National Academic Centers of Excellence on Youth Violence Prevention: Using a Community Based Participatory Model to Advance Youth Violence Prevention

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Youth Violence

Youth Violence is:

~ the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual,
~ exerted by or against children, adolescents or young adults, ages 10–24,
~ which results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation

The impact of youth violence is:

~ 5,292 young people were murdered in 2004—an average of 14 each day
~ 888,103 young people were treated in emergency departments for nonfatal injuries in 2005.
~ Yearly direct and indirect costs (medical, lost productivity, quality of life) exceed $158 billion
~ 6% of high school students report not going to school in the past month because of safety concerns (2005)
~ Communities experience health care cost increases, property value decreases, and social service disruption

Preventing Youth Violence

- Historically:
  ~ Interventions designed and conducted by academic institutions
  ~ Little to no involvement of those directly affected by youth violence - local residents, community-based organizations, businesses
  ~ Youth violence prevention knowledge and strategies are not readily put into broad practice

- Benefits of community involvement:
  ~ Increased likelihood that prevention strategies are sensitive to the unique culture and needs of a community
  ~ Community-specific barriers can be identified and addressed eary
  ~ Broad support can be generated to adopt and sustain prevention efforts

- Congress supported the establishment of Academic Centers of Excellence on Youth Violence Prevention in 2000 to:
  ~ Serve as multidisciplinary youth violence prevention models
  ~ Support the move of science into practice
  ~ Enhance academic and community capacity and partnership to prevent youth violence

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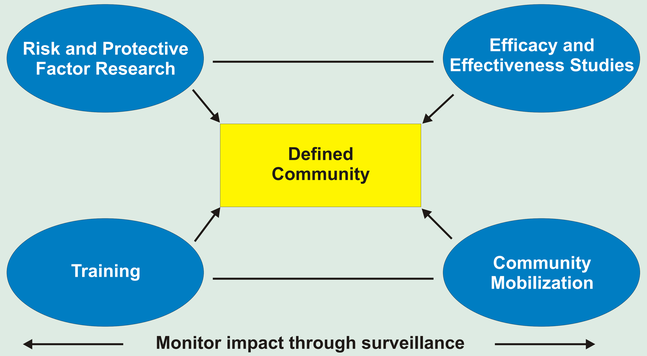
Academic Centers of Excellence on Youth Violence Prevention

- Currently supporting 10 Centers
- Currently supporting a Coordinating Center, which is:
  ~ Enabling faster development of prevention research, products, and programs
  ~ Serving as a key resource for the national translation and distribution of knowledge and prevention strategies generated by the Centers
  ~ Facilitating increased collaboration among youth violence prevention organizations to support the sustainability of programs

- Activities of Centers
  ~ Partner with and mobilize representative from a defined community to formulate community action plan to address youth violence
  ~ Conduct youth violence risk and protective factor research
  ~ Conduct efficacy and/or effectiveness studies of strategies and programs
  ~ Provide training, technical assistance, and mentoring related to youth violence prevention
  ~ Monitor Center impact through surveillance

Center Components



Community-based Participatory Research Partnerships

- Neighborhood Level:
  ~ Youth and adult community residents
  ~ Grass-roots organizations
- School Level
  ~ Students/Parents
  ~ Teachers/Administrators
  ~ Local school district representatives
- City/State Level:
  ~ Mayor's office
  ~ Police department
  ~ Centers for Youth and Family Services
  ~ Hospitals
  ~ Judicial system
- National Level:
  ~ CDC
  ~ Other federal agencies
  ~ Non-profit organizations

Facilitating Community-based Participatory Research

- Approaches
  ~ Centers develop/lead new coalition(s) vs. join existing community group(s) as equal member
  ~ Groups focus on general community issues vs. specific youth violence prevention issue/strategy
  ~ Community members generate research ideas, help develop research protocols, and support data analysis and dissemination vs. engaged as recipients of data findings
  ~ Center PI's responsibilities include community engagement vs. community-liaison position established
- Challenges:
  ~ Lack of trust between partners
  ~ Developing a true collaborative process
  ~ Maintaining scientific rigor
  ~ Competing demands/agendas
  ~ Political pressures/changes
- Overcoming Challenges
  ~ Frequent and open communication
  ~ Basing operations in the community
  ~ Large time commitment
  ~ Sharing responsibility and benefits among all partners
  ~ Training community members on research methods
  ~ Demonstrating collaboration rather than being directive
  ~ Regularly evaluating partnerships and progress and willingness to make necessary changes quickly

Future Activities

- Identify/describe the carious community-based participatory research strategies across the Centers
- Evaluate the impact of the various strategies on youth violence
- Develop tool to identify and evaluate different strategies that can be applied to other public health issues

Disclaimer:
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