

The Kids Will Be Alright: Addressing Teens' Needs for Connection After Covid Isolation

Megan McCullough
Department of Social Work
Cal Poly Humboldt
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Community Need Statement

- Covid-19 lockdowns impacted teenagers' mental health and social development
- Del Norte County has high ACE scores, including high rates of bullying of LGBTQIA2S+ students and students of color, and high rates of depression and isolation (kidsdata.org).
- Sunset's level of support is a protective factor.

Method

- Met with students to build relationships since September 2022
- Surveyed and interviewed students to determine need
- Compiled research from students and peer-reviewed articles to provide the focus of intervention
- Created curriculums and identified local resources
 - We focused on **self-love, self-care, communicating emotions, media literacy, relationship values, role models, visualization, body-centering, affirmations, journaling, and confidence**
- Collaborated with Kim to facilitate groups, held groups in alliance with students
- Engaged in reflection and received feedback

Acknowledgements

- The students of Sunset High
- Kim Meriwether, LCSW, Supervisor
- Julie Slater North, Laura Power, Larry Soll, Aisha Candrian, Julie Simpson, and many other mentors and collaborators
- My cohort and my family (blood and chosen)
- Pho Huang and Kin Khao

One caring relationship can make a difference in a child's life.



Credibility Statement

I am a gender fluid person and sexual assault survivor, both making me particularly passionate about abolishing oppressive gender expectations and educating and empowering youth in the ability to create their own radical relationships, have clear expectations without harm, and communicate boundaries. I recognize my impact as a white, educated person and work to question bias, highlight historically silenced perspectives, and create a non-hierarchical, collective learning space. **I continue to work to be more culturally competent, humble, and responsive through respectful engagement, research, reflection, and feedback.**

Theoretical Issues

- **Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics and Education from Dr. Bruce Perry, Polyvagal Theory from Dr. Stephen Porges**
 - A person must be regulated before they can absorb any information; utilizing a "bottom-up" approach, we can meet students where they are
- **Queer, Feminist, and Indigenist Theories, AWARE Model (Grady & Dombo, 2016)**
 - A critical and radical lens of dismantling hierarchies and assumptions, building relationships, and inviting accountability, curiosity, and humility

Deliverable & Sustainability

- Compilation of resources, curriculums, and methods as a gift for the next intern and counselor at Sunset High
- Mental wellness and emotional resilience continues on through the students' lives

References



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