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Quality Improvement: An Initiative to Foster Mental Health Wellness among a Hemophilia Treatment Center Patient Population

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Submission Group

Psychosocial Issues

Abstract

Objective: The goal of this program was to engage attendees of a Community Wellness Fair program in personal wellness methods. Attendees came from Houston and the surrounding metropolitan area. The program was designed to raise awareness of mental health issues, to identify reputable mental health care resources, and to normalize the topics of depression and suicidal ideation. Because the time interval between comprehensive hemophilia clinic appointments is 6 to 12 months, patients benefit by having personal coping skills available whenever needed, should they experience overwhelming life stressors and attempt to cope with these experiences on their own. Offering educational programs on emotional self-care and mental health care resources helps provide patients with effective tools to cope with personal life experiences when most needed. **Methods:** Gulf States Hemophilia and Thrombophilia Center (GSHTC) hosted a "Community Wellness Fair" for patients and their families in May 2019. A variety of mental health vendors and demonstrations were available, including tai chi, mini massages and modified seated chair yoga. Two on-site counselors were available to meet with participants after completion of a depression screening form. The fair also featured a presentation by a staff member of the UTH Department of Psychiatry on the psychological impact of living with a chronic condition. A community member then described his struggles with depression. The movie "Inside Out" was screened for youth and reviewed by a professional psychiatrist. A peer-reviewed mental health resource booklet, compiled and distributed nationally among hemophilia treatment center (HTC) social workers, was distributed to attendees. **Summary:** The Wellness Fair was attended by 27 participants who were invited to complete a post-event survey for evaluation of the program and planning for future events. The 20 (74%) respondents were nearly evenly divided between patients and parents/family members; 30% were male and 55% female; 15% did not provide their gender. Evaluations completed by attendees demonstrated a high level of satisfaction with the program content and a desire for practical information about mental health wellness. Responses included the comment "This is the first event I have attended and will be attending more. Thank you . . . for caring about your patients and their families." Suggestions for future programs included information about children with Von Willebrand disease, substance abuse issues, and more activities for entire families. **Conclusions:** In addition to providing practical help and advice for dealing with stress, demonstrating to patients and their families that the HTC supports them, may, in the long term, be helpful in unforeseen areas such as medication compliance, reduction of clinic no-shows and completion of treatment logs. Currently GSHTC plans to further develop and enhance programs on personal wellness for the community at large and for specific gender and diagnosis needs.