak in society’s eyes. The social norm of society is that men are strong and protect themselves as well as their families. If a man is attacked, he is more likely to keep quiet about it and make up an excuse as to what happened than to speak up and alert the proper authorities as to what happened.

Financial issues come into play as an identified barrier to success in preventing violence because generally interventions are expensive. Usually the help an individual needs is expensive and is not covered by insurance. The one intervention with adequate evidence of efficiency was a therapeutic foster care program which would cost money to place the child, train the foster parents, provide medical support as well as stay in touch with school counselors and personnel.

Violence is an issue that is hard to control because those who need help have to *want* to get help. It is nearly impossible to change someone if they do not want to be

changed. If an individual is not willing to admit there is a problem and try to find ways to solve it, the only possible intervention is to force nonviolence which more than likely includes the law (jail time, restraining order).

PROGRAM PROPOSAL

Specific Problem to be Addressed

Violence is a broad topic that affects many different people of different socioeconomic backgrounds, races, religions, etc. The people affected by violence everyday are barely few and hard to find. Victims, as well as community members, peers, and family members are only a few of the members of society affected by violence. These interventions related to violence will specifically be addressing violence against children because violence is a very broad topic. I have chosen this particular area to address because a lot of violence can be traced back through individuals' childhoods. Childhood is a very critical part of life in determining characteristics expressed later in life. For example, those who sexually assault others usually were sexually assaulted or abused as children. According to the Community Guide, interventions at a young age are more likely to help prevent violence later in life, thus my interventions will focus on young children.

Target Population

The population being targeted is children and adolescents in violent households. By helping these individuals we may also be helping others this violence has affected. By getting children and adolescents out of violent households we hope to get help for the abusers and place the victims in safe places where they can recover and grow. If children are raised in safe and healthy places, they will be more likely to lead productive lives without violence.

Proposed Interventions

Intervention #1

The first environmental intervention will target children and adolescents in need of placement in safe foster homes. A safe and productive environment is essential in healthy, optimal households. If violence is a big part of any household involving children, it is necessary that the violence stop or the children be removed. This intervention will focus on removing the children from the household and getting them into safer care so

they can grow up in a better environment.

Custody of the children in danger will be transferred from the incapable parents to trained foster parents within a therapeutic foster care facility. These foster parents will provide a supportive and sociable community for the child to grow up safely. The foster parents will be trained in communication techniques to determine the severity the child has been affected by the violence and to determine whether outside help is required. The foster parents will also be trained in proper parenting techniques to ensure these children receive the support and positive role models they need to become productive members of society. Progress will be measured by communication skills and amount of violence later in life.

This intervention hopes to accomplish moving abused children out of the abusive setting and into a safe community where they can grow in an acceptable and supportive environment.

Intervention #2

The second intervention will be educational to try to reach through to those in the household to recognize signs of abuse and excessive violence and the outcomes to victims as well as abusers. This intervention might target abuser parents, observant siblings in the house, or friends aware of the violence.

Usually signs of violence are recognized in school by teachers, counselors, and other administrators. Educational programs will be performed in elementary, middle, and high schools to educate the children of the effects of violence as well as where to report violence. If a child is recognized as a potential violence victim, efforts will be made to communicate with the child and figure out what is going on. If it comes out that there is in fact violence occurring in the child's household, the parents will be contacted as well as the authorities to end the violence and find a safe place for the child to stay. Educational material will be provided to all members of the household to convey the effects of violence and communication tactics and resources to talk to the right people if violence is suspected or apparent.

This intervention hopes to educate individuals involved with violence about the effects of violence on victims as well as abusers and all other parties aware of the violence.

Healthy People Objective(s)

Healthy People 2020 state the following as "Objectives for Prevention of Violence":

1. Reduce homicides
2. Reduce firearm-related injuries.

3. Reduce nonfatal firearm-related injuries.
4. Reduce nonfatal physical assault injuries.
5. Reduce physical assaults.
6. Reduce physical fighting among adolescents.
7. Reduce bullying among adolescents.
8. Reduce weapon carrying by adolescents on school property.
9. Reduce child maltreatment deaths.
10. Reduce violence by current or former intimate partners.
11. Reduce sexual violence.
12. Reduce nonfatal intentional self-harm injuries.
13. Reduce children's exposure to violence.

Data Collection Plan

The following link provided by the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control shows statistics and information regarding youth violence.

http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/YV_DataSheet_Summer2009-a.pdf

The interventions previously mentioned will be measured by comparing violence rates connected to young children and adolescents over time. Violence can be measured by the number of violent attacks an individual commits. This will be measured once we have become aware of the issue and then again every six months for an indefinite amount of time. If the number of violent attacks decreases, then the program is deemed efficient.

SUMMARY

Major Assessment Findings

According to Healthy People 2020, 51,000 people die a year due to violent attacks. Without intervention the people who will be most affected are older adults and children. The interventions previously mentioned discuss violence in the homes of young children and adolescents. It is extremely important for a child to grow up in a safe and supportive environment for optimal and most productive results as an adult. It has been proven that individuals who were abused as children are more likely to abuse their own children. Getting children out of these violent homes is necessary for the wellbeing of the future of our society.

Conclusions point to interventions supporting environmental changes as well as educational efforts to prevent violence in the households of young children and adolescents. A change of environment might include removing the victims from the

house and finding a foster home where they can stay in a safe place. Education about violence and the effects on not only the victims, but everyone around the victim, will hopefully help individuals realize they need help to stop this very serious issue.

Two Proposed Interventions

The first intervention will focus on removing the children from the household and getting them into safer care so they can grow up in a better environment. They will be placed in a therapeutic foster care facility where the foster parents are trained individuals. The foster parents will be trained in effective communication as well as optimal parenting techniques for individuals going through rough times.

The second intervention involves educating members of the household in which violence is occurring about procedures to combat violence. The educational seminars will also cover the effects of violence on the victims as well as everyone around the victims. Hopefully abusers who are educated about violence and abuse will see the problem and realize they need help before things get extremely out of hand and the authorities need to be involved.

If successful, the number of violent attacks against young children and adolescents should decrease and more individuals should be educated on violence and the effects on the community violence brings.

Works Cited

http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/physician-resources/public-health/promoting-healthy-lifestyles/violence-prevention.pageul_websites.html

http://www.americanbar.org/groups/domestic_violence/resources/usef

http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/YV_DataSheet_Summer2009-a.pdf

<http://healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/objectiveslist.aspx?topicId=24>

<http://www.thecommunityguide.org/violence/Violence.pdf>