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Excessive Drinking in Perry County, Missouri.

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COUN 6785: Social Change in Action:
Prevention, Consultation, and Advocacy

Social Change Portfolio

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OVERVIEW

Keywords: Excessive drinking in adults, Perry County, Missouri

Excessive Drinking in Perry County, Missouri.

Goal Statement: This prevention program aims to reduce the percentage of self-reported excessive alcohol consumption among adults aged 18 and older in Perry County, Missouri using prevention-focused programs, education, and community awareness.

Significant Findings: Perry County, MO, is a rural community within Southeast Missouri.

Missouri is within the top 10 % of states with the highest reported adult excessive drinking.

Perry County is one of the top counties for excessive adult drinking within Missouri (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2018). Excessive drinking is a community health concern due to its multitude of adverse effects on mental and physical health. Educating the community and spreading awareness can begin a journey towards changes at the societal, institutional, community, and individual levels encouraging prevention of excessive drinking.

Objectives/Strategies/Interventions/Next Steps: Prevention can begin with educating everyone on the prevalence of excessive drinking and the adverse effects on the community.

Encouraging easier access to mental health services to all community members and effectively advertising available substance use treatments can spread awareness and prevention.

Collaborating with community-owned businesses to promote stricter policies on excessive drinking can lower the risk of drinking too much, driving impaired, and other consequences of excessive drinking. Non-alcoholic events and activities encourage social events and entertainment without alcohol. Programs, such as LifeSkills Training Program, can be funded

and utilized to assist with helping individuals with the risk factors that influence the use of alcohol—for example, job skills training to ensure more fulfilling employment. Professional counselors can advocate for the community's health concerns by collaborating and providing effective prevention strategies, programs, and changes.

INTRODUCTION

Excessive Drinking in Perry County, Missouri.

Excessive drinking includes reported binge drinking and heavy drinking. The data used in this portfolio include adults that have reported drinking excessively over the previous 30 days. The location of the study is Perry County, Missouri. Perry County is a rural community in Southeast Missouri that lies on the border of Missouri against Illinois. The county has a population of 19,191 as of 2019. Excessive drinking is a health concern due to the multiple adverse effects on a person's physical and mental health. Some of the top mental and physical health concerns reported include hypertension, suicide, depression, alcohol poisoning, fetal alcohol syndrome, and heart problems (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2018). Working toward preventing excessive drinking could avoid a multitude of community health concerns.

PART 1: SCOPE AND CONSEQUENCES

Excessive Drinking in Perry County, Missouri.

The target problem that I have chosen to use in my prevention program is excessive drinking of adults in Perry County, Missouri. Currently, 20% of adults within Perry County report drinking excessively within the last 30 days, whereas Missouri adults report at 21%. Perry

County is one of the top counties in Missouri, of which overall ranges from 15-24% of adults reporting drinking excessively. The United States' top performers reported excessive drinking reports at 15%. Missouri is listed in the top 10% of the United States. Local trends were unavailable due to a change in measure. The site stated it would not be appropriate to compare previous years. Nationally, the trend in reported binge drinking in adults has decreased from 18.9% in 2011 to 18% in 2018 (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2018).

As previously stated, prevention of excessive drinking could benefit the community's health by lowering the prevalence of health concerns caused by excessive drinking. Excessive drinking can lead to mental health problems such as suicide, depression, interpersonal violence, and aggression. Physical concerns include hypertension, alcohol poisoning, heart problems, sexually transmitted infections, and diseases, unplanned pregnancy, fetal alcohol syndrome, and motor vehicle crashes (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2018). Many of the listed concerns directly cause other social, legal, and mental problems, such as poverty due to the incarceration of a family member, legal fees, and hospital bills from alcohol-related injuries and deaths. Excessive drinking can increasingly affect all areas of health, life, family, and community.

This project aims to prevent excessive drinking among adults aged 18 and older in Perry County, Missouri.

PART 2: SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL MODEL

Excessive Drinking in Perry County, Missouri.

The social-ecological model explains that an individual's behavior has a range of influential factors working together. The model analyzes the interaction between individual, relationship, societal, and community factors and how prevention is possible through action

across multiple levels of the model simultaneously (CDC, n.d.). Learning how each element contributes to the risk level and how each level works together in the model can aid in the successful prevention of unwanted behaviors and characteristics.

Individual

Risk Factors

Individual risk factors for excessive drinkers in Perry County, Missouri, include impulsivity, heritability, stress, and existing mental health disorders (Naegele et al., 2014). Perry County is a rural area containing fewer options for entertainment than larger counties and cities. Individuals that struggle with impulsivity may be more likely to participate in dangerous behaviors, such as drinking excessively. Elevated stress levels can lead to unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as excessive drinking. Research shows that occupational stress is a leading indirect cause of excessive drinking in men (Temmen & Crockett, 2020). A person's mental health can play a role in alcohol consumption. Variations in cognitive and emotional regulation have been proven to lead to increased alcohol consumption (New Addiction Research Study Results from University of Potsdam Described (Risk and Protective Factors for Alcohol Use Disorders Across the Lifespan, 2021).

Protective Factors

Protective factors include characteristics that lower the risk of excessive drinking among adults; these include self-control, self-esteem, religiosity, involved parenting styles, and mental health treatment (Cho et al., 2015). While mental health can be a risk factor for excessive drinking, receiving treatment can become a protective factor, increasing self-esteem and self-control. Becoming involved in religion can improve psychological and social support while

individuals seek to define their sense of self, morals, and values. This self-discovery decreases their likelihood of developing a substance or alcohol use disorder (Abbott et al., 2019).

Relationship

Risk Factors

Relationship factors include family, personal, and romantic relationship involvement. Risk factors in this level include family involvement, family history of substance use or alcohol use disorder, the prevalence of domestic violence, and peer influence (Abbott et al., 2019). A study found that parental involvement played a massive role in excessive drinking, more commonly among women (Temmen & Crockett, 2020).

Protective Factors

Protective factors are like those at the individual level, including parental involvement, self-esteem and confidence, self-control, and religiosity. Individuals with high self-esteem and confidence are less likely to succumb to peer pressure, lowering their risk of developing an alcohol use disorder (Abbott et al., 2019). Religiosity is a protective factor due to the peers one will be more likely to surround themselves with, lowering their risk of being pressured into drinking. Religiosity can also increase one's moral and value system, making one less likely to engage in reckless behaviors (Abbott et al., 2019).

Community Factors

Risk Factors

Community risk factors include the availability of alcohol within the community and the level of acceptance of excessive drinking. Availability has the number and types of places that sell alcohol within the community, such as community events and non-liquor stores. When

individuals perceive the substance to be readily available and accepted within the community, their risk level increases (Stanley et al., 2011).

Protective Factors

Protective factors include the availability of non-alcoholic community events for members to participate in and decreased ease of access among youth to purchase alcohol. Religiosity among community members can also be a protective factor, reducing the prevalence of excessive public drinking among certain religions (Abbott et al., 2019). Other community protective factors include the visual health of the community, including visually appealing structures, environment, and houses (Stanley et al., 2011).

Societal

Risk Factors

Societal risk factors include advertising alcohol consumption, employment opportunities, cultural norms, and education availability. Appealing advertisement of alcohol at community events and on media can increase the risk of regular alcohol use, increasing the risk of excessive alcohol consumption (Naegele et al., 2014). Viewing frequent advertisements of alcohol can encourage a societal view of alcohol consumption as a regular part of society, or a necessary addition to social events, increasing the prevalence of alcohol consumption. Lack of employment opportunities leads to higher stress levels and an increased probability of excessive drinking as a coping mechanism (Temmen & Crockett, 2020).

Protective factors

Protective factors include the availability of alcohol use disorder education and prevention programs, increased security during community events to control negative consequences of alcohol consumption, employment opportunities, and community awareness of the adverse effects of excessive drinking. Spreading awareness through social media, in community resource areas, and in school systems can help to lower the risk of excessive drinking by providing adequate education to the community (Naegele et al., 2014).

Conclusion

In conclusion, multiple factors contribute to the risk of an individual developing a drinking problem. Aspects from the environment, community, and society all play a role and the individual's factors. Drinking is used to cope, socialize, celebrate, and for many other purposes deemed normal by society. The wide variety of contributing factors makes alcohol one of the most dangerous substances, along with its availability in the community (Stanley et al., 2011). Protective factors can be utilized along with an evidence-based program so that prevention and reduction are possible.

PART 3: THEORIES OF PREVENTION **Excessive Drinking in Perry County, Missouri.**

The Transtheoretical Model, developed by Prochaska and DiClemente, looks at behavior change as an individual moves through six stages in a non-linear fashion. This model was created based on the data from individuals attempting to cease smoking. However, the stages can be tailored to fit any behavior change (Prochaska & Velicer, 1997). The six stages are:

1. Precontemplation- The individual has no intention of changing behavior within the next six months.
2. Contemplation- The individual is considering making changes but is hesitant due to perceived barriers to changing.
3. Preparation- Individuals begin taking steps towards making changes.
4. Action- Individuals are actively making changes and intend on continuing in their new behaviors.
5. Maintenance- Individuals have successfully changed their behavior and are working on relapse prevention.
6. Termination- Individuals have changed their behaviors entirely and do not foresee relapse of behavior

The Transtheoretical Model has been declared one of the leading models used for behavior change. The various stages have proven successful because the interventions are beneficial to all individuals. After all, it includes those not ready to change (Prochaska et al., 2004). The societal and community-level risk factors include the view that excessive drinking is considered standard among adults. Therefore, this all-inclusive intervention could provide the necessary prevention and treatment of excessive drinking among adults. This theory also allows individuals to move through the stages in a non-linear fashion, meaning it is acceptable for an individual to push back a stage if their readiness to change declines (Prochaska & Velicer, 1997).

Programs are available to address problematic drinking among adults and adolescents in communities. The population this project focuses on includes individuals aged 18 and older presently participating in excessive drinking and at risk of excessive drinking in the future. Programs such as LifeSkills Training and PROSPER work with youth to build on life skills and

link with effective community programs. LifeSkills Training targets the middle school population but could also be altered to serve adults. This program teaches social and self-management skills and the skills necessary to resist peer pressure into drinking or using drugs (Social Programs That Work, 2018). Programs targeting youth can benefit the prevention of excessive drinking by reaching individuals before the problem starts and spreading awareness of the consequences.

Recovery Coaches is a program for parents that have lost their children due to substance use. This program seeks to encourage recovery by removing barriers to treatment and encouraging participation in treating adults with substance use disorders (Social Programs That Work, 2018). This program could be beneficial to those already engaging in excessive drinking and could be altered to fit the needs of individuals that are not parents or still have custody of their children. Often, individuals are not aware of available treatment within the community or have barriers that keep them from getting the necessary treatment. Therefore, having someone to assist them in seeking treatment and reducing barriers could increase motivation to change their drinking behaviors.

Programs are meant to provide the necessary encouragement, support, and resources to make positive changes within a community. Finding a program suitable for the desired change area can be accomplished by researching or contacting local community health agencies. Spreading awareness of available programs and treatment centers is essential for community treatment and prevention.

PART 4: DIVERSITY AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Excessive Drinking in Perry County, Missouri.

In Missouri, alcohol is the most commonly used substance by adults aged 18 years and older. The Southeast region, where Perry County is located, reports 44.4% of adults to drink alcohol (Missouri Department of Mental Health, 2021). Perry County is a rural community with a population of 96.5% white people and 2.5% Hispanic or Latino in July of 2021 (United States Census Bureau, 2021).

Impact of Substance Use on Identified Population

In a predominantly white community, the Hispanic population faces many barriers to resources, education, employment, and community support. These barriers are risk factors for developing a mental health and substance use disorder (Eghaneyan et al., 2020). For example, only 3.2 % of the Perry County population speaks Spanish. This prevents access to community resources, communication with public entities, and the ability to gain social support within the community without appropriate translators (United States Census Bureau, 2021).

Increasing Cultural Relevance of a Prevention Program

Another barrier for the Hispanic population is access to and completing treatment for substance use disorders. This is partly due to the language barrier; however other factors exist, such as lack of insurance, inadequate housing, lower-income, and the potential for unemployment and housing instability while in treatment (Eghaneyan et al., 2020). According to the data for Perry County, Hispanics report less than five individual admissions into substance use disorder treatment in 2020 (Missouri Department of Mental Health, 2020).

Considering the protective and risk factors associated with excessive alcohol use previously reviewed, it is also essential to recognize that those factors cannot be regarded as appropriate for all cultures within a community (Reese & Vera, 2007). Individual protective and

risk factors should be considered for various cultures, including the Hispanic population discussed in this project. Section C.2f of The ACA Code of Ethics (2014) states that the counselor's responsibility is to maintain awareness of the need for continued education throughout their career, including staying informed of the education needed to provide the best services to diverse populations (ACA, 2014). This means that professional counselors have the ethical duty to be aware of the culturally specific protective and risk factors clients experience regarding their substance use disorders and their barriers to treatment.

Ethical Considerations in Prevention Programming

A community program targeting the prevention of excessive drinking in Perry County will need to be culturally competent by providing interpretation services and advertising the availability of such services. This service will be crucial to ensure individuals feel they can utilize the treatment services and have a complete understanding of confidentiality and informed consent before treatment. It will also be vital that the program staff be up to date on culturally sensitive information, such as existing barriers, protective and risk factors, and cultural concerns regarding treatment practices. In respect to prevention, community awareness and education should be delivered in a manner inclusive of alternate languages, cultural beliefs, and practices present within the community. Stakeholders for the program should include local businesses that serve diverse populations within the community. An example would be the Mexican restaurants that serve alcoholic beverages, benefiting them by exploring how excessive drinking has impacted their business, allowing them to benefit from prevention.

Although the Hispanic population is a majorly underserved and underreached population within Perry County, Missouri, other ethnicities also suffer similar barriers. It will be important that a prevention program consider the diversity of the people it serves to ensure total inclusion

and access to everyone. Minorities face additional risk factors and may lack protective factors experienced by majorities, leading to unhealthy coping such as excessive drinking. Therefore, the program must be culturally relevant by considering cultural beliefs, practices, and norms within Perry County, Missouri (Reese & Vera, 2007).

PART 5: ADVOCACY

Excessive Drinking in Perry County, Missouri.

Included in counseling competencies is the ability to determine, with the client, when a voice is needed outside of the session. Advocacy is the art of speaking for those without a voice to fight injustice at institutional, systemic, community, and public policy levels (Ratts et al., 2016). Advocating for prevention would include raising community awareness and promoting change in public policy to fight against a concern that affects said, community members.

Excessive drinking affects the community in multiple ways, including physical health problems, alcohol-related vehicular accidents, suicide, death, property damage, poverty, and violence.

Therefore, advocacy can aid in preventing a community health concern that puts members at risk of dangerous consequences.

Prevention will include looking into the root of excessive drinking more deeply by exploring the social environments of the community members. Client and system involvement includes various levels and interventions for each level (Toporek et al., 2009). The institutional, community, and public policy levels will be introduced in this portfolio, and the barriers to each will be explained. According to the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC) (2015), the institutional level includes societal social institutions and community-based

organizations. The community level consists of the spoken and unspoken societal norms, expectations, and other cultural beliefs. Public policy is the level that includes the local, state, and federal laws and policies affecting the population's growth and development (MSJCC, 2015).

Institutional Level

Perry County, Mo, is considered a rural area with country landscaping, lifestyle, and culture. The needs of rural communities are often overlooked due to the urbanization of most agencies and are lacking in services for transportation, housing, and treatment. Rural communities experience isolation due to the geographical location, causing increased transportation and social support barriers for residents (Harowski et al., 2006). Isolation and lack of transportation increase the difficulty of accessing entertainment, making alcohol use more appealing.

At the institutional level in Perry County, Mo, advocacy barriers include refusal of treatment, confidentiality concerns, limited resources, lack of public transportation, limited treatment options, lack of mental health services, and homelessness due to lack of affordable housing. In 2018, an estimated 77,207 Missouri residents over 18 years had Alcohol Use Disorder over the previous year, rated highest in the Midwest Region. Perry County residents accounted for 5.84 percent of those residents with Alcohol Use Disorder. However, in five years, only 20.71 - 23.88 per 10,000 residents of Perry County entered Substance Use Treatment for Alcohol Use Disorder (Missouri Department of Mental Health, 2020). This is partly due to limited treatment availability, with only two outpatient modes of substance use treatment in the county. The nearest inpatient treatment center is 30 miles out of the county; coupled with a lack of public transportation; appropriate treatment access is limited for Perry County residents. Due

to the lack of substance use treatment resources, collaboration from community members and organizations is necessary to advocate for increased treatment availability.

Community Level

Community-level barriers include stigma surrounding alcohol use disorder and the cultural norms within the community. As a rural community, Perry County often lacks entertainment and available activities. Yearly, community events are held at local churches, schools, and even fields where an abundance of beer stands are readily available. It is a cultural norm for parents to bring their children to these events to ride rollercoasters while they consume alcoholic beverages. Socialization for residents often involves meeting at local restaurants and bars where alcohol is served, making it an appealing beverage choice. With a lack of mental health services, residents have an increased risk of developing mental health disorders that could lead to self-medication with the legal drug, alcohol. In 2020, 293 residents in Perry County received Mental Health Treatment, even though 15% of the population has reported ill mental health over the previous two weeks (Missouri Department of Mental Health, 2021).

Advocating at the community level would include raising community awareness through education programs, awareness events, and collaborating with local businesses to explore excessive drinking prevention for customers. Advocacy could also involve working with community organizers to explore avenues of decreasing alcohol consumption at community events. Educational programs could also target older youth who believe alcohol to be a regular part of an adult's entertainment and socialization.

Public Policy

Conversation and research are necessary at the public policy level to explore which policies are hindering client growth and development. Prevention includes participating in social action to change the policies contributing to the health concerns due to excessive drinking, such as policies regarding time off for substance use treatment in the workplace (MSJCC, 2015). Many individuals face barriers to treatment, including losing pay, housing, and the stigma surrounding seeking treatment for alcohol use. Policies such as increasing checkpoints during community events and reducing the number of businesses allowed to sell alcohol within the community could further aid in prevention.

Counselors must be competent in advocating for their clients at multiple levels. Competency in advocacy includes using empowerment-based theories to address internalized privilege and oppression, assist with self-advocacy skills for empowerment, and work within the community better to understand its culture (MSJCC, 2015). Competency also includes recognizing when advocacy leaves the individual session and which level to pursue (Harowski et al., 2006). Collaboration is also essential to ensure practical advocacy efforts within the community and utilize all available resources.

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