Improving Health Outcomes for Sexual Minorities Through Access

Alicia Arias
*Fort Hays State University, adarias@fhsu.edu*

Mary Jo Gubitoso
*Fort Hays State University, mjgubitoso@fhsu.edu*

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Improving Health Outcomes for Sexual Minorities Through Access

Alicia Arias MSN, RN
Department of Nursing – Fort Hays State University

INTRODUCTION/ABSTRACT

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) individuals face obstacles in accessing healthcare services due to previous experiences both within and outside of healthcare (Hafeez, Zeshan, Tahir, Jahan, & Naveed, 2017; Macapagal, Bhatia, & Green, 2016). Healthy People 2020 (2018) identified LGBTQ people as a vulnerable population susceptible to poor health outcomes. Support of the LGBTQ community is imperative. Low healthcare literacy can be one contributing factor to unwillingness to access services (Alencar-Albuquerque et al., 2016). The purpose of this project was to translate research into action, and address lack of support of LGBTQ individuals in regards to healthcare access. Support topics were identified via a health equity survey and were discussed during campus Gender and Sexuality Alliance meetings to improve support resources for LGBTQ students on a Midwestern University campus. Ultimately, the goal is that by removing barriers to care for members of the LGBTQ community, health outcomes will be improved.

Keywords: LGBTQ, healthcare, access to care, health disparities

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES

To reduce health disparities at a university through increased access to care by increasing health literacy and support of students who identify as members of the LGBTQ community. Three goals were identified for the project:

Goal #1: Identify perceived disparities and resources in the community.

Goal #2: Decrease the healthcare access obstacles identified via survey responses.

Goal #3: Maintain student attendance in the GSA group sessions.

METHODS/INSTRUMENTS

Setting-Fort Hays State University
Sample-Members of the LGBTQ community at Fort Hays State University.

Design-Quasi-experimental, longitudinal study was conducted. Four topics identified on the initial survey were discussed in collaboration with regularly scheduled FHSU Gender and Sexuality Alliance meetings. These topics were; healthcare resources on campus, resources beyond campus, resources for individuals who identify as transgender and a guest speaker with a personal account of the process of transitioning. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected.

RESULTS

Experience in the community in healthcare

Majority of LGBTQ students surveyed had not disclosed sexuality or gender identity to healthcare providers

Current health status and needs

36% stated that there were at least 15 of the last 90 days that mental health was not good.

20% stated that there were at least 15 of the last 90 days that their physical health was not good.

Healthcare access obstacles

The majority of participants identified embarrassment, uncertainty of being welcomed in clinics and anxiety as obstacles to healthcare.

After the topics of obstacles in healthcare were discussed during GSA meetings the re-evaluation survey showed that participants were grateful for the information discussed and felt more confident and informed when it came to accessing healthcare.

DISCUSSION

Organizational Implications as a Result of Project

- Identified resources for healthcare on campus and in community

- Increased healthcare literacy and advocacy for one’s own health

- Facilitated conversations between students and LGBTQ members of the community

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

Implications for organization. The implications for the organization of the project aimed to improve health, education and long-term success of the LGBTQ community on campus. Improving the health of students who are members of the LGBTQ community was completed by first identifying barriers experienced. Meetings were held with the clinic administrator, inclusion and diversity, and students to work towards improving health of students. Data will be used to work towards implementing positive changes throughout the community.

REFERENCES


