A PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING MODEL FOR COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

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FINDING BETTER WAYS
Funded by the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth

July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2012
PURPOSE

- To describe a public health nursing (PHN) model of community assessment (CA) based on community participatory and ethnographic approaches.
- To discuss the importance of community participation and local knowledge in development of culturally relevant preventive interventions.
WHY COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT?

- To collect information required to initiate individual, community, and population level change
- To assess health-promoting and health-negating conditions or community health status
- To empower community members
- To increase sustainable interventions
- To inform development of a substance use prevention program in a rural southern county
Community Assessment Model of CBPR and Ethnographic Orientation

(Adapted from Aronson and colleagues, 2007)

Community Core and History
- Physical Environment
- Idea Systems
- Social systems
- Behavioral Patterns

Teen/Parent Photovoice
Teen/Parent Group Discussions

Ethnographically Informed Community Assessment and Mapping

Community Leader Interviews

Community Partnership Approach (CPRT)
Community Drug Prevention and Program Manual for Rural Youths and Parents
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT (CA):

- Core function of public health
- Integral to interprofessional public health research and practice
- Useful in community-based participatory research (CBPR) and population-focused practice
- **Primary aim of our VFHY project**

*Partnering with Rural Youth and Parents to Design and Test a Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drug Use Prevention Program Model*  
*Funded by VFHY July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2012*
BACKGROUND: Evolution of CA

- Community diagnosis – a “keystone of public health practice”
  - Ecologic approach: man-environment interaction and social needs, basic to accurate assessment of the health of a community
  - Requires multidisciplinary skills
  - Based on community’s health status, capability, and action potential
  - People and environmental factors, institutional and human resources, beliefs and behaviors, political systems, habits of action (Freeman, 1970)
BACKGROUND: Evolution of CA

- Community health nurses (CHNs) work with a “community as the patient” to gather pertinent community data about:
  - The physical community, its people, the environment, communication channels, vital statistics, health and related resources, and CHN services and programs (Tinkham & Voorhies, 1972)

- Community as client – the focus is on the health of the total population
  - Personal and physical data to formulate a total picture of the community’s wants and needs (Archer & Fleshman, 1975)
BACKGROUND: Evolution of Participation

Community as Client

- Community - Target of change
- Community health - Goal of change
- Partnership - Means of change

Involve Community Members

- Define their needs
- Set realistic priorities
- Determine/control acceptable solutions
- Evaluate progress

(Goeppinger, Lassiter, & Wilcox, 1982; Goeppinger, 1984; Cook [PhD], Goeppinger [PhD, RN], Brunk [MSN, RN], Price [PhD], Whitehead [PhD Anthro.], & Sauter [MD], 1988)
BACKGROUND: Evolution of Methods

Integration of CA Data And Methods:

- Ethnographic and qualitative methods
- Epidemiologic data from secondary sources
- Holistic assessment of the health of a community
  (Project GENESIS, Glittenberg, 1982)

- Informant interviews
- Participant observation
- Windshield survey
- Secondary analysis
- Surveys
- Interpretation to identify community capabilities and problems
  (Goeppinger, 1984)
Theoretical orientations of a CA model for PHN
- Community participatory approach
- Ethnographically informed

A participatory approach provides philosophical and theoretical basis for community partnerships. This orientation also provides the basis for collaboration with the community (Chiu, 2003; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003).

An ethnographic orientation emphasizes “ways of life” of people; providing a social scientific description and cultural basis for understanding people in interaction (Patton, 2002).
A Multi Method Community Assessment Model

Stakeholders
- Photovoice
  - Individual and/or Group Interviews

CA Domains
- Community Core and History
- Physical Environment
- Idea Systems
- Social systems
- Behavioral Patterns

Processes
- Ethnographically Informed Community Assessment and Geographic Systems Information (GIS) Mapping

Existing Data
- Census
- Geographic Vital and Health Statistics

Community and Population Outcomes
- Community, Practitioner, and/or Researcher Partnership
- Identification of Strengths and Weaknesses
- Foundation for Program Planning

University of Virginia School of Nursing
COMMUNITY HEALTH

- Determined by multiple community and population levels
  - Economic, physical, and psycho-social environments
  - Interacting with intrapersonal/interpersonal level factors
- Community participation and ethnographic approaches
  - Ecological, community, and environmental assessment
  - Photovoice and GIS mapping methods
- Foster understanding of socio-cultural contexts, systems, and meaning through a collaborative research or practice process.
CA DOMAINS: Ethnographic Perspective

- Five relevant domains
  - Community core and history
  - Physical environment
  - Social systems
  - Idea systems
  - Behavior patterns

(Aronson, Wallis, O’Campo, Whitehead, & Schafer, 2007)
COMMUNITY DATA PROFILES

- Geographic
- Demographic
- Economic
- Health Status
- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Historical

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT WHEEL

- Community Core
- Physical Environment
- Health and Social Services
- Economy
- Transportation and Safety
- Politics and Government
- Communication
- Education
- Recreation
- Perceptions – Subjective and Objective

Anthropology (Whitehead, 2004, 2009)

Nursing (Anderson & McFarlane, 2011)
LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

- Provides rich understanding of ecological and contextual dimensions, and health attitudes and behaviors
- Informs and empowers community and public health research or practice teams
  - To select and customize culturally relevant interventions to increase capacity of a community to promote healthy lifestyles.
MULTI METHOD CA MODEL

- An ethnographic and participatory model is grounded in epistemology and critical theories
- Fosters understanding of socio-cultural contexts, systems, and meaning through a collaborative research or practice process.
- Provides the basis for true collaboration and community partnerships
REFERENCES


