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Spanish-Speaking Parents in San Benito County Get Informed on Teen Drug Use

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*Abstract*

Language can be a barrier to parents and their access to resources in the community. There is a high consumption of drugs amongst teens, and parents need to be informed. As an intern for Youth Alliance and the collaboration of the San Benito Probation Department a class was held for Spanish-speaking parents in the community. The information was presented in a PowerPoint format. Parents also received a copy of the PowerPoint that they could use for future reference. During this class parents were informed about the most common drugs their teens might be exposed to. This included both street drugs, and home products that are used to obtain a high. This class focused on both the prevention and intervention of teen drug use. Information on signs of drug use, and how to help our teens was also provided. All attendees completed a pre and post survey. Based on this feedback, the conclusion was made that parents would appreciate more of these classes and information to be provided in the community.

*Agency and communities served*

Youth Alliance is a private nonprofit located in Hollister, California. They provide services for the teens & families of San Benito County, which include Gilroy, Hollister, and Morgan Hill (Familia & GrC Brochure, n.d. ). The agency was founded in 1995 by Diane Ortiz and other advocates (Youth Alliance, 2017). Youth Alliance began with hard working volunteers and today, serves 2,135 children, youth, and families yearly (D. Ortiz, personal communication, March 8, 2013). The mission of the agency is to provide services that will benefit and strengthen the youth, and families in their community. Its vision is to help the youth become leaders of the community (Youth Alliance, n.d.). They will be leaders that will economically and socially contribute to the betterment of the community. Youth Alliance welcomes any individual in the community, and will not turn them away. The guiding principles that Youth Alliance operates under are respect for others, devotion, and service. They respect every individual no matter what their background, social class, and immigration status is. Also, they are devoted to the people they serve, by helping them to the best of their ability to provide the services they need. Youth Alliance serves any one that seeks their help. They provide services to children, teens, and adult parents in San Benito County.

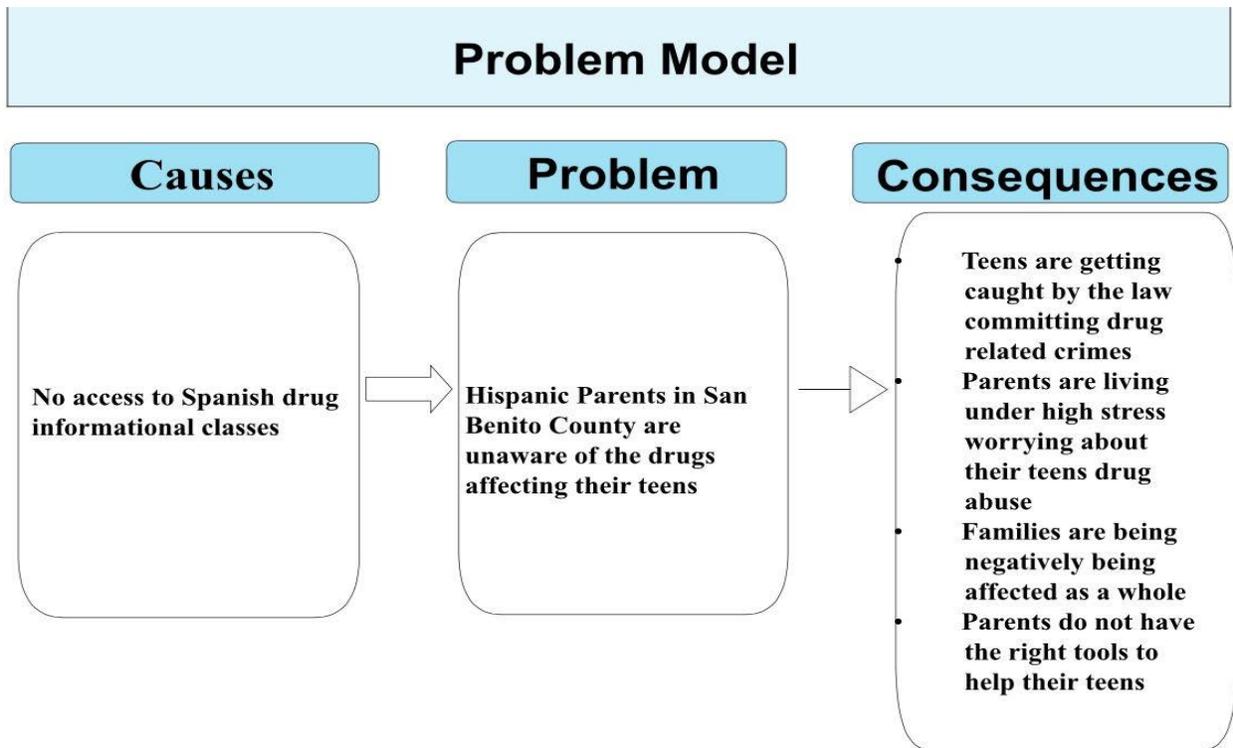
*Problem, issue or need*

Many residents in San Benito County have no access to information about drug use amongst teens because of their language barriers. This holds them back from being familiarized of the different substances that can affect their teens. Without this information parents cannot help their teens, and there's a higher risk that they may get involved in the use of drugs and alcohol. Information on drugs is not easily accessible to Hispanic parents. There are resources out there for "them," but it is in English, and requires translation. Without this information

Hispanic parents have a tough time reaching out to their kids, and speaking about the topic.

There are different consequences to this problem such as an increase in drug use among Hispanic teens, and teens become informed on the topic by outside sources, and not always their parents.

This can lead to teens being misinformed.



*Capstone project description and justification*

*Project Title:* Spanish-Speaking Parents in San Benito County Get Informed on Teen Drug Use

The purpose of this project was to help parents gain knowledge and be better informed on the drug that affect their teens. Many parents in the community are unaware because of the lack of resource available in their own native language. Spanish drug classes are not commonly offered in the County of San Benito, especially in the Hollister. Hollister is the location in which my project was held, and parents see the need of those resources in the community.

*Scope of Work*

This project was intended to be held and completed on my own. It was after Summer 17' that she explained that her own capstone project had failed, and then had to come up with a new capstone idea. I decided to offer my project, and if allowed, we could work on it together. I thought it was a perfect idea for us to collaborate on this project because of our agency placements. As mentioned before, Youth Alliance works with different populations, and one being parents with troubled teens. Nancy, an intern for the San Benito County Probation Department does too. Collaborating would have a higher impact on the community. We discussed our idea with our field instructor, Andrea, and she gave us an okay. We worked on different tasks throughout the project, and tried to collaborate as much as we could to even out the work. Since our capstone was project was a Spanish drug class for parents there were different tasks that needed to be completed. We began by finding a location, and this was done with the help of Dolores, a Youth Alliance staff member. The location was at Rancho Apartment complex in Hollister. We created a flyer that was to be passed out in order to bring people to our class. Both our mentors approved before printing it out. For example, the flyer had to be adjusted a couple times before getting the final one. One adjustment that had to be made was taking off the San Benito Probation logo. We could not use the logo because in order to be able use it we had to go through a process, and needed the probation chief approval. We also, got contact information for the Parent Project parents. This was done with the help of Janette, a Youth Alliance staff member. Gathering the information to be presented, creating a PowerPoint, and gathering materials was an ongoing process until capstone date. An ongoing task was also trying to find guest speakers for our class. The main obstacle would be the difficulty of finding guest speakers to come to our class. It was hard to try to get guest speakers to present at the class. This event was originally a two-day event in which day one a guest speaker from a law enforcement

agency presented on what they saw out on the community. Then, on day two the goal was to have someone from behavioral health speak on how substance abuse affected someone's mental health. Unfortunately, not guest speakers were available, and it had to be condensed to a one-day event. The good thing about that was that my capstone partner and I could focus on teaching the parents on these substances, and research as much as possible to correctly inform the parents that attended.

### *Project Results*

According to the feedback received from parents our expected outcome of informing Spanish-speaking parents of drugs affecting their teens was achieved. At the end of the class parents felt more informed, and even provided ideas to one another on how they can help their teens. It felt like it was a safe place for them to speak up on the struggles they had with their teens regarding drugs. Not only did parents in the community become informed on the drugs their teens are exposed to, but also learned of ways to help prevent their teens from using substances. This outcome was measured by the surveys completed by the attendees. Most parents mentioned that they were there to gain knowledge about substances. In the post survey, most parents mentioned that they gained some new knowledge and would like to see more of the classes in Spanish implemented in the community. Aside from the surveys an activity was done during the class to test the parents on the knowledge presented. The names of all substances presented and a fact about each one was cut into pieces, and parents were to match each substance with its corresponding fact. Parents enjoyed this and activity, and some took pictures as they mentioned they would like to have a picture for future reference.

Originally this project was to be a two-day class session in which guest speakers were to present to the people attending. Day one was to have a law enforcement speaker that would

speak on what they saw out in the community. Day two a guest speaker from behavioral health was to present on the way substances affected someone's mental health. Our biggest challenge was to get guest speakers for our class sessions. My capstone partner, and I are not experts in these topics, so it was difficult for us to speak on them. We decided to make out two-day event, a one-day class. We thought it would be better if we just focused on informing the parents on the substance use amongst teens.

### *Personal reflection*

Based on the feedback provided by residents of San Benito County more information about drug use amongst teens should be provided in Spanish. Language can really be a barrier when residents of the community seek resources in their own native language. It is recommended that agencies in the community such as Youth Alliance, and the San Benito County Probation Department keep offering these substance informational classes for Spanish-speaking residents. According to the surveys completed by the parents that attended the class, they would like to continue seeing something similar in the community, and think other parents would benefit as well. Providing this education to parents can make a difference as they will be able to take action and hopefully help lower the risk of substance abuse among their teens.

This project helped me grow in diverse ways. Not only academically but also personally. It changed my views on a couple topics. Academically, I've always disliked public speaking. It is not my strongest area. Up to my capstone project day I feared getting up there, and talking in front of parents. It was not that bad once I got up there, and I definitely got more public speaking practice under my belt, and especially in Spanish.

Where I felt I grew the most was in the personal aspect. Many times, I questioned myself why parents did not talk to their teens about drugs. Truth is many Hispanic parents are not well informed, and resources are very limited to them. In our PowerPoint we included a before and after picture of a meth user of a life span of just a few years. The picture shocked the parents so much. I will never forget all the facial expressions I saw standing up there. Honestly, it was sad. They couldn't believe it, and it's a sad reality that we face. Drugs affects our teens more and more each day. Many teens will use just about anything to obtain a high. I cannot judge parents for not having a "drug-talk" with their teens. Instead, we must find ways to help them get informed in their own native language. That is where we need to start. Information needs to be made easier accessible to them.

Personally, I feel like two broader health and social problem were addressed by this capstone project. The first one is that this country is a home to many non-English speaking Hispanic parents. Especially in California, that means that there needs to be an increase in resources available to them. This greatly means an increase in Spanish drug information. No easy access to Spanish drug information leads the second issue. If parents have no access to Spanish drug information, then they are not informed and cannot help prevent their teens from drug use. Drug use amongst teens grows every day and affects many families across the country. If a parent can talk to their teen, and have close communication with them it can help prevent drug use.

With this project, I was able to help inform some Hispanic parents about drugs in the community. Even if it weren't that many parents I was still able to inform the ones that attended. I gave them a better sense of what is actually out there, and ways to have a better communication

with their teens. Even if I only helped one parent, I am glad I did. That can make such a difference when looking at the big picture.

Beyond my project, I would really like to see more resources in the community being offered to Hispanic parents in the community. It would be great that Youth Alliance and the San Benito County Probation Department would together to put a drug class for parents in Spanish. I do not feel like it's a very difficult task to do, it just takes someone that is willing to do it. It is a big need in the community, and something needs to be done about it. I feel like this should not be a just one-time thing, but instead these agencies should hold a class 2-3 times a year. Even if it's a support group, in which parents can just go talk about issues that affect them as a parent. I'm more than positive that parents will bring up the drug topic. During my capstone project many parents actually had something to say, and gave advice to one another. It felt like it was a safe place for them to open up, and talk about the drug issue amongst their teens.

My advice for future capstone students is to find something you are passionate about. Find something that drives you, and it's something that makes your heart feel warm. Sounds silly, but if you do it from the bottom of your heart you will better serve the people you are helping. Students starting the Collaborative Health & Human Services major might already have an idea of a capstone idea they want to do once they get to capstone. It is okay to change your idea, sometimes when you least expect you might find something that is really needed in your community. At first, I wanted to do a flyer, I felt like it was easy, and I would not have to face my fear of public speaking. Truth is, I'm sure that the class I held made more of a difference than a flyer for the community that I was serving. My idea clicked in when I was co-facilitating the drug discussion for the Parent Project group. It was what the community I was serving really

needed. My last piece of advice is to enjoy the process, breathe, it all comes together in the end.

It's a path worth taking!

## Appendix

## Scope of Work

| <b>Activities</b>   | <b>Deliverables</b>           | <b>Timeline/Deadline</b>                     |
|---|-------------------------------|--|
| Find event location   | to hold event                 | completed May 31st, 2017                     |
| Create survey questionnaire that parents will complete at the beginning and end of group. Two different surveys.      | survey questionnaire/feedback | ongoing/completed a few weeks before project |
| Create a flyer to pass out as an advertisement, and invite people to my event.  | flyer                         | completed in September                       |
| Get contact information from PP group so that those parents can get information about my group being held in October. | start "invitation list"       | ongoing until project                        |
| Research/Collect information about topic that will be presented.  | curriculum                    | ongoing until project                        |
| Contact guest speakers  | guest speakers                | unsuccessful                                 |
| Create presentation PowerPoint based on curriculum  | PowerPoint                    | ongoing until project                        |
| Activity for parents  | create engagement             | completed a few days before project          |
| sign-in sheet/materials needed  | help event run smoothly       | ongoing until project                        |

## **Parent Activity**

To match each substance with its fact.

**Marihuana:** Es muy común fumada o en “edibles,” comida.

**Metanfetamina:** Después de la euforia inicial, el efecto comienza a disminuir, lo que puede causar que te sientas cansado y triste por varios días. Esto puede causar la necesidad de consumir la droga para sentirse mejor.

**Heroína:** Las personas que usan es droga empiezan a lucir viejas y tienen heridas que no sanan.

**Cocaína:** Generalmente un polvo blanco, o líquido. Común conocida como “caballo.”

**Alcohol:** La sustancia más usada entre jóvenes.

**Analgésicos:** Comúnmente usada para controlar el dolor.

**Jarabe para la Tos:** También conocido de “Purple Drank.”

**Inhalantes:** Sustancias que son “esnifadas”, como la pintura en aerosol.

**Nuez Moscada:** El efecto dura aproximadamente 24 horas.



Flyer

## Te Invitamos a Aprender Sobre las Drogas!

Será una noche en la que aprenderás sobre los diferentes tipos de drogas que afectan a jóvenes en nuestra comunidad. También hablaremos sobre cómo prevenir el uso de las drogas en los jóvenes y cómo ayudarlos.

**Las clase será en español!**

### Donde?

Rancho Park  
1200 Rancho Drive  
Hollister, CA 95023

### Cuando?

Miércoles, 18 de Octubre 2017

### A Que Horas?

5:00-7:00 PM



Presentadoras:

**Alejandra Rocha**

Estudiante- Universidad de Monterey

**Nancy Zermeno**

Estudiante- Universidad de Monterey

Pre-Survey

**Encuesta para Padres- Antes de Clase**

- ¿Ha asistido a un grupo de información sobre drogas en el pasado? **Falso Cierto**
- ¿Es usted un padre de un adolescente? **Falso Cierto**
- ¿Está al tanto de las drogas a las que sus hijos podrían estar expuestos en la comunidad? **Falso Cierto**
- ¿Tiene conversaciones con su hijo acerca de las drogas? **Falso Cierto**
- ¿Ha visto algún comportamiento inusual en su hijo que pueda indicar abuso de sustancias? **Falso Cierto**
- ¿Está o ha tenido su hijo en problemas por razones de abuso de sustancias con la ley o en la escuela? **Falso Cierto**
- ¿Sabe usted que el consumo de alcohol en los adolescentes es peligroso ya que su cerebro sigue desarrollándose? **Falso Cierto**
- ¿Está de acuerdo en que la marihuana "te relaja y no es peligrosa"? **Falso Cierto**
- ¿Qué espera ganar con este grupo?

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Por favor explique su razón para asistir a este grupo...

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Post Survey

**Encuesta para Padres- Después de Clase**

Este evento cumplió con mis expectativas... **Falso Cierto**

Los facilitadores proporcionaron información valiosa... **Falso Cierto**

Me gustaría ver más de estos eventos en la comunidad... **Falso Cierto**

Si se ofrece, ¿asistirías a otro grupo de información sobre drogas? **Falso Cierto**

He aprendido sobre una droga que no tenía ni idea de... **Falso Cierto**

Usaré la información proporcionada para ayudar a mi adolescente a mantenerse alejado de las drogas ... **Falso Cierto**

¿Hay algo que usted cambiaría o agregaría al grupo de hoy? Si es así, por favor explique.

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**Comentarios Adicionales:**

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