



Providing Community Readiness Evaluation and Prevention with Appropriate Case Documentation

Hour Requirements 25

Community Readiness Evaluation and Prevention Description

Because of clinical training, a BHA may have a different perspective about a community issue or need than other community members. Planning and implementing a prevention strategy without assessing the readiness of the community for change may result in low participation, poor response to the program, or simply a lack of understanding of the need for change. The BHA can use their training and their position to empower community members to address the issue.

Conducting a community readiness assessment is a key step in determining the best way to respond to an identified need or issue in the community. Behavioral health services are more likely to result in effective and sustainable change when they are tailored to the specific readiness level of the community. When a need or problem is identified, the BHA should gather input from people who are influenced by or can influence the issue. Some examples include leaders, youth, healthcare providers, elders, and educators. This input helps the BHA determine how ready the community is to address it.

The results of a community readiness assessment can be used to develop an effective prevention or intervention plan, which lays out individualized community strategies built around the needs and readiness of the community.

Development of Prevention Plans

Prevention activities generally occur before treatment activities on the spectrum of care. However, they may be provided to any individual, regardless of their status in treatment. Prevention activities are based on the risk factors and protective factors already present in the community. Activities are designed to reduce the risk for harmful and dangerous behavior and to help build protective factors. For example, a prevention effort may focus on adolescents who have begun experimenting with alcohol or another illicit substance but have not yet reached a level of use that is considered a disorder.

Prevention planning is a highly valuable activity: it can support overall health and wellbeing, save money that would be spent on costly treatment or crisis response, and decrease physical and mental health disparities among marginalized populations.

Examples of Community Readiness Assessment Activities and Associated Prevention Strategies

- Discussing and planning for effective prevention events at meetings with prevention program staff or other community service providers.
- Attending tribal council or village council meetings to discuss local needs and potential responses.
- Complete community readiness assessment activities:
 - Use community readiness surveys to assess awareness of a problem or need
 - Distribute and collect surveys
 - Evaluate survey data
 - Interviewing community members about their perception of problems and potential responses.
 - Determine what prevention strategies are recommended for the level of readiness for your community on the identified issue.
 - Distribute evaluations to determine the effectiveness of the prevention strategy.
- Coordinating visits with a prevention specialist to assess community readiness and/or plan prevention events.
- Preparing and planning appropriate activities for prevention events (e.g., Respect March, Health Fair) on topics such as:
 - Healthy food choices.



- Physical activity.
- Smoking or vaping.
- Sexual health.
- Healthy media and technology use.
- Healthy relationships.
- Parenting.
- Preventable chronic diseases.
- SMART goals.
- Domestic violence prevention.
- “Culture Heals.”
- Strengthening Families.
- Planning and preparing for education sessions with groups and/or individuals to raise awareness of mental health or substance abuse problems.
- Leading advocacy activities or workgroups that plan and implement prevention and education activities.
- Working with community leaders to ensure a coordinated prevention response for at-risk individuals, families, or groups.
- Consulting with supervisor regarding planned activities.

Evidence-Based Practices and Resources

- SAMHSA: Stages of Community Readiness
<https://www.samhsa.gov/capt/tools-learning-resources/stages-community-readiness>
- Assessing Community Needs and Readiness
<http://www.evaluatod.org/assets/resources/evaluation-materials/atod-ii/communityneedsassessment-toolkit-10-14.pdf>
- The Organizational Change Readiness Assessment
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/109019/chapters/The-Organizational-Change-Readiness-Assessment.aspx>
- SAMHSA: Prevention and Behavioral Health
<https://www.samhsa.gov/capt/practicing-effective-prevention/prevention-behavioral-health>
- Coalition for Behavioral Health: The Power of Prevention
<https://www.coalitionforbehavioralhealth.org/>
- Effectiveness of Day Treatment Programs
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2863320/>
- Strengthening Families Alaska
<http://dhss.alaska.gov/ocs/Pages/families/default.aspx>