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Family Day

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Capstone Project Parent-Family Day

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Abstract

Jóvenes Sanos of United Way Santa Cruz County is a youth-led program that works towards empowering youth voices in raising awareness regarding mental wellness. Communities have seen an increase in mental illness, therefore it is important to continue working on raising awareness within our communities. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness 1 in 6 adolescents in the United States between the ages 12-17 have experienced a major depressive episode. Jóvenes Sanos in conjunction with their affiliate Luna y Sol program conducted a Family Day Event to increase parent engagement, promoting healthy time between families and bringing other community agencies that can be of benefit to them. It was expected that through this event there would be 150 people attending and after the event it was determined that 130 people attended the event. The number of attendees was great and proved that youth and their families can benefit from these types of events. It is recommended that this event continues to happen yearly along with adding program participants' parents to the programs database in order to keep them involved with monthly newsletters and at least twice a year parent orientation meetings to inform parents of newcomers of the work their youth are doing in their community.

Agency & Communities Served

Jóvenes Sanos is a youth program of United Way of Santa Cruz County that serves youth in the Watsonville Community. United Way of Santa Cruz County is a non-profit agency that provides various community services to the underserved within the county since 1941. Furthermore, United Way operates through grants, community partnerships and volunteers. Jóvenes Sanos aims to empower youth in advocacy and leadership as well as promoting health equity for the Watsonville community. Jóvenes Sanos shifted their mission from healthy eating and active living to focus on mental wellness in 2021 in order to support in breaking the stigma

surrounding mental health and promote mental wellness. Moreover, as part of their mission Jóvenes Sanos is making efforts to increase parent engagement to expand community awareness regarding mental health and the importance of mental wellness. As part of their mission, Jóvenes Sanos is making efforts to increase parent engagement to expand community awareness regarding mental health and the importance of mental wellness. Jóvenes Sanos' youth participants are high school students that work on promoting mental wellness within their community. Additionally, Jóvenes Sanos works to create an environment and culture of health and wellness by elevating youth voices to shift the stigma around mental health as well to promote hope, healing, and resiliency through peer-to-peer connections. Furthermore, Jóvenes Sanos supports youth leadership development to engage in community-level change. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) one in six youth in the United States between the ages of 6-17 experiences a mental health disorder each year. Therefore it is important that programs like Jóvenes Sanos continue working with youth in their communities to promote mental health wellness and raise awareness.

Problem Model Background and Literature Review

Problem Statement

Stigma around Mental Health has been present within our communities for many years and as part of community efforts it is essential to continue working on raising awareness and normalizing the importance of practicing and promoting Mental Wellness. During the covid-19 pandemic a rise in mental illness has been observed. Ornell et al. (2020) states that there is a bigger number of people who's mental health is affected rather than the actual infection itself during a pandemic. Furthermore, according to Jorm (2012) surveys conducted in the United States and around the world it has been determined that the rate of mental illness continues to

rise, however people do not seek help/treatment or wait to do so for many years. Lack of mental illness awareness prevents people from seeking Mental Health support as the onset of mental illness is first exhibited during adolescence and early childhood (Jorm). Therefore it is essential that community youth programs continue to work on raising awareness on what is Mental Health and include parents in their programs to ensure that youth are being supported with any struggles they may experience that affect their Mental Health and promote mental wellness.

Figure 1: Problem Model

Contributing Factors	Problem	Consequences
Lack of community awareness	Stigma regarding mental health	Suicides
Unable to access resources		Untreated mental illness
Covid-19 pandemic		Increased crime rates

Contributing Factors

Lack of community awareness

Community awareness has been an ongoing factor that contributes to people not getting the support they need for mental health needs or exercise mental wellness. Jorm (2012) states that the lack of awareness in youth and young adults contributes to recognizing mental illness and seeking help. Furthermore, he states that having youth's parents being aware in recognizing mental health needs/symptoms is extremely helpful in seeking mental health support sooner rather than later. Moreover, NAMI states that a factor that contributes to the stigma surrounding mental health and those in need of support is the stigma people feel by being "labeled" once they

have been diagnosed with a mental illness. Therefore, it is important to continue working on teaching communities the importance of recognizing and practicing mental wellness.

Unable to access mental health resources

Another factor that contributes towards the stigma surrounding mental health is the inability to access community resources by those experiencing mental illness. There are many reasons why people do not seek mental health support and according to Lindsey et al. (2012) people have their own personal views of what mental illness may look like and therefore not recognize or seek support. Lindsey et al. (2012) writes that family history or religious views contribute towards inability to access mental health resources. Economic cost is another reason for people not to access mental health support within their communities. Therefore it is important for communities to continue raising awareness and provide guidance for access to affordable mental health resources. Ornell (2020) states that the cost associated with mental health illness is high and it also contributes towards people not seeking support and he emphasizes the importance of teaching and providing coping strategies that can help individuals manage some of their mental health needs as well as practice mental wellness.

Covid-19 pandemic

The covid-19 pandemic is another factor that contributes towards an increase in mental illness and the stigma that surrounds it. According to NAMI during the covid-19 pandemic youth and young adults experienced a significant challenge in their mental health due to isolation from peers, having to adapt to virtual learning, having changes in sleeping habits and other routines. Furthermore, NAMI reports that one in five youth reported that the covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on their mental health and in the United States 31% of adolescents between the ages 12-17 had an increase in mental health related emergency department visits. Moreover

Ornell et al. (2020) reports that according to a “study patients infected with covid-19 can experience intense emotional or behavioral reactions such as fear, boredom, loneliness, anxiety, insomnia or anger”. Ornell et al. (2020) further explains that these can lead to developing mental health disorders like depression, post traumatic stress disorder, psychosis, paranoia, and anxiety which can lead to suicide. Therefore, it is crucial that communities continue working together in order to support their youth with their transition back to schools and into their communities as the world moves towards their endemic stage.

Consequences

Suicides

According to Mental Health America (MHA) access to mental health services remains a challenge despite increased efforts to raise awareness. Furthermore, MHA states that minorities continue to be greatly impacted and that those in black and hispanic communities affected by major depressive states are seeking less help than whites. Moreover 50.3 percent of white youth received mental health care for major depressive states in the last year in comparison to 35.6 percent of black and 36.8 percent of hispanic youth. According to NAMI suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death in the United States among individuals ages 10-14 and the 3rd leading cause in individuals ages 15-24. Furthermore, Parent Engagement HIT states that although there are millions of patients with mental illness receiving mental health services there are many that are suffering from a mental illness who do not receive treatment due to stigma and negative perceptions associated with mental illness. The exact number of individuals not receiving mental health services/treatment is difficult to determine as many individuals fly under the radar and are underreported, therefore it is extremely important to work towards breaking the stigma in order to encourage individuals to seek mental health treatment.

Untreated Mental Illness

Jorm (2012) writes that there are several factors involved with people delaying or failing to receive mental health services, however a very important one is that a person may not know or recognize that they have a mental health disorder. Untreated Mental Illness affects many in various ways, according to NAMI people with depression are at a higher risk of developing a cardiovascular disease. Additionally, those suffering with mental illness if not receiving treatment are at a higher risk of abusing alcohol and other substances. NAMI states that 32.1 percent of adults in the United States suffering with mental illness also experienced substance abuse disorder in 2020. Furthermore, youth suffering from mental illness not receiving treatment are at a higher risk of dropping out of school than those who receive treatment. Moreover, individuals with mental illness who do not receive treatment are at a higher rate of suicide. In addition, treatment of mental illness is a big contributor in homelessness. These are only some of the ways that untreated mental illness affects those suffering from mental illness, however there are many other ways in which they are affected and not only them but others in their immediate circle of support and as well as communities as a whole.

Increased crime rate

Mental Illness is a big contributor towards increased violence and more and more communities are seeing the effects it has on those who do not seek mental health treatment. According to NAMI 2 in 5 people who are incarcerated suffer from a mental illness and suicide is the leading cause amongst those in local jails. Moreover, NAMI states that 70 percent of youth in the justice system have a diagnosable mental illness. Ghiasi et al. (2023) writes that “Certain psychiatric conditions do increase a person’s risk of committing a crime. Research suggests that patients with mental illness may be more prone to violence if they do not receive

adequate treatment,[8] are actively experiencing delusions, or have long-standing paranoia”.

Therefore, if stigma surrounding mental illness continues the more likely it is that individuals suffering from mental illness will be less likely to seek treatment.

Project Description and Implementation Process

Project Proposal

For the proposed capstone project the program’s coordinator intern worked with the Jóvenes Sanos program in partnership with Luna y Sol in creating a family day event to promote parent engagement and involvement in the work that their youth are doing within the program and how it impacts the Watsonville Community. In addition to informing and engaging parents, the family day event will allow parents to familiarize themselves with mental wellness and how they can support their child. This project enhances the program as it currently does not have any parent engagement tools or activities to involve the program’s participants' parents in the work their child is doing in the program and how it impacts their community. Additionally, this project will be the starting point for other future interns and program coordinators to review and enhance accordingly as the program continues its community service work and goal of youth empowerment and breaking the stigma surrounding mental illness and promoting mental wellness.

Project Justification & Benefits

The purpose of the project as previously mentioned will contribute in supporting the program’s goal to raise awareness around mental health and promote mental wellness. The Family Day event will create a bridge between the program participants and their parents to get them involved in their work with the program as well as to model to their parents how important mental wellness is. Additionally, the Family Day Event will provide parents with mental health

awareness, provide access to other community programs and resources as well as to promote mental wellness. In addition, it will allow the parents to contribute to their community by raising mental health awareness with those they know in their community as they will be more informed in this topic; especially when it comes to monolingual or primary Spanish speakers as the Watsonville community has a huge primarily Spanish speaking population. Oftentimes there is a lack of awareness of how important mental health is within communities. Moreover, the parent Family Day Event will allow Jóvenes Sanos to continue working towards their mission of bringing more community awareness regarding mental health and how important mental wellness is for their community as a whole. In addition, this project will allow the program participants to engage their parents in their work and improve their parent son/daughter relationship. Furthermore, the parent Family Day Event will serve as a baseline for the program coordinator as well as future interns of this program to continue promoting mental wellness and parent engagement. Lastly, it will also allow those working in the Jóvenes Sanos program to develop and enhance strategies to ensure parent involvement.

Implementation Process

As part of the planning process to ensure implementation and completion of the Family Day event several meetings were conducted with the program's mentor and leadership group to discuss the event planning process and share ideas. A flier was developed by another program intern and an RSVP form was created by the program coordinator intern to get an idea of how many people would be attending the event. As the search for a location to host the event was made a connection with another community program Luna y Sol was developed and through this a partnership agreement was made to hold the Family Day event in conjunction. This allowed Jóvenes Sanos to have the event at the Luna y Sol program's location and also secure funding to

be able to hold the event with them for the next two years. Once the partnership was developed several planning meetings were held to discuss the event details, delegate tasks as well as purchasing and gathering event materials needed. After running into trouble with catering logistics Luna y Sal was able to secure the cater. The program inter focused on developing a donation letter and reached out to various organizations in Santa Cruz County to inquire about sponsorship in-kind donations for the event. After doing so various organizations reached back and agreed to contribute with gift cards, gift certificates, and other in-kind donations.

Furthermore, a sign-in sheet was created to gather a better understanding of how many people actually attended the event. Lastly, the set up for the event was done and the event was held.

During the event Jóvenes Sanos youth lead various interactive activities for program attendees, supported with tabling and information families about the program and the impact it has in the community and lastly youth lead a raffle at the end of the event.

Expected Outcomes & Assessment Plan

Jóvenes Sanos has been focused on working with youth in the Watsonville Community in promoting mental wellness awareness and elevating youth voices within the community.

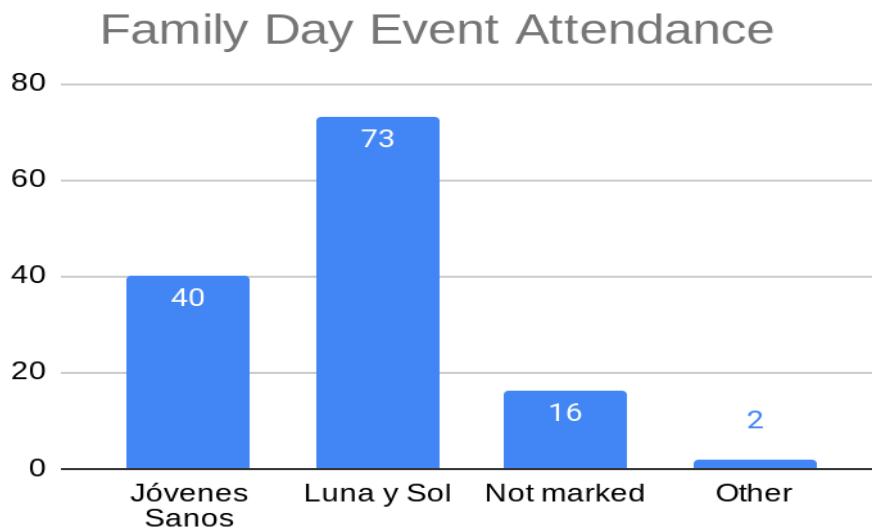
Therefore as Jóvenes Sanos continues to work in increasing mental health awareness within their community and it is shifting to increase parent engagement. As a way of promoting this shift

Jóvenes Sanos put together a Family Day event in partnership with Luna y Sol, another community program. During this event tables were set up to display program information and other community programs were invited to promote their programs in order to increase community support to families and their needs. In addition, food was provided and a DJ was invited to play during the event. Additionally, various engaging activities to promote parent engagement were executed. Between Jóvenes Sanos and Luna y Sol it was expected to have

about 150 people attend the event and as a way to measure how many participants and their families would be attending the event a sign-in sheet was created. Through this RSVP form that was distributed prior to the event it was anticipated that 73 people from Jóvenes Sanos would be attending the event.

Project Results

After analyzing data of the attendance records used for the event it was determined that 40 people from Jóvenes Sanos attended the event, which was at more than half of the total amount that was anticipated to attend. Luna y Sol had a great number of people who attended the event totaling 73 people. However, 16 people who attended did not check off a box of which program they were attending and two people who attended from the City of Watsonville were invited by both programs. Overall, the event was a success with a total of 130 people who attended which was 80 percent of the 150 people both programs expected to have. The table below shows the results of the data collected:



Conclusion & Recommendations

In conclusion the event was a success with great attendance of program participants and their families. As Jóvenes Sanos continues to work on shifting the stigma surrounding Mental Health and promoting mental wellness it is recommended that they continue with their family day events in their efforts to increase parent engagement. Additionally, conducting quarterly parent orientation meetings to inform program participants' families of the work their youth is doing within the program in addition to informing new program participants' parents of the programs goals and purpose. In addition, gathering parent information in order to share the programs monthly newsletter to keep them informed regarding the work the program and their youth are doing within their community will be a great way to continue working towards their parent involvement efforts and most importantly destigmatizing mental health and promoting mental wellness.

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Appendix A

Project Implementation Plan

Task	Timeline	Parties Involved	Materials/ Services Needed	Completed Product
Meeting with Mentor to discuss family day event planning	February 3, 2023	Mentor, intern	Zoomlink	Gathered an idea of how the event will look like
Meeting with mentor to discuss family day planning progress	Feb 6, 2023	Mentor, intern	Zoomlink	Discussed progress regarding family event day planning
Leadership meeting	February 20, 2023	Mentor, program coordinator, program interns, program participants	In person	Developed agenda for family day event
Develop RSVP Form	February 24, 2023	intern	N/A	RSVP form created
Reserve family day event location	March 3, 2023	intern	Fill Out application to reserve location	Event location reserved
Arrange family day event catering	March 3, 2023	intern	N/A	Event Catering scheduled
Research interactive engagement activities for event	March 3, 2023	intern	Computer	Create list of engagement activities for event
Create event sign in sheet	March 20, 2023	intern	Computer	Sign in sheet created

Event set-up	March 31, 2023	Mentor, program coordinator, and leadership group, intern	Table cloths, tables and chairs, decorations set up, program's information, engagement activities materials	Family Day Event
Ensure sign in sheet completed	March 31, 2023	Intern Coordinator	Sign in sheet Form	Completed sign in sheet
Implement event agenda	March 31, 2023	Mentor, coordinator, interns, assigned group participants	Execute event agenda	Family Day event, agenda executed
Family Day Event	March 31, 2023	Mentor, program participants, parents and other community members, intern	N/A	Family Day Event
Family Day Event clean up	March 31, 2023	Mentor, program coordinator, interns	N/A	Clean facility
Review sign in sheet	April 17, 2023	Intern	Sign in sheet	Gather data of how many people attended the event
Review Event Outcome with JS	April 17, 2023	Interns, program coordinator, mentor	N/A	Event overview
Complete Parent Engagement Google folder	April 30, 2023	Intern	Computer	Completed Parent Engagement Folder