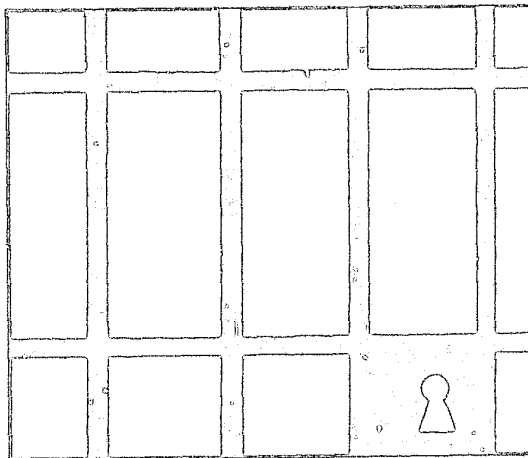


PROCEEDINGS

2nd National Conference on Medical Care and Health Services in Correctional Institutions



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PATIENT EDUCATION - A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY*

Everyone of us in this room shares a common desire. Now you're probably saying to yourself, "How can that be? We all come from different states, we all have different jobs, and more importantly, we all are individuals." Yes, we all are individuals with different backgrounds, different lifestyles and different goals. Even with these considerations, I still maintain that you and I share one common desire: to get through life with as few problems as possible.

This desire is reflected both in our personal and occupational life. Whenever possible, most of us try to prevent accidents or any other type of crisis from arising, either at home or on the job.

People who work in the correctional system are no exception. The entire operation of a correctional institution is geared toward the prevention of problems. The rules enforced and the procedures followed are for the purpose of having a smooth running organization that has the best interest of all at its foundation.

The Standards for Accreditation exemplify how this basic desire fits into the professional world. The Standards not only provide guidelines for medical and health care in the correctional setting, but also guidelines to prevent some problems from occurring within the correctional institution.

Standard 1021 is one such standard. It states, "Chronic care, convalescent care and medical preventive maintenance are provided to inmates of the facility." Under the discussion section, medical preventive maintenance is defined as "...health education and medical services provided to take advance measures against disease and instruction in self-care for chronic conditions." This Standard gives those associated with the correctional institution the opportunity to prevent a medical crisis from arising and to encourage the incarcerated to develop positive health habits. Positive health habits are those which enhance the quality of one's life.

So now you're probably wondering where I fit in with the prevention of problems and, even more so, with the Standards for Accreditation. Last spring the State Medical Society of Wisconsin contacted the Community Health Education program at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse. One of the requirements of the program is to do an internship, where the student has the chance for practical application of his or her knowledge. The State Medical Society was interested in having a Community Health Education intern work with the Jail Health Project. The intern would develop a health education program to be conducted in a pilot jail. I was that intern.

For ten weeks this past summer I planned, implemented and evaluated a health education program for the inmates at the Eau Claire County Jail. Eau Claire County Jail had expressed an interest in this particular type of program and, therefore, was chosen as the pilot state. The pilot program that I developed was entitled "Getting a Handle on Stress."

*Presented by Virginia Beth Jones, Community Health Coordinator, State Medical Society of Wisconsin.

In developing a program there is a planning process that should be followed. This process includes these essential components:

1. Problem Identification
2. Resource Identification
3. Methodology for Problem-Solving
4. Evaluation of the Program

Problem Identification is when you, or the person who is working on the program, determines what the health education or patient education needs of the incarcerated are. Some examples of these needs are: nutrition education, personal hygiene education or education regarding the management of a chronic illness.

For my program I determined the health education needs by way of:

1. Health Interest Survey
2. Interviews

The Health Interest Survey was sent to jail personnel to find out what they perceived the health needs of the inmates to be.

For a more personal approach, I conducted interviews with the inmates and jail personnel. In the interviews I asked them which one of the following did they see as being most useful to them:

1. Drug Education
2. Exercise Education
3. Nutrition Education
4. Relaxation Techniques for Stress Reduction
5. Personal Hygiene Education

I also asked for any suggestions they might have regarding the programming.

The results from these types of needs analyses were that the incarcerated wanted and needed to learn ways of dealing with stress and tension in the jail setting.

Step two in the planning process is Resource Identification. A resource is anyone or anything that will facilitate, directly or indirectly, in meeting the identified health needs of the target group, which in this case was the inmates. The resources that you will want to consider are:

1. Human
2. Financial
3. Material

In the case of my program John Berg, the jail counselor; Dick Detert, an instructor from the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse and I were the prime human resources. The human resources that you may want to consider are:

1. People already working within the correctional institution.

2. Official agency personnel - University Extension and your Public Health Department.
3. Private agency personnel - YMCA or a counseling center.
4. Voluntary agency personnel - American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, Mental Health Association, etc.
5. Professional Organization Interns - State Medical Society.
6. Interns from a university system that offers degrees in health-related occupations.

Financially speaking, since I was an intern with the State Medical Society, the only cost to the jail was time -- time that it took the jailers to move the inmates in and out of their cells and time spent by jail personnel in helping plan the program. The cost you or your institution may incur will all depend upon who you choose to conduct the program and what materials they may need.

The materials used in the Stress Program were handouts, a film and a film projector. As far as materials used in a program in your institution, it all depends upon the human resource you choose to use and the topic or topics that are covered.

The next step of the planning process is the Methodology of Problem-Solving. These are the actual program and the techniques used to meet the health needs of the target group.

The following were included in the three two-hour sessions of the program at the Eau Claire County Jail:

- I. First Session
 - A. Short lecture on the topic of stress - what it is, how it helps you and how it hurts you.
 - B. Holmes Life Stress Measure
 - C. Rap Session for the inmates regarding their stress in the jail setting.
- II. Second Session
Dick Detert teaches the inmates Relaxation Skills.
- III. Third Session
 - A. Discussion concerning Relaxation Skills taught during the second session.
 - B. Film "Your Own Worst Enemy"
 - C. Handout given to the inmates called "Strategies to Beat Stress"

The methodology your program contains will all depend upon the individuals who conduct the program and the topic chosen.

At this time I'd like to let you all experience a few relaxation skills. After all, conferences involve a lot of sitting, listening and interaction with people. All three of these activities can produce a certain amount of tension. Because of the time factor and the setting here, we will not be doing the same activities that were taught to the inmates. However, we will do some other

exercises that are just as effective. They are as follows: neck roll, arm and hands press, hands on hands, heel and toe stretch and deep breathing.

The fourth and final step in the planning process is Evaluation of the Program. In order to continue having programs that are truly useful, you must evaluate your program in some matter to see if it achieved its goal. If your program successfully meets the health needs of the inmates, and they appear to be using some of the information that was taught to them, then you can assume that your program has been effective.

There are various ways to evaluate. I will share with you the methods of evaluation that I used:

1. Pre and Post Test
2. Interviews with all participants of the program

The Pre and Post Test consisted of twenty identical questions given to the inmates before they started the program and after the final session.

There were an average of ten individuals at each session. However, only five attended all three sessions and were present when both the Pre and Post Test were issued. Three out of the five showed an increase in knowledge about stress and handling stress.

The interviews were much more indicative of the success of the program. The interview provided a time when I could ask them questions about their use of the relaxation techniques and their overall impression of the program. I also asked the inmates for any suggestions that they may have had for future programs. This is something that is crucial when planning for future programs.

I strongly urge you to have some sort of evaluation, no matter how formal or informal. You or the person conducting the program can choose whatever method seems most appropriate for your program.

To summarize, here are the four essential steps in the planning process: Problem Identification, Resource Identification, Methodology of Problem-Solving and Evaluation. Whatever the health needs of the inmates in your institution are, that will determine what type of program you develop. Handling stress was the topic that the inmates of the Eau Claire County Jail seemed to feel was the most important to them. If the inmates have learned from my program ways to deal with stress, then that entire correctional institution will benefit.

In conclusion, correctional institutions can provide the setting for professional medical care and health education. Utilize this setting to its full potential. The care you provide in your correctional institution is a means by which you can prevent a crisis from developing. Prevention is the name of the game when you want to get through life with as few problems as possible.

REFERENCES

1. "Standards for the Accreditation of Medical Care and Health Services in Jails."
2. "Guide to Self Incorporated," Agency for Instructional Television, Box A, Bloomington, Indiana.

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