
Spryfield's Drug Addiction Problem

Spryfield is a community which is located a few kilometers west from downtown Halifax. It has a lot to offer in terms of natural sceneries and business establishments located all in one neighborhood. It has a diverse population from all around the world living in this community. Unfortunately, just like any other communities it is facing numerous health issues and one these issues is drug addiction.

In this paper you will be reading about one of the health issues in this community which is drug addiction. I will be including the community assessment, the determinants of health contributing to this health issue, the programs that are being offered to support residents suffering with this problem, and the role of the community health nurse to the affected individuals.

Community Assessment

The assessment was done through driving around the community, observing the physical environment, and familiarizing the location of the Community Wellness Centre, recreational areas, parks, lakes, churches and other business establishments. I interviewed the staff in the Community Wellness Centre regarding programs that are being offered to help promote health. I also interviewed our neighbor that has been living in the area for over thirty years. Online research was also done about the community's statistics and demographics.

Locale/Structure

Walking around the area I saw the Community Wellness Center where residents are offered free check-up and follow-up, which is conveniently located in Dentith Road. The area where most people in Spryfield congregate is the Captain William Spry Community Centre; it is where most family hang out and have fun. Churches are also found in the area where people congregate, share their faith and celebrate mass. They also have a shopping mall, groceries stores, banks, veterinary clinics, doctors' offices, clinics, pharmacies, laundry shops, convenience stores, and restaurants. I also noticed old apartment buildings which is a lot in the area. I had a conversation with a fellow church goer and neighbor, George M., he mentioned that he does repairs with mostly all, of the apartment buildings in the area as well as our apartment building where we live in (personal communication, March 8, 2020).

Spryfield is abundant in natural beauty. While driving around I saw lakes (Long-lake Provincial Park, Williams Lake, Colpitt Lake, and Kidston Lake to name a few); Ponds (Cranberry Pond, Catamaran Pond, Roachs Pond, Purcells Pond).

Social Systems

Spryfield has four schools namely, Elizabeth Sutherland, Rockingstone Heights Elementary School, J.L. Ilsley High School, Central Spryfield School (We are Spryfield, 2006).

There is a Community Wellness Centre and walk-in clinics in the area where people can go to

for check-up and know the different programs available in the community. There are also several nursing homes in the area namely, Melville Lodge, Melville Heights, Melville Gardens and Arborstone Enhanced Care facility.

Spryfield has several parks and playgrounds used by people from all ages. The schools mentioned above also serve as part of the recreation areas as they have fields or huge spaces which people can use for their recreational activities. Captain William Spry Community Centre is also an area for recreation for many residents. It also has a library, meeting rooms, office spaces and wave pool. Spryfield also has a skating rink called Spryfield Lions Rink where people play hockey, skating and watching minor hockey games (We are Spryfield, 2006).

The transportation being used by residents here are buses and private vehicles. From what I have observed here, there are several people using motorcycles, bicycles or walking as a means of transportation. Every morning going to work, whether by bus or private vehicle, I have noticed since we moved here that there is a traffic congestion from Armdale Rotary up to Herring Cove road which is very inconvenient. I also noticed that most areas have no bike lanes which is a hazard for people using bicycles. I also observed that vehicles do not follow the speed limit in the area which could result to an accident.

Spryfield is under the government of Halifax Regional Municipality specifically District 11. The councillor that is assigned to this district is Steve Adams (Halifax, 2020).

People

Spryfield has a diverse population. The area's population is composed of 11,700 as of 2016. The working age population is 20 to 64 which is 65% of the population in Spryfield. The age groups for the area are 0 to 14 is 16%; 15 to 24 is 11%; 25 to 39 is 22%; 40 to 64 is 38%; 65 and over is 13% of the total population (DWPilkey Consulting for United Way Halifax, 2018). 1% of the population living in Spryfield identify themselves as South Asian/East Indian (Capital Health, 2014).

Average household income is \$57,600. A couple with children has an average income of \$96,138. Single parent and person living alone has a lower household income around \$47,000 and \$31,700 respectively. 54% of population living in Spryfield are renting and only 46% percent owns their own home (DWPilkey Consulting for United Way Halifax, 2018). 23.8% of families in Spryfield are being classified as low income and is highest number of households receiving financial assistance and employment support from the province (Capital Health, 2014). Spryfield also has the lowest percentage of the population 25 years of age or older that is employed which accounts to 56.6% (Capital Health, 2014).

In the data provided by Capital Health (2014), Spryfield has the highest visit of high acuity to the IWK Emergency Department (101.99 visits per 1000 population) and the highest rate of visit to the Emergency Department of low acuity (221.75 visits per 1000 population). It also has the highest percentage for accessing Addictions Community Based Services (24.5 clients per 1000 population). Spryfield has the highest per 1000 population accessing Mental Health Services which equates to 45.3 clients per 1000 population and the highest number of people accessing Community Health Teams. Spryfield also has the highest number of children/youths accessing the IWK dentistry clinic (23.1 children/youth per 1000 population) and the highest community of

children/youth accessing IWK Pediatrician visits (Capital Health, 2014).

Community Health Issue

The issue I found that exist in my community is drug addiction. During my assessment, I have interviewed my neighbor, visited the Community Wellness Centre and asked them about this issue surrounding Spryfield and the programs that are available to help them. I spoke with R. Evans, a staff at the Addiction Centre, she mentioned that drug addiction is prevalent in Spryfield and some are accessing the community programs that are available in the wellness centre (personal communication, March 08, 2020). The data that I got from the Capital Health (2014) clearly states that Spryfield has the highest percentage of people accessing Addiction Community Based Services which accounts to 24.5 clients per 1000 population, which is the highest percentages compared to other areas in the city. In an interview, G MacLellan. mentioned that one of the biggest problems in the community is drug addiction (personal communication, March 08, 2020). I also personally witnessed a police raid, just a few meters from our apartment. There were more than six police cars in the area and a few moments later, I saw two people who got arrested. It was unclear whether why they were arrested at that time but on the following day it was on the news. The arrest was made and yielded many kinds of prohibited drugs, firearms, and loads of cash that was believed to be proceeds from selling drugs in the area. In another interview, C. Wentzell, a friend of mine also living in Spryfield said that there was an incident of arson in an old apartment building near his house. He asked their neighbors about the incident and they said that it was related to drugs (personal communication, March 09, 2020). From the years 2008-2011, as reported by the Halifax Regional Police, the total crime that occurred in that period which is related to drugs was 208 (Capital Health, 2014).

Determinants of Health

The determinants of health that greatly affect the issue are income and social status, employment and working conditions, physical environment, and personal health practices and coping skills. All determinants can influence each other (Potter & Perry, 2019).

Income and social status influence the communities' issue. 23.8% of families in Spryfield is classified as low income and is the highest in the all the district. Spryfield is also receiving employment support and income assistance from the province. Long (2013) said that income generation for drug abusers are linked to drug use and drug dealing. Low average monthly income and higher total monthly income is being linked to high-risk income generation activities as well as drug use.

Employment is another determinant in this issue. As mentioned above, 23.8% of families in Spryfield is classified as low income and only 56.6% of the population 25 years or older are employed. (Capital Health, 2014) which is the lowest in the district. Unemployment is linked to health-threatening coping behaviours and stress (Potter & Perry, 2019).

Physical environment affects individuals both directly and indirectly (Potter & Perry, 2019). As mentioned in my assessment, houses and apartments in Spryfield are mostly old. Living in a substandard house or apartment and with low income has an impact on a person in terms of stress both physically and mentally (Spooner, 2014). Once the person is stressed in one or both

aspects, then that would imply a person to rely on his coping skills.

Coping skills is one way to address the stress that a person is having. Effective coping skills are attitudes that a person will do to effectively cope with their stressors without the risk-taking behaviours (Potter & Perry, 2019). In this case, people who do not have an effective coping skills resort to health threatening behaviours and one of these behaviours is drug misuse/substance abuse. There are also many factors that can contribute to drug addiction.

Actions to Address Issue

Spryfield has number of programs that is being offered in the Community Wellness Centre. In an interview with R. Evans, they offer Addictions Community-Based Services, which helps individual with their addiction problems. The treatment can be offered individually or as a group which ever the person prefers. A two-week treatment program, this program is intensive for people who benefit with a daily treatment. Skills building workshop are also being offered to enhance skills that will help make changes in their lifestyles. Some examples for this workshop are Early Recovery Skills, Leisure and Self Care, Healthy boundaries, and Coping with Anxiety (personal communication, March 08, 2020). There is also a free health and wellness program, and health promotion and community outreach that are being offered in the Community Wellness Centre. There is public housing program and metro housing program that peoples can benefit from. A non-profit organization (YWCA) provides help in developing their skills for employment, providing housing and integrated support to the affected individuals.

Role of Community Nurse

As a Community Nurse, we play a big role in providing support to our patient physically, mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually. We should inform our patient that any information that is being said is strictly confidential and will only be shared with in the appropriate health care team/discipline. It is our role to thoroughly assess our patient properly in a non-judgemental way to earn their trust and confidence. During assessment we should use open ended questions and try to explore the patient's feelings and assess his/her coping skills and health status. Involving the patient in the treatment planning is also important to promote a client-centered approach to care. If the patient would like his/her family to be involved in planning, we should change our approach to a family-centered care whereby including the patient and who he/she considers family; this will promote a trusting relationship towards the patient and the family. Advocating for the patient's needs and rights, as well as being a councillor/facilitator for promoting good health and a healthy lifestyle. We can offer appropriate referrals like the programs in the community wellness center, social services agencies, other health care disciplines, and non-profit organizations that can help the individual achieve his/her goals. We should also monitor the progress of our patient and do a follow up assessment on the effectivity of the program or treatment. In this way we can know if the program or treatment is effective towards helping the individual achieve his/her goals and make necessary adjustments or referrals if the need arises. It is also important to be aware of the negative impact/changes that the program or treatment might give to the individual. Evaluation is important to make necessary changes, assessment, re-planning, and referrals.

Conclusion

Spryfield is a wonderful community to live in. It has all the amenities and community resources that we need. It is not perfect, but in imperfections we find ways to improve our community. Same goes to our health. If we help each other as a patient, nurse and the whole health team; We can provide good quality health care and support. As a community we move forward towards promoting good health, healthy lifestyle and equality for everyone, Regardless of ethnicity, color, race, gender, religion, beliefs, and social status.

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