

Title : Addressing the Exposure And Awareness of Trauma in Urban Communities
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Healthy People 2020: Educational Advancement/Literacy; Injury and Violence Prevention; Mental Health; Oral Health; Substance Abuse; Tobacco Use

“Rebuilding Our Communities and Our Lives”

YouthBuild, USA

Incorporated in 1990, YouthBuild’s mission is “to unleash the intelligence and positive energy of low-income youth to rebuild their communities and their lives.” The program is an education-focused, youth and community development agency, providing opportunities for achievement for young adults (ages 16-24) who may be academically under-skilled, underemployed, and/or have been in the criminal justice system. Here, students can work toward their GED’s while learning job skills, and participating in leadership development activities in their communities.

Exposure to Violence as a Source of Trauma

Schwab-Stone et al. (1999).

According to Schwab-Stone et al, 1999, **victimization** and **witnessing violence** can lead to both **externalizing behaviors** as well as **internalized symptoms**.

Externalized behaviors might include:

- *Antisocial behaviors*
- *Willingness to Use Aggression*

Internalized symptoms might include:

- *Anxiety*
- *Depression and somatization*

Many adolescents experience multiple factors that affect them adversely. Issues such as poverty, low socioeconomic status, as well as exposure to community violence can hinder youth from truly obtaining their goals. This causes problems academically, as well as mentally and socially. Often times, since exposure to community violence is repeated and so prevent, it becomes the norm for adolescents. Therefore, the interns were asked to come up with a guide/curriculum on Traumatic events to make youth aware of the adverse effects of traumatic events as well as provide help on how to cope.

Methodology

In order to truly assess the issue of exposure to community violence and traumatic events, a literature search was performed to discover the current information available on such topics. We initially researched Post-traumatic Stress disorder, Adverse childhood events, and Toxic Stress. After interacting with the students and getting to know their history, we pulled information from different organizations such as the National Child Traumatic Stress Research Network, a contributor to the field of traumatic events and Toxic stress, as well as Child Trauma Academy. We then used these sources and many others to compile the information into one booklet, creating a guide. The guide contains scientific information on how traumatic events can have a negative psychological and physical effect, as well as includes scenarios with questions to engage the reader and test her understanding.

Future Outcomes

- We hope that the guide will be used by facilitators and students
- We want students to become more aware of social factors that can have adverse affects on their health and well being
- Adolescents can learn that they are indeed affected by these factors, and then can take steps to get help by learning to communicate their feelings better.



Community Outreach

Tutoring Services:

- We were able to assist the teachers and students of YouthBuild by acting as tutors for students requiring additional assistance
- We quickly found that the subject most students experienced difficulties with was Math. Contents included: Algebra and Trigonometry

Community Services

- We were able to participate in a community “Build” with the program
- Sponsored by KaBOOM, organizations including Morgan Stanley and YouthBuild, worked together with community member to build a playground for the preschool students of Babyland, in Newark, NJ.

Development of a Guide on Trauma:

- Addresses the issue of trauma and its effects on young adults in urban communities.
- Provides methods to identify traumatic events and its effects
- Assists adults/teachers/faculty/staff members with aiding students who are victims of trauma

