

Community psychology flashcard



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The essay describes the designed programme to combat the identified social problem of girl children's organized marriages in Winterveld community found in the north of Pretoria. Children are forced or convinced to believe in marriages with elderly man in their community who seemed to have power or money these include foreign nationals who own small businesses. Some of the marriages are also organized based on religious reasons believed by parents involved. Parents do these for various reasons which at most involve money to secure themselves, and have nothing do with the best interests of the girl child.

Most of these girls fail to continue with schooling due to change in their roles. In this essay the student will show how she going to incorporate the key principles of community psychology in designing her programme which are prevention, empowerment and participation. Dalton, Elias and Wandersman (2001) had two notion of community which are locality and relational. Locality refers to defining the community according to its geographical structure, while relational refers to when the interpersonal relation and sense of community are not limited by geography.

According to Ngonyana Ka Sigogo and Modipa (2004) as cited in Fitchet (2009) community refer to the political histories and beliefs in a given socio-political context, in South Africa, community may come to operate as a code for race and ideas of racial differences including the idea of ' us' versus ' them'. The programme is designed as follows: The student will need to establish the causes of the problem. This will be done by interacting with different systems of the community.

Naidoo (2000) reiterated that when behavior is seen from a system's perspective, intervention can be generated at many levels: individuals, family, group, institution and community. Naidoo encourages the application of ecological approach which recognizes the importance of the historical, environmental and situational context of people's lives. In addition Scaleggi, Teed & Torres (2000) in Naidoo (2000) declared that the approach enable the practitioner to assess recurring needs, risks, and crisis, predict likely transition periods, thereby allowing them to plan programmes and intervention that both treat and prevent difficulties in living.

The student will need to conduct research in the community to collect data that will guide her on combating the challenge. The main focus of the programme is to prevent than curing such incidence from recurring. In order for prevention to happen the issues of power in Winterveld need to be considered. Rappaport(1981) talks of the right model which is more similar to social action. Under this model citizens (children) are seen as having legal rights which are sometimes infringed by the state or other powerful institutions.

People of Winterveld need to stand together to enforce the children's rights. In addition Rappaport (1981) also talks of class action, where stakeholders of the community can act on behalf of the children as children themselves cannot act alone in their behalf (Tutorial letter 102, 2012). Rappaport (1981) also talks about the need model, in the need model people are seen as having particular physical and psychological needs which should be satisfied in order to prevent distress. Parents in Winterveld need provision of adequate knowledge in children's rights and Act.

Children need to be also made aware of the rights and responsibilities. Parents can be engaged in community development programmes that combat poverty, like farming. Empowerment is defined by Fitchet (2009) as a process whereby people are afforded power to change their position within society. Rappaport (1981) noted empowerment as implying “ what you see as poor functioning is a result of structural inequalities and lack of resources which makes it impossible for the existing competencies to operate”.

It is the role of the community psychologist to address the power unevenness in community as change won't emerge without it being resolved. Ahmed & Pretorius-Heuchert (2001) in Fitchet (2009) stated that by empowering a community, circumstances can be produced that put pressure on those with power to improve the quality of life for communities. Empowerment in Winterveld can be reached through model such social action which entails various strategies.

Seedat, Cloete & Shochet (1988) reiterated that social action model radicalizes a community's social problems; this means that the problem cannot be solved by only looking at the community that the problem is in but by looking at the broader social structure and mobilizing the community to address these issues at the higher level. Orford (1992) as cited in Naidoo (2000) stated that community psychology espouses to develop a sense of community through citizen participation and empowerment and collaboration with community agencies and role players with respect for individual and cultural differences.

This can be done through interdisciplinary approach which derives from the recognition that many of the problems addressed by community psychology and public health are problems that falls in between the domain traditionally covered by medicine, psychology, education and so on. The aim of the interdisciplinary collaboration is at blending the special strength of many different disciplines to address precisely these kinds of problems and in practices is most likely to emerge through what is known as problem focused approach of intervention.

For instance to enhance participation the student is going to form a local forum of different structures of the community like schools, teachers, clinics, child protection activist, etc. The community needs to feel the ownership of the programme as they know more about the community daily challenges than the student. They need to be also involved in planning and implementation. Conclusion It can be concluded that term 'community' takes on different definitions and at times involves political matter. Both three key principles of community psychology are crucial in addressing most of the challenges in various communities.

Prevention which is of main focus cannot happen without considering other two principles. The student also believes that social structures of power also play important role in oppression the vulnerable such as children.

Community psychologist faces a huge challenge in bringing upon change in communities as they have to put on different skills and to also involve themselves in politics. Without the key principles being given careful consideration it is not going to be possible to achieve change in the community.