Considering a Model of Support for At Risk Children in Rural Appalachian Communities

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Barriers to Mental Health in Rural Appalachia

- Accessibility
  - Geographical isolation
  - Knowledge
  - Poverty
Per Capita Income in Appalachia

arc.gov
Barriers to Mental Health in Rural Appalachia

Availability
Underserved areas
HRSA.gov
Common problems in rural youth

- Substance abuse
  - “disproportionally high rates” in Appalachia (arc.gov, 2008)
- “At Risk” nature of rurality
  - Isolation
  - Cyclical nature of poverty
- High School Drop Out

Mental Health in Rural Appalachia
High School Graduation Rates in Appalachia

arc.gov
Emergency Room Mentality
- Fear of stigma
- Fear of hospitalization
- Seeking help from physicians

Mental Health in Rural Appalachia
Community Mental Health

- Paraprofessionals in conjunction with professionals (Minore & Boone, 2002)
- “Working relationships”
- Urban “hubs” with satellites (e.g., Prestera)
- Identifying natural helpers within the community and providing training

Natural Helper Framework
Medical

- Training for medical professionals
- Bangladesh – training paramedics to counsel abused women (Naved, Rimi, Jahan, & Lindmark, 2009)
- Screeners to be used in doctor’s offices
- Integrated settings

Natural Helper Framework
Clergy

- Social support in rural areas is central to management of mental illness
- Clergy reported very little interaction with formal mental health service delivery system (Blank, Mahmood, Fox, and Guterbock, 2002)

Prevention

- Addressing mental health in the church setting

Natural Helper Framework
School

Prevention

- Programs within the school to identify and assist “at risk” youth

- Raising teacher awareness of mental health problems and warning signs

- School counselors

Natural Helper Framework
Family support

- Community gatherings to foster strong families
- Resources for family members when problems occur
- Prevention
  - Taking advantage of community strengths

Natural Helper Framework
Organizing/Leveraging Community Strengths and Resources

Strengths in Appalachia: strong sense of pride, family values and bonds, desire to help one another, religion/spirituality

Natural Helper Framework


References