Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin's Approaches to Interrupting the Cycle of Violence [1]

Rationale / Objectives

Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin’s (CHOW) concern for violence prevention dates back to the 1980s when child abuse cases started presenting in the emergency department- with hundreds of cases monthly. The hospital staff were trained to deal with acute injuries and their presence in the ER had the potential to re-traumatize the children. In the early 1990s, an increasing number of teenagers were repeatedly coming to the emergency room with violence-related injuries like gunshot and stab wounds. Hospital staff recognized that these incidents of violence were not isolated and that the child’s entire family was at risk for experiencing violence. The CHOW goal was to prevent and break the circle of violence by setting up a network of child advocacy centers to address violence at the family level, eliminate repeated injuries and help family members cope. 1 [2]

Project/Program Description & Major Achievements

- CHOW employed a multidisciplinary approach to violence prevention. In 1996, they implemented the free project Ujima to help stop the cycle of violent crimes. Also the hospital collaborated with the Sojourner Family Peace Center to create peaceful communities in which domestic respect and a life free from violence is the right of everyone. 1 [2] [3] 3 [4]
- Community based home visitation model reduced the CHOW recidivism rate from 12 % to 1% and the program improved medical outcomes, increased confidence and self-esteem and improved school, youth and family relationships.

Lessons Learned

- It is essential to address violence among children to foster their growth into healthy adults. The hospital credits long-term, collaborative relationships with community stakeholders for the success of its intervention programs.
- The process of collaborating to build the new center was a learning experience for both Sojourner Family Peace Center and the hospital.
- CHOW recommends that hospitals begin addressing violence by getting to know their communities. No potential partner should be counted out, no matter how large, small or untraditional it may be.
People / Organizations Involved

- Children Hospital of Wisconsin [5]
- Children Service Society of Wisconsin [6]
- Medical College of Wisconsin [7]
- Health Research & Educational Trust [8]
- American Hospital Association [9]
- Association for Community Health Improvement [10]

Further Description

CHOW worked collaboratively with human services, the district attorney’s office, Milwaukee Police Department and Milwaukee County Behavioral Health. They developed the project Ujima. **Project Ujima** is a multidisciplinary collaboration between CHOW, the Medical College of Wisconsin and the Children’s Service Society of Wisconsin. Youth from ages 7 to 18 who are victims of violence are identified when they are patients in the emergency department. Case workers identify patients’ needs and provide immediate support during the hospital stay. After a youth is treated for an acute injury, Project Ujima operates as a community-based home visitation model. After discharge, a community liaison visits the patient’s home within two weeks to develop a service plan. This liaison helps all family members access medical, behavioral health, legal, school and social services in order to reduce the risk of recidivism for the youth and help the entire family achieve its goals. The hospital collaborated with the **Sojourner Family Peace Center** providing advocacy and in-depth case management services to victims of violence. Case management included: Helping victims of violence access shelter, providing counselling, health care referrals and helping obtaining legal services.

Major Achievements

Prior to the project’s implementation, CHOW emergency department had a 12% recidivism rate for violent injury. As of 2013, only 1 % of those using the project’s services have returned to the emergency department for violence-related injuries. The program participants showed better medical outcomes, increased confidence and self-esteem and improved school, youth and family relationships. The Sojourner Family Peace Center had a coordinated and integrated approach to solving family violence with earlier interventions for youth at risk. 1 [2] 2 [3]

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<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Detail</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ER recidivism rate</td>
<td>91.7% reduction</td>
<td>from 12% to 1%</td>
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Supporting Evidence:

1. Hospital Approaches to Interrupt the Cycle of Violence [2]
3. Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin joins Governor Walker and Statewide partners to announce Family Justice Center Project [4]

External Links:


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