



The Back to School Bash: An Example of Health Promotion and Community Investment

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Introduction

- The Back to School Bash is a community event sponsored by the Matthew Walker Comprehensive Health Center to provide school supplies to the center's underserved clients at a fun, family oriented event. The scholar was asked to be on the planning committee for this event. A decision was made during a planning committee meeting that clients would be required to attend educational classes to promote healthy behaviors, self-efficacy and personal responsibility. Health promotion became the cornerstone of the event. Community involvement was then solicited and many people from the surrounding community supported the event by providing healthcare literature on relevant topics, school supply donations and volunteerism. All activities and classes focused on health promotion.



Background

- Pender's Health Promotion Model states that many factors influence health behaviors and the environment can be manipulated to affect positive health-behavior change. When positive emotions are associated with certain behaviors, there is increased probability that the desired behavior will be increased. Peers, families and healthcare providers become sources of influence and support for desired, positive health behavior change. Situational influences from the external environment can play a role in a client's commitment to or participation in health-promoting behaviors (Pender, 2011).
- Bandura states that self-efficacy is a central belief that one's self can produce behavior change by completing a task or activity that leads to increased knowledge and competency. When the expectation of situation or behavior mastery occurs, positive changes in behaviors are produced (Bandura, 1986).



Methodology

- A planning committee was established to implement the Back to School Bash event. Each member had certain tasks they were responsible to complete. Bi-weekly meetings continued for planning and implementation of the event. As the date drew nearer, weekly meetings occurred either in person at MWCHC or via conference call. Meetings were held between June 3 and July 20, 2013.
- The passport and survey tool were developed to assess the health screening rates of MWCHC clients.
- Educational sessions were scheduled and written on a variety of topics pertinent to health promotion, relevant to the center's primary population.
- Donations were solicited from the surrounding community for vendor participation, supplies and volunteers for the event.
- A backpack stuffing party was held on July 16, 2013. Many volunteers and planning committee members stuffed 300 school backpacks with donated supplies, 200 literature bags from a large healthcare group and 50 maternity bags filled with supplies from the March of Dimes. Supplies were both educational materials and take home items.
- The Back to School Bash was held on July 20, 2013 from 9 am - 1 pm at the Matthew Walker Comprehensive Health Center.



Results

- Over 200 people attended the event. An increase of over 50 % from previous year.
- Over 200 backpacks with school supplies were provided to needy families. An increase of over 50 % from last year.
- It was noted that over 73 % of Matthew Walkers clients who participated in the survey at the event have been counseled on the importance of health screening tests.
- Much of the data is still being entered and processed.



Discussion

- The BTSB was a great success:
 - Increase of over 50 % in the number of attendees
 - 50 % increase in the number of backpacks provided to needy families.
- One limitation was the data collection method.
 - This will be evaluated for improvement for next year.
- This event can stand as a model for future community events that provide health promotion activities, family fun, educational opportunities and community investment.
- This will improve patient self-efficacy and personal responsibility for health promotion in their daily lives.

Recommendations

- Begin planning committee meetings earlier in the year
 - April instead of June.
- Increase community outreach to surrounding businesses and churches by asking for their participation in the event.
- Look for other ways to inform the public of the health center, it's goals, and services provided.
- Make advertising a priority.
 - Handout flyers to all clients who come to the center for care as a reminder.
- Use this event as an example for future events to bring community partners into MWCHC and allow them to become a part of the center's mission.
- After the event, ask for community and individual feed back on the event. i.e. What did they enjoy most, what would they like to see next year, will they commit to healthy behavior change?



Conclusion

This was a wonderful event for the clients of MWCHC, Vanderbilt Sickle-Cell clinic and the surrounding community. Participation in the event increased by 50 % from last year. There was a variety of health promotion classes, fun activities and healthy foods provided free of charge to participants. The event provided the opportunity to allow clients to be personally responsible for their own healthcare, thereby improving client self-efficacy. Over 200 people registered for this event and over 200 backpacks were given to needy families. The Back to School Bash event is an excellent example of how a community health center can partner with clients and community members to make an investment in the healthcare and personal needs of those being served at the center.



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