Using Theoretical Frameworks to Evaluate a Coordinated School Health Program

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Abstract

Background: The Coordinated School Health Program (CSHP) supports school wellness coordinators in implementing school wellness programming. In Pima County, 53.3% of low-income children are overweight or obese (CDC, 2013). Providing effective support services (e.g., technical assistance [TA]) via the CSHP is essential for student health and wellness.

Objectives:
• Form a partnership between Pima County Health Department (PCHD) and graduate students in The University of Arizona’s College of Public Health HPS 532A focused on the CSHP.
• Conduct an evidence-based community assessment evaluating CSHP resource availability, accessibility, and utilization in one low-income school district.
• Develop an evidence-based program plan for CSHP support service improvement, and an evaluation plan to measure success.

Methodological Framework

Guided by the Getting To Outcomes® framework (Wandersman et al., 2000):
1. Conduct needs/resources assessment: windshield survey, quantitative and qualitative wellness coordinator interviews (Figure 1)
2. Establish goals/desired outcomes (Figure 2)
3. Consider best/promising practices: Evidence-Based System for Innovative Support (Figure 3)
4. Assess fit: CSHP focus group
5. Address capacity issues: PCHD CSHP focus group
6. Develop a plan: CSHP TA Enhancement Project (Figure 4)

Next steps:
7. Implement plan & conduct process evaluation
8. Conduct outcome evaluation
9. Engage in continuous quality improvement
10. Address sustainability issues

Theoretical Framework

Figure 3. Evidence-Based System for Innovative Support, adapted from Wandersman et al., 2012.

Conclusions

• The Getting To Outcomes® framework is useful for supporting a systematic, comprehensive approach to guide assessment, improvement, and evaluation of a CSHP.
• The Evidence-Based System for Innovative Support provides an evidence-based framework for enhancing TA in a CSHP.
• Using theoretical frameworks shows promise in supporting evidence-based improvements for the CSHP in Pima County.

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