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

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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...
References


THANK YOU