POLICY, POLITICS AND GLOBAL TRENDS

Anitha Madhu

Western Governors University

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National Health Policies play an essential part in defining a country's vision, strategies and policy directions for ensuring the health of its population. According to World Health Organization (WHO), national health policies and plans can respond the growing calls for health system strengthening and renewal of primary health care, emphasis on public health and health in all policies. Policies guide the entire health system and address the social determinants of health and the interaction between the health sectors and other sectors in society (WHO,2018). Many public health policies exist for the school health system, but a revision of these policies required in the current situations of our country in evaluating and diagnosing the depression in high school students. Depression in high school students is a significant issue in the public health system now, and this issue to be raised in how to diagnose them in a timely manner by doing an evaluation on students by the student counselors or the school nurse with an intervention of attaching a curriculum of Adolescent Depression Awareness Program(ADAP) in all independent school district in state level and national level (Swartz et al., 2017). This paper is a discussion of this issue with the purpose of initiating and supporting a top-down approach to policy, creating a plan from a bottom-up approach in promoting a policy change within a community utilizing the principles of Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR).

A1 Public Policy Issue

According to the National Institute of Health (NIH), depression in adolescence is a significant public health problem. As per NIH, twenty percent of the United States (US) population experiences significant depression by the age of eighteen and almost 65% reports depressive symptoms (NIH,2015). Many researchers are showing that there is a rise in the percentage of depression in high school students, but there was no evidence of a proper intervention in preventing these rise. Depression is a common disorder in teenagers in the United States high school student population, and which is associated with significant morbidity and mortality. Early identification and treatments are very vital in the prevention of self-harm and harming others in the community. Evaluation and education on depression is a potential intervention in an effort to advance knowledge about depression and help-seeking behavior (Ruble, Leon, Gilley-Hensley, Hess, & Swartz, 2013).

A1a Issue Selection

"We need to do more than just pray for the victims and their families,” "It's time in Texas that we take action to step up and make sure this tragedy is never repeated ever again in the history of the state of Texas," said by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott during the wake of deadly school shooting in Santa Fe, Texas on May 19th 2018. This incident was a massive shooting by a teenager who allegedly used a shotgun and a revolver to kill eight students and two teachers and injured ten others in Santa Fe, Highschool in South East Texas (Abbott,2018). According to the shooter’s classmate, he was quiet, a loner and had been bullied by classmates and even from the coach. Moreover, the shooter wrote in his journal that, he wants to commit suicide after the shooting. Even though the shooter was not identified with depression, clues are pointing towards the possibility of depression symptoms in this teenager. This shows that lack of identification of depression or lack of knowledge in seeking help for the symptoms of depression. In 2018 we have already been 23 school shootings where someone was hurt or killed, and 11 of these incidents happened in high school of the US. In 2004, the safe school initiative was formed by secret service and the department of education, followed by a massive attack in Columbine high school in 1999. The safe school’s initial reports also suggested that 71% of the attackers were victims of bullying. In regards to bullying, 87% of school shooting perpetrators left behind evidence that they were victims of severe bullying (Safe School Initiative,2004). It is a fact that teens are going through a high range of stress in high school such as peer pressure, social media pressure, the class works, influence and availability of drugs, alcohol and smoking, role confusion , and sleep deprivation . With the background history, it is proven that high school students need help in early identification of depression and appropriate intervention before it gets into a public health disaster.

A1b Issue Relevance

According to Ruble, Leon, Gilley-Hensley, Hess, & Swartz (2013), depression in high school students constitute a significant public health problem. Major depression is a common disorder in teenagers and is associated with significant morbidity and mortality in the United States high school student’s population. Early identification and treatment are very crucial in the prevention of self-harm and harming others in the community. Depression evaluation and education is a potential intervention in an attempt to improve knowledge about depression and help-seeking behavior (Ruble, Leon, Gilley-Hensley, Hess, & Swartz, 2013). A study by Ruble, Leon, Gilley-Hensley, Hess, & Swartz (2013) concluded as a school-based educational intervention improved knowledge about depression and attitude toward help-seeking in adolescents.

There was a randomized trial study conducted in 2012-2015 in different states in the United States by a group of researchers, to determine the effectiveness of a universal school-based depression education program. According to the researchers in 2015, three million adolescents experiencing major depression and only 39% received treatment for depression (Swartz et al., 2017). The intervention was Adolescent Depression Awareness Program (ADAP) in high school students and follow up was done after four months with the primary outcome was depression literacy with the secondary outcomes of mental health stigma and the receipt of mental health services. The ADAP is a universal school-based education program developed in 1999 to increase depression literacy in youth and is intended to be embedded in the slandered high school health education curriculum. The conclusion of that research was, ADAP is an effective public health intervention for improving depression literacy among students to reduce the high school violence.

A1c Financial Impact

Public school funding in the United States comes from federal, state, and local sources. The states provide most of the funding that keeps public elementary through high school schools running in the U.S. For evaluating and diagnosing the depression in high-school students; the school system may need to higher more nurses and counselors. The coast should be included in the financial budget of each school district. For the intervention of adding ADAP into the curriculum and hiring teachers for teaching the program also have a coast. Schools should hire adequately trained professionals, social workers, psychologists depending on the number of students. Fortunately, ADA has collaborated with the David Raymond Price Foundation to expand depression education to the schools and communities in Texas. ADAP has organized and conducted yearly training for interested school-based and health professionals who work in the Independent Schools in the different area of the nation (Johns Hopkins Medicine, n.d). The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), supports the mental health in schools Act which provides federal funding for training school staff on mental health-related issues (National Alliance on Mental Illness, n.d). The cost for mental health treatment must be included in all insurance, and all medications for the treatment must have low out of pocket costs.

A2 Personal Values

I am a mother of a high school student, and I understand how much stress and depression my kid and her friends are going through. More than that, Santa-Fe shooting was just near to my community, and I felt the pain from the community. Every day we are hearing about kids are suiciding and about the school shooting in different states. Being a mother, I always take those pain to my heart and bothers me for a long time. I feel that all high school students have proper mental health and are very crucial in children’s accomplishment, their goals and for a better future. As we all know, high school students are burned with high stress due to their academical

Issues, peer pressure, trying to fight against drugs and alcohol. Cultural shock is also another factor for depression in high school. Adolescents should be able to cope with their life changes and to identify their problem in advance by the awareness program and should seek treatment early before they get into a major depression. High school students are spending more time with their teachers and friends than with their parents, and therefore, teachers and counselors will be able to identify the behavioral changes and to notify the parents to continue to observe. Thereby, I personally believe that the schools, educators, parents, families, and policymakers must stress the importance of early evaluation and diagnosis of depression in high-school and the implementation of ADAP program in every school district in the US.

A2a Ethical Principle or theory

The Principle of Beneficence is supporting the perspective of early evaluation and diagnosis of depression in high-school and the implementation of the ADAP program in every school district in the US. Beneficence is compassionate and taking affirmative action to help others in an insight of good desire and public health advocacy. This ethical principle supports the moral rules and obligations protecting and defending the right of other, prevent the occurrences of harm to others, to remove the condition which causes the harm, to help the person with disabilities, and to rescue the person from danger situation (John, 2011).

Another ethical principle which supports the public issue is utilitarianism, due to the value of the act is determined by its usefulness and the positive outcome. This principle supports the act of early evaluation and diagnosis of depression in high-school and the implementation of the ADAP program in every school district in the US, because of this policy creates the most happiness for the most of the people in the US (COS, n.d) by making a non-violent community and a promising healthy and strong youngster for the future.

B1 Decision Maker

I will meet with Gregory Wayne Abbott, the 4 8th Governor of Texas and he will receive the suggested policy brief as the decision maker for early evaluation and diagnosis of depression in high-school and the implementation of ADAP program in every school district in the US. Mr. Gregory is an American lawyer and a politician who have passion in making many interventions to prevent school violence. The Governor has various recommendations and proposals for increasing law enforcement presence at schools, providing mental health evaluations that identify students at risk of harming others, strengthening existing campus security programs, and enhancing firearm safety. Tx Governor have a strong understanding in the prevention of the school violence, and he thinks that his plan will make our schools safer and our communities safer (The state of Texas Governor,2018)

B1a Explanation

With the uncontrolled increase in a number of high-school violence in all over the nation and the parent’s loss and the community loss, need the attention of decision-makers to this public issue.

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