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Targeted Internet Adoption in Georgetown County, South Carolina

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Noor Zalloum

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Community Care Network: Tidelands Health

Introduction:

The COVID-19 pandemic had significantly impacted families in a myriad of ways, such as parents losing their jobs, changes of schedule and relationships, and a dramatic shift with schooling. These have been my observations as a UN Youth Corps intern through Georgetown RISE in summer 2021. Not only did individuals' lives change, but people also had to worry about contracting the virus. At Tidelands Health Community Resource Center, the staff's goal is to educate others about a healthy living style and offer programs for Georgetown County. During my internship, I was mostly involved with the Positive Parenting Program, which is also referred to as Triple P. Triple P is a free program that is available to any parent or caregiver. Besides working on Triple P, the project that is relevant in our world today is the mobile vaccine event. The mobile vaccine event is designed to vaccinate individuals near Andrews, a town located in Georgetown. At Tidelands Health Community Network, our events and programs represent Sustainable Development Goal 3: Good Health and Wellbeing. Tidelands Health is supporting the community with public health initiatives by providing free vaccinations and a free program that represents good living between children and parents/caregivers.

Internship:

Throughout my internship, I did not have a set of responsibilities or daily tasks that I had to complete, apart from tasks related to the programs at the community resource center. Some of my assignments were simple office jobs like filing folders, answering calls, setting up binders for

residents and new staff members, laminating documents, and making gift bags for certain programs. I also was encouraged to attend meetings that are affiliated with Triple P. Currently, events and advertising Triple P are the main topics that are discussed during meetings. Events are important due to the planning and brainstorming ideas to engage and involve the parents and caregivers. In addition, we want to attract more individuals to the program; the way that we are expanding the program is by putting up billboards, handing out flyers and cards to agencies that affiliate with childcare and parent support groups, and putting up yard signs around Georgetown County. In addition, I attended all the vaccine events; my job was monitoring the individuals who received the vaccination and help set up the whole event.

Triple P Program:

The Triple P Positive Parenting Program is a parenting program to prevent and provide care for behavioral, emotional, and mental health problems in children aged 0 to young adult years (Graaf et al., 2008). Providing knowledge to caregivers and parents will boost confidence and strengthen their parenting as well. Within the program, Triple P does include certain levels that include different topics and tactics regarding childcare. The purpose of the levels is to discuss ways to communicate with children and allow parents to seek advice from the coordinators. The Sustainable Development Goal 3: Good Health and Well Being is connected to Triple P for the reason of Triple P is a support program for parents and caregivers. During the pandemic, parents and caregivers are struggling with figuring out the new lifestyle and how to raise their children currently. Unfortunately, the pandemic has also affected individuals' mental health for many reasons, including adapting to homeschool and virtual school and financial instability.

At Tidelands Health Community Care Network, about four people oversee the Triple P program. To be part of the program, members must be trained to hold seminars across the county. The program does have certain levels that are focused on different topics, for those who want to attend the seminars. Individuals around Georgetown County can sign up through the Tidelands Health website.

Mobile Vaccine Event:

In addition to the Triple P program, the mobile vaccine event is one of the programs that are relevant to our time. Georgetown County is the number one county in South Carolina to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Others do still find it difficult to find the time to get vaccinated, so the mobile vaccine event's purpose is to hold the vaccine event where it is convenient for individuals. We held a vaccine event at the Interfor Construction site, construction workers were able to receive their vaccine during their shift time. In addition, others were able to receive the vaccine in their own church, which allowed children to even receive their vaccine. Giving these opportunities to people in the county will make them feel safer in their environment.

Targets:

Target 3.7 is universal access to sexual and reproductive care, family planning and education (United Nations). The target focuses on providing education to create a good family lifestyle, which projects what Triple P is about. The physical side of health is important, but people tend to forget to think about the mental and emotional state that they are in. A parent and caregiver need to value their own and child mental state. Aside from Triple P, the mobile vaccine events have created another way for people to get the Pfizer vaccine. The vaccine is our way to bring normality to the world. Not only will it reduce anxiety for people, but it will reduce the risk

of someone contracting the virus. Target 3.B, support research, development, and universal access to affordable vaccines and medicines, which represents the mobile vaccine event (United Nations). We were able to vaccinate ages 12 and up for free whether if they do or do not have health insurance. Vaccinating children and others will eventually help others go back to work and school. That is what target 3.B projects research, and medicine, and vaccine that people can afford. Sustainable development goal 3: is all about having a healthy life mentally and physically, Triple P can improve family living and the mobile vaccine events are giving the chance for people to be vaccinated.

Observations throughout Internship:

During my internship, I have noticed that the programs at Tideland Health Community do make a change in the county. The Triple P seminars were held at Riverside Pediatrics and Waccamaw Medical Park South. Parents and caregivers were able to attend the seminars virtually and in person. My observations that I have seen are that parents and caregivers were happy with the seminars and related to the tactics/strategies. Not only did parents and caregivers were intrigued with the program, but people also wanted to be trained to be one of the coordinators for the Triple P program. Aside from the Triple P program, the mobile vaccine event was a success. Children and adults were able to receive the vaccine without needing health insurance or any other documentation. In addition, the process was easy and not stressful for the people who were getting vaccinated.

Georgetown County Foster Families:

Georgetown County has reported that they only had 13 foster homes in 2016, but the issue is that only 43 percent are placed in homes (Stairs et al., 2020). Foster parents take on the

role of being a child's parents. Being their caregiver also means that you are responsible to be a child's support system, which means listening to their previous home life, helping their academic trouble, and behavior issues. What Triple P can do is provide positive ways to discipline children and guide them to a successful life. In addition, giving support and advice to a caregiver on how to approach a foster child is crucial. Introducing Triple P to these foster homes will reduce child misbehavior, change their academic style, and improve relationships between a parent/caregiver and child. Not only does Triple P provide a positive outcome to foster families, but the program also influences new families. Disciplining someone's child can be difficult due to their biological parent not approving or a child not responding well to being disciplined. Triple P has helped families work together as a team to parent their children in a healthy way. The program also offers ways to strengthen marriage and children's relationships.

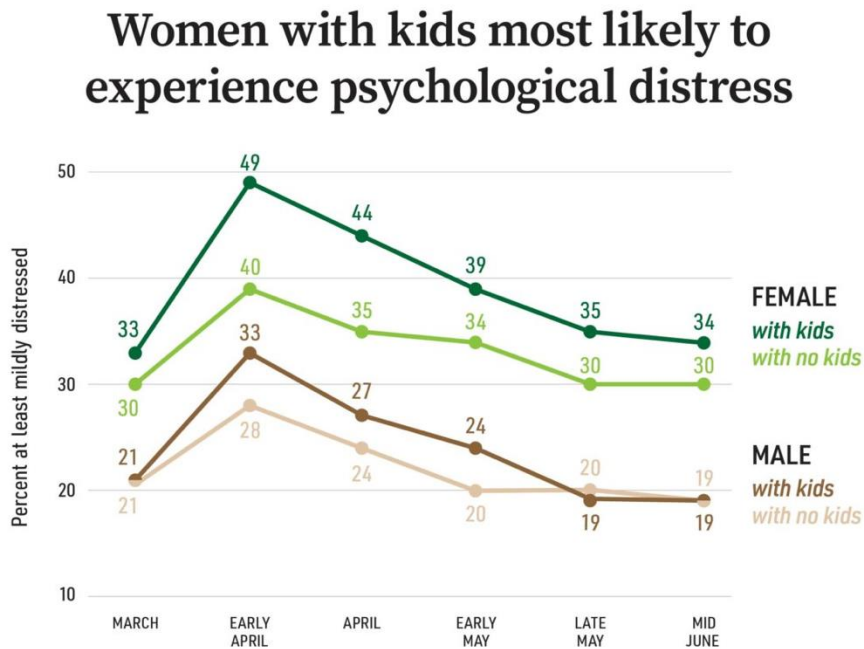
Triple P Program impact across United States:

In California, Santa Cruz County's Triple P program has been seeing success within their county. Santa Cruz County Triple P coordinator Nicole Young has reported that parents have been seeing improvement in their Children's behavior and families (Young et al. 2015). Parents seeing the change within their children's behavior and in their families is one of the main goals of the program. Young also stated that parents are seeing a dramatic change within their parenting, "Parents have said they found Triple P very helpful, and they learned things like how to be more patient, or how to talk to their children, how to give descriptive praise and create routines, and how to let their teens be involved in making decisions" (Young et al. 2015). We did not have to worry about the pandemic in 2015, but now more than ever creating routines, improving communication with their children is important especially during this pandemic. COVID-19 has

affected families and individuals' routines and having a free program could help families navigate and create routines during this era.

COVID-19 Effect on Mothers:

COVID-19 took a toll on individuals' mental health, especially mothers and expecting mothers. Mothers are facing a lot of challenges during the pandemic, which is creating fear for fearing their own health and their unborn child, isolation, losing their jobs, and their own mental health issues (Miller et al., 2020). In Georgetown County, 37.3 percent who gave birth are single mothers and nearly 13.6 million are single mothers in United States. June of 2020, 34 percent of who are moms, have reported psychological stress while men have a lower percentage and women without children (Miller et al., 2020). Mothers need the validation that they are safe from contracting the virus and spreading it to their own families. Not only is the virus affecting mothers, it is also playing a huge role in a child's life. Children have to find the motivation to do their schoolwork at home and parents are pressured to keep their children engaged at home. Parents have believed that pandemic has taken toll on their children's mental health and regret not being aware (Miller et al., 2020).



A total of 6,824 members of the probability-based Understanding America Study participated in six tracking survey waves from March 10 - June 16, 2020. Sample sizes and margins of sampling error for this population are available at: tinyurl.com/CESRGenderDiffs. For full question text, methodology, topline, and data, visit: covid19pulse.usc.edu

Figure 1.

The graph represents that woman are more likely to experience mental health issues than males with children and females without children (Miller et al. 2020).

Global Parenting Issues:

As covid cases increase, families around the world will still feel vulnerable and defeated. Some families must sacrifice their jobs to stay at home with their children who cannot take care of themselves. In addition, some children are forced to do homeschooling due to schools not opening or parents not feeling comfortable with in-person classes. Parents and caregivers must

worry about their financials and the needs of their children. Everyone around the world is facing some sort of struggle due to the pandemic.

Delta variant:

Our world was slowly going back to normal, but the contagious delta variant has put us a step back. In the United States, 100,000 cases of covid are being reported daily (Nania et al., 2021). In Georgetown County, there are currently 7,197 and in Horry County 43,678 cases (New York Times et al., 2021). Why getting vaccinated is important? According to CDC, the delta variant is twice more contagious than the other strands (Crownharts et al., 2021). Unvaccinated individuals are more likely to contract the virus and have more serious symptoms than fully vaccinated people. The Pfizer- BioNTech is about 80 percent effective at preventing contraction of the delta variant (Nania et.al. 2021). Individuals need to consider getting themselves and their families vaccinated to reduce their risk and feel more comfortable going out. While the cases increase right before school is in session, parents, and children are going to fear that their school year and education are going to be affected. In South Carolina, Tidelands Health is offering free vaccinations for everyone, and Tidelands Health Community Network will continue to help and educate individuals about the delta variant. In addition, Triple P will continue to support and provide assistance for parents and caregivers during this time.

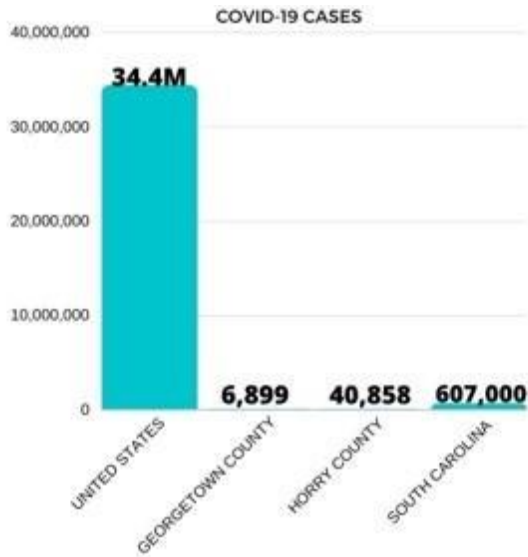


Figure 2.

The number of COVID-19 cases in United States, Georgetown County, Horry County, and South Carolina (New York Times et al. 2021).

Policy Recommendations:

Triple P Recommendations:

- Provide Triple P seminar at schools
 - more parents will be willing to attend in a familiar area
- Having more Triple P events,
 - parents and caregivers have a busy schedule as it is, parents need to plan and be able to attend events
- Promoting Triple P in other counties
 - Triple P is promoted mostly in Georgetown County, I think it would be great to promote Triple P around Horry County to have more exposure.
- Have more parenting exercises during seminars

- Acting out scenarios during seminars will allow parents and caregivers to understand the strategies
- Introducing the program to foster homes
 - Foster homes could benefit from the program and learn how to communicate with their foster children
- Introducing the program to new mothers
 - New mothers tend to seek advice

Mobile Vaccine Event Recommendations:

- Mobile Vaccine Events at schools, campuses, and nursing homes
 - Having mobile vaccine events at convenient places will attract individuals to get the vaccine
- Advertising mobile vaccine events on local news outlets
 - Advertising mobile vaccine events will allow individuals to know when and where the mobile vaccines are
- Providing more information about the vaccine
 - People are still hesitant about getting the vaccine, so providing more information about the vaccine might ease their hesitation
- Offering vaccines to highly contagious areas
 - Vaccinating at highly contagious areas will reduce the risk of spreading and contracting the virus

Conclusion:

The pandemic has changed the world in many ways. Families are struggling due to being isolated from everyone else, financial problems, anxiety, and academic issues. Triple P is a positive parenting program, that will introduce families and children to a better lifestyle during this time. While most people are going back to the “normal” life, there are still long effects of COVID-19 that need to be resolved. The mobile vaccine event has helped others feel safe around their community also. The programs at Tidelands Health Community Care Network goal are to better the lives of Georgetown County and worldwide.

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