

AMCHP Annual Conference, 2010

Moving Ahead Together:

Celebrating the Legacy, Shaping the Future of Maternal and Child Health

Ten Years and Counting:

Youth Development MCH-Academic Partnerships in ACTION

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UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The brochure is available online and we have several that we have printed and passed out to trainings and things that we go and do. We do use the Search Institute quite often. We have training called Parents Let's Talk that I know a lot of you are probably getting tired of hearing about but it has five components and one of those components is developmental assets and the strength in that youth asset study that has been done at OU also. So, we see a real correlation with positive health outcomes and risk reduction and protective factors with these developmental assets. So, it's really good to know that we're pretty much on track with what we're doing. We know that it seems like a good idea to us. Good to hear on another statewide level that you're having success also. If I may ask just a couple of questions, one I have for Jane. I'm really intrigued about the evaluation that you have and we have teen pregnancy prevention projects. We utilize the Postponing Sexual Involvement curriculum and we would like to incorporate more of the developmental assets in that growth and developmental assets along with the core curriculum and we'd like to know if you've done that with teen pregnancy prevention projects and if so, how that evaluation is done exactly.

JANE POWERS: Actually that's precisely our target population right now is we're working with the adolescent sexual health programs funded by the New York state department of health and we've got a number of tools that we've used in evaluations around looking at the extent to which programs are integrating youth development principles and practices. So, it's a self-assessment reflection tool that we've given to providers. I'm happy to share those with you but it's kind of like a first step to and it holds people accountable like these are the principles and this is what you should be integrating into your program and to what extent are you using these principles of youth development in your work and so that's what I have to offer now. We are about to embark on a major evaluation effort for newly funded adolescent sexual health programs and again will be developing a number of tools to do this but it's looking at the positive outcomes in addition to risk reduction behaviors and so I'm going to give you my card and I'll be happy to follow-up and share those resources because it's really critical.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you. I would sure like to see that. I appreciate it. Dr. Kreipe I have one for you as well. When you were talking about protective factors you mentioned spirituality, not necessarily religiosity. Can you kind of expand on that just a little bit?

RICHARD KREIPE: Well, I think the issue is that generally people do have a strong religious kind of a component to their sense of self. There is an element of spirituality

as well. It's just that it's framed in a more structured way around a specific religion but I just saw a patient the other day who was raised Roman Catholic but she wants to become Wicca and I'm sure that's because that's a kind of a reaction against the way she was raised and I'm sure that when she gets 21 she'll be back to being Catholic again but it's the way transitions often go. So that issue of there is something beyond yourself, it's that sense that it's not all about you and I think one of the key points we see in adolescent growth and development so much is especially early on, the early adolescent, we talked about the egocentrism, the personal fable. The world, the universe circles around them, which I think is an important thing for early adolescents because what we talk about is the key point of going from childhood to adulthood is developing a sense of self, you know, the Ericssonian model. A firm sense of identity. So being egocentric early on is actually a positive part of growth and development but to realize that there is something beyond you in some way and some capacity and it can have different kind of frames. So, it's not necessarily just a narrow and an organized in a structural kind of a way, although that does fit as well for certain individuals.

I just want to mention that the document that Jane talked about will be on the website associated with this workshop. So, everybody can have a copy of it without lugging it home.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I just wanted to share sort of the process we're in right now in Minnesota, which I'm pretty excited about. There's been a group of state level folks that have been meeting for a couple of years now representing our different

departments in the state. So, public safety, we've got public safety onboard. So, some juvenile justice folks, which I feel is kind of a coup. I'm excited about that. Human services, education and several people that are also in health that really buy into that concept of positive youth development and we've sort of building our capacity to understand what that means for us as a state over the last couple of years inviting speakers to come and talk to us. Policymakers are meeting quarterly. Then a few months ago we were granted a very small technical assistance grant through 4H, which invited us to or asked us to invite our 4H partners through our 4H extension office in (Inaudible), Minnesota and plus another youth representative from our group called Youth Community Connections. So, now they're onboard and we're really trying to figure out can we come up with a shared definition of youth development and how can we really push a policy agenda for all of our departments that is youth focused and ultimately we want youth participation. That's for all of our goal. We don't have a youth cabinet. We don't have a board. We would really like to have youth at the table and I haven't figured out how to fund it yet or who would be in charge of convening those kids or transporting them or all that business, which is so hard about having a youth advisory board. Any wisdom you can share with us on that front?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You know, we're not the experts on this by any means but I do want to say in the journal supplement look at the article on the youth development team and the efforts we've taken in New York State to get all the state agencies together that in any way touch youth. It includes our department of motor vehicles, department of labor that's the first thing is to get your state level partners. It sounds like

you're there. Then from there you get down into the communities and we're probably struggling as much as it sounds like you're struggling to get that youth involvement. We're in the process right now of developing a network of youth advisors to the department because my dream is to eventually, you know we have a health issue that we want to know first of all how best to roll this out to young people or to find out really how they see it. I need a mechanism to get that out quickly. So, we're in the process right now through the Center of Excellence.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We are experiencing a lot of success in this although it's hard but it really needs a dedicated person. It's got to be somebody's job. It can't be yours. Somebody has to be dedicated to this. It just can't be an add-on. Adults are going to have to change their behaviors and when they're going to meet. I mean all these logistical issues, which can be absolutely solved and worked out but adults have to change and be prepared and young people need to be prepared. We do have a lot of tools and resources on this and if you want to follow-up with our youth network I have an actual youth network coordinator on our staff that is managing this effort at this point.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: One of the other things we've learned from this is for example last year we did an extensive number of youth focused focus groups on adolescent sexual health in preparation for a symposium and there's something magical about working with an academic institution that they have these people called graduate students apparently. (Laughter) So, it's not that expensive. I was surprised. It didn't cost as much as I thought it was going to cost to pay stipends for the young people to

come, for the travel and everything and again I think it's by this partnership. Now, if we were to do that within the department, oh my God, the cost would have been ten times as high and then of course we never would have gotten approval to do it because of the newest restriction on renting space, serving food, whatever. So, I mean that's where we leverage a lot. Again, I'm giving away my trade secrets here, so you'll have to erase some of your tape but this is where I say the luxury of my job is that we're able to facilitate a lot of these things for not a lot of money.

QUESTION: In a similar way we had one of our adolescent medicine fellows, a Leah Fellow was very interested in reproductive health and she worked on the symposium as well. That was really kind of one of her major (inaudible) and she came basically free because federal tax dollars that pay for the Leah Program cover her. So, I think that's a really important point is the academic institutions really can have a lot of fire power that don't have to necessarily cost a whole lot more but it sounds like you're right on track with things. I agree. You can't do it all but you can be the champion. I think that's the key point is you've just got to keep banging that drum and it's kind of like we've talked about youth development and how people define things. It's like mowing the lawn. You get it done and it looks great but you know what, a week later you've got to mow it again and in the summer you might have to mow it twice in one week. In the fall you might be able to go two or three weeks between mowing but you just have to say this is what it takes and I think that's one of the big issues around the long-term commitment. How do you really make it go? We're fortunate I think in New York state to have a New York state governor's children's cabinet because that does bring everybody together at the

same place at the same time and we are actually in Albany, week ago today talking to the cabinet about youth development. So, I think each state will have different venues in which they can have some influence. I don't want to make it seem like New York State has solved everything. We've got lots of issues and one of these that we keep coming against is in addition to actually getting the youth there because of transportation. People don't realize that New York State is a huge state. From the northeast corner to the southwest corner is about a six or seven-hour drive. So, it's a big state. So, transportation and those kinds of issues are also important. Another thing I think we found consistently kind of difficult is family involvement, parent involvement and I think sometimes people think of youth development as okay, my kids are being taken off to some program and these youth service agencies are doing their youth development but I really think that we really need to kind of include parents more proactively but that's kind of sometimes difficult. Have you all found ways of including parents, getting parents involved in these kinds of things in creative ways, ideas?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We have a Parents Let's Talk training that we do from the health department. We have a few partners that we go out with and do a full day of training called, Parents Let's Talk, and it's based on the Advocates for Youth, October, Let's Talk Month and we are creating a cadre of trainers throughout the state who will then go and talk to groups in their communities and maybe parents and maybe Girl Scout leaders, youth ministers and just a variety of professionals and parents that work with youth in a variety of ways. So, we're sort of letting them know these are things that

you can do just on that level. So, we're getting more and more requests for it. So, I think it's been successful.

RICHARD KREIPE: So, it's disseminating and diffusing. That's good.

QUESTION: You mentioned mainly using a lot of MCH funding. Are there other sources of funding that you might be able to tap into?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We used a combination of MCH and state dollars on this but I think there is the possibility with many of these new funding streams I think that there are a lot of these principles really apply to that. I'm looking at the teen pregnancy. The implementation of evidenced based programming, which we are in the process now of re-soliciting our state program, you know it is a component of it. I look at that personal responsibility funding and I think that that's where we are looking, our Office of Children and Family Services with a lot of the federal typical social welfare funding. I think look at any of those funding sources because it really is the best foundation and the way that we've been able to make it very popular in our state is to say that you're not just addressing one thing, you're addressing the entire adolescent and that really appeals to people.

QUESTION: (Inaudible)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Education is a continuous challenge for us. We were making some real progress and our state education department a few years ago had the highest median age of any state agency and all of my contact persons disappeared. They all retired and I'm in the process now of trying to really develop new contacts but I think that I have a new mantra and you're going to hear it and that is in the education system in many ways we can't really reach from the top up. It's really got to be from the community up and there is a local rule with local school boards having a tremendous amount of authority and particularly in the area of sex education as far as what's being provided and I'm really trying to mobilize communities in young people within their communities to really make the demands because it's very hard. You know what New Yorkers are like. We're very strong willed and no one is going to tell us what to do and I think that really permeates through this particular system and it doesn't do well for a local system. I'm also very sensitive the other day with Linda from Nebraska who said that she has to go back to the mid part of the country with the new ideas from the coastal areas and the beltway and I thought, God, I never thought of myself as one of the coastal areas, Albany is miles from the coast but again it's a similar type thing in New York where we do have very conservative communities and we have the more liberal urban areas. So, we try to be sensitive but that's an ongoing challenge for us. We are making some progress with our juvenile justice system, which is very encouraging.

RICHARD KREIPE: I think an important issue is to get partners wherever you can because sometimes they have input into other things. I've grown up in Philadelphia. I

always thought 4H was the same thing as the Future Farmer's of America but 4H is everywhere and in fact at MCHP a few years ago we talked about what Jackie Davis-Managaut (phonetic) from the (Inaudible) Cooperative Extension of New York City they're doing things in Harlem with growing community gardens, etcetera. So, I think we need to really kind of think and I hate the phrase outside the box but we need to think about lots of different kinds of partners that might have a role. You know, 4H is really at a national level really being seen as doing a lot of things with respect to positive youth development, the University of Arizona and other partners as well. So, I guess that's one of the neat things about positive youth development is you need to think about who else should we get involved? Who else needs to be at the table because you might get into education in that way? So, there are other states where education is kind of at the lead of all of this and so I guess there are different states with different strengths and different kinds of challenges.

Question: One of the other ways we might be able to engage parents is to do activities like mother/daughter kinds of activities, father/son kinds of activities and encourage the kids to be excited about it so that they bring their parents. If you have like maybe a cooking something with the mother and the daughter, you know just simple things to get them together.

RICHARD KREIPE: That's a brilliant strategy because I think the best way to get to a parent is through the young person. So, if you can get that young person interested in something the parents can come along with it to see what they're interested in and

actually work on the developmental. We talked about connectedness being an important issue. That could be a way of helping parents connect because I think in homes often there is a disconnect because the kids are playing their videogames and other kinds of issues and so that would be a wonderful strategy is to get to the parents through the youngsters but actually working on some kind of a activity they can work on together.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Also in New York State we don't do any direct service. We contract out with communities and we always refer to the power of the pulpit. In many of our communities it's the preacher who tells the parents to be there that night at 7:00 o'clock and they are there. So, many of our community organizations tell us that it's the most powerful thing that they have to engage parents.

RICHARD KREIPE: One thing we may take advantage of I think in a lot of communities I'm hearing about taking advantage of the crisis of the obesity epidemic. A lot of times parents are overweight. They don't want their kids to be overweight and so you can engage the parent as here's how we can maybe working together we can help your child be less likely to get hypertension and diabetes and some of the other medical complications of overweight. That can be another strategy to get the parents as well and then it can be like cooking together, cooking healthy. I think the key point there is to make sure that it's kind of culturally sensitive because the food in various areas of the country obviously have different...and not just various areas of the country but various communities as well. So, good points. Any other thoughts or questions? Well, I really

appreciate you sticking around all of this time. It's been great. I'd like to thank Kris and Jane and please be sure to complete the individual MCHP session evaluation form and have a safe trip home.