Windshield Survey

Rachal Trigger

NURS 340

Windshield Survey

The windshield survey is an assessment tool that can be used by a community health nurse. “It is a subjective process by which nurses understand the community by viewing what appears before their eyes while looking at the physical community” (Yoder-Wise, 2012, p. 180). The windshield survey that was completed for this assignment focused on a community called Discovery Village that is located within a military installation.

**Community**

A community can be defined in many different ways. It can be defined purely geographically or in more of a human sense. “Community can be a group of people who live in the same area, or the area in which they live” (Harkness & DeMarco, 2012, p. 177). In a study looking to understand the meaning of community respondents were asked to define the term community. The study concluded that “community was defined similarly but experienced differently by people with diverse backgrounds” (MacQueen et al., 2001).

The community examined for this assignment is geographically defined, but there are also other defining features. The community is on a military installation. This means that all of its residents are military affiliated and working in the direct area. Another feature of this community is that since all of its residents are on active duty, the age of the community is relatively young. To put this into perspective, the average age of an active duty soldier is 28.

**Community Health**

Community health focuses on the health of the entire community instead of the individual patient or family. “Working at the community level to promote healthy living and prevent chronic disease brings the greatest health benefits to the greatest number of people in need” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014).

The community faces some potential health risks. Rates of PTSD, suicide, and depression are higher than amongst the civilian population. Combat exposure, isolation from family and friends, and difficult training missions and work schedules are all contributing factors. Another potential risk to psychosocial health is the lack of diversity in religious services. The military community is diverse with members from all over the United States. The many faiths are not represented. This lack of religious support can lead to further isolation. A third potential risk to health is a lack of public transportation. The community is closed off to the general public and bus service is not available. This could potentially create a “road block” to an individual attempting to access healthcare. Another potential risk to the health of the community is that middle school and high school children have to travel a considerable distance to attend school. Children can be seen at the bus stop as early as 6:15 AM and not returning home until after 5:00 PM. The long days away from home can affect the sleep and meal patterns of the children contributing to the risk on health. Travel concerns also exist. The hours that children are walking to and from the bus it is dark much of the year posing risks to safety.

**Community as Client**

When thinking about community nursing, the entire community is considered, not just a single patient. This approach gives the nurse the unique opportunity to affect the health of many. “It is necessary to consider the history, demographics, ethnicity, and values and beliefs of the entire community” (Harkness & DeMarco, 2012, p. 185).

**Healthy People 2020 Leading Health Indicator**

Maternal, infant, and child health is an important leading health indicator to consider for this particular community. Due to the fact that it is a military community, nearly the entire community is of childbearing age. This leading health indicator looks at the well-being of both mothers and children. Some areas of concern include maternal health, preterm birth, and infant death.

Nursing has the opportunity to improve maternal, infant, and child health in this community. “Preconception (before pregnancy) and interconception (between pregnancies) care provide an opportunity to identify existing health risks and to prevent future health problems for women and children” (Healthy People 2020, 2014). Nurses can use their skills and knowledge to focus on preventative efforts to promote health in both mothers and children. “Prevention initiatives are essential to respond to situations that are threatening to the mother, child, father, and extended family engaged in the prospective birth” (Harkness & DeMarco, 2012, p. 229).

**Conclusion**

As can be seen throughout this analysis the community assessment is a valuable component of healthcare. Assessing the needs of the entire community has the potential for affecting change on a great scale.

References

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MacQueen, K. M., McLellan, E., Metzger, D. S., Kegeles, S., Strauss, R. P,…Trotter, R. T. (2001). What is community? An evidence-based definition for participatory public health. *American Journal of Public Health, 91*(12), 1929-1938.

Appendix

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| Housing and zoning  The homes are 10-15 years old. They are wood framed duplexes or tri-plexes. There is no yard in the front and a small green yard in the back. A detached garage sits behind the homes. The homes are in good condition and maintenance is evident. There is central heating, modern plumbing. There is no central air-conditioning, but many units are noted to have window air conditioners. | Transportation  People in this neighborhood most commonly drive cars and ride bikes. Streets and roads are paved and conducive to transportation. A major highway is located several miles away.  Public transportation is not readily available. This potentially prevents individuals in the community from being able to access health care and other services. | Race and ethnicity  The neighborhood is diverse. Members of many different ethnic backgrounds are observed (Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, and Asian). |
| Open space  The homes are 1200-1700 square feet. Lots are small with a small shared lawn in back. The community is on a military installation and is comparable to an urban suburb. Surrounding the neighborhood are tall evergreen trees. Throughout the neighborhood young oak trees have been planted. | Service centers  Health services are available within the community. It is noted to have both a medical clinic and a dental clinic. An elementary school and daycare are available within the community. Middle school and high school children are taken by bus to neighboring schools which vary from 10-15 miles away.  Having to travel for school could negatively affect the health of middle and high school children. Children can be noted waiting for school buses at 6:15 AM and not returning home until after 5:00 PM. | Religion and politics  The neighborhood has a military-facilitated chapel. It hosts both catholic and protestant services on Sundays and religious holidays. Both Republican and Democratic ideas are represented in the community.  Religious services are limited and may not be sufficiently diverse for the population. Only two of many faiths are represented. This could potentially affect the psychosocial health of the community. |
| Boundaries  Discovery Village is a residential neighborhood located on a military installation. Signage is located near all entrances to the community. Yards are green and well-maintained. The neighborhood is surrounded by military offices, barracks, and motor-pools. Very little litter is observed in the neighborhood. | Stores and street people  There are no “street people” in the community. It is very uncommon for wildlife or stray animals to be present. Shopping is available just outside of the community, about 1.5 miles away. A very large grocery store and a department style store with a food court is available in the same area. | Health and morbidity  The community is relatively young in age due to being a military community.  Mental health issues have become of great concern within the community. Service-members have high rates of PTSD and self-harm/suicide. Family members may suffer from depression related to isolation and distance from family and friends. |
| Commons  Many parks can be found in the community. Paved walking paths and children’s playgrounds are available. | Signs of decay  No signs of decay are observed in the community. The neighborhood is clean with very little litter noted. No real estate signs are seen because the homes are not owned. They are rented to service-members. Empty homes are not seen. A waiting list for on-post housing is always in effect. Homes are filled very quickly upon the move-out of a tenant. | Media  Several different types of media are readily seen in the neighborhood. Dish Network and Direct TV equipment is seen outside of homes. A free local newspaper is also noted to be delivered to residents on Saturday morning. Interestingly, many of the homes have these newspapers piled up on their front porch. The paper does not seem to be well-received by many of the residents. |