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Community Nursing Intervention: "Victory City" arts and mental health program

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“VICTORY CITY”

An arts and mental health community intervention for adolescents

Description

The proposed program aims to combine the protective factors of creative expression, peer interaction, education, and access to primary health care with arts-based therapeutic interventions to improve the mental health of adolescents.

Significance

- Mental health is severely underfunded in Canada ⁽²⁾
- Suicide is a leading cause of death among adolescents ^{(2) (4)}
- 70% of mental illnesses have onset in adolescents ^{(2) (4)}
- Stigma negatively affects reception of treatment ⁽²⁾



Literature Themes

- **Best Practice for treatment:** psychiatric counselling combined with psychotropic medication ⁽⁵⁾; only 1/3 of mentally ill adolescents complete a full clinical counseling program ^{(1) (3) (6) (13)}. In trials: MST (multisystemic therapy) proves most effective: treatment in home with whole family, focus on coping and protective factors ; MST not typically implemented to date ⁽¹⁾ School programs more accessible, higher commitment rate: In a trial 98% of teens completed school-based programs ; 37% completed CBT; 15% completed clinic –based treatment
- **Stigma:** Parents and adolescents have negative attitudes about the use of medication in treatment ⁽¹³⁾. Adolescents feel vulnerable in clinic settings ^{(1) (13)}
- **Education and training:** school teachers do not feel competent to screen for mental illness ^{(3) (8) (9) (11)}; art therapy can reduce grief and support trauma counseling ^{(1) (4) (15)}
- **Research Gaps:** Suicide prevention and effects on suicide rates ^{(3) (6) (8) (9) (10) (11) (12) (14)}; efficacy of treatment without symptom re-occurrence ^{(1) (10)}; lack of longitudinal studies ^{(11) (12)}; the efficacy of school-based suicide prevention programs– inconclusive results: issues with increased suicidality and social isolation ^{(3) (8) (9)}; the efficacy of art therapy in adolescent chronic mental illness ^{(1) (4) (15)}

The Intervention – Victory City

Upstream approach: risk-assessment, screening, health promotion, prevention, community involvement, building capacities

- **Integrate:**
 - art therapy, mentoring and peer support into adolescent mental health programs
 - community interventions that are comprehensive and accessible
- **Build:**
 - capacities between schools, the community and the health care system
- **Evaluate:**
 - Mental health outcomes of the arts-based community program
 - Psychometric instruments: self-reported symptoms, suicidality, self-harm behaviour
 - Other indicators - hospitalizations, recurring symptoms, suicidal ideation or planning, school attendance, self-image

BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITIES



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