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Preventing Future Children from Living in Poverty in Port Isabel, Texas

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COUN 6785: Social Change in Action:
Prevention, Consultation, and Advocacy

Social Change Portfolio

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OVERVIEW

Keywords: Child Poverty, Low-Income Families, Hispanic, Mexican-American, Border Town, Educational Opportunities, Family Counseling, Focus Groups, Port Isabel, Texas, Prevention
Preventing Future Children from Living in Poverty in Port Isabel, Texas

Goal Statement: This prevention project aims to decrease Hispanic child poverty in Port Isabel, TX, from the current rate of 45% to 40% over five years by connecting with Hispanic families who live in poverty through focus groups and family counseling to address bicultural issues affecting educational success.

Significant Findings:

Population and Problem

Many Hispanic children in Port Isabel, TX, live in poverty (45%; County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2018), especially girls under the age of five (DATAUSA, 2018). How might this be decreased now and prevented in the future?

Key Findings

Risk factors for child poverty include parents living in a colonia or low-income housing (Dietz, 2008; Towne et al., 2017), attending a high school with low standardized test grades (Texas Education Agency (TEA), 2017), identifying as Hispanic (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2018), not having health insurance (Towne et al.), or living in a time of global economic hardship (Towne et al.). Protective factors for child poverty in Port Isabel include family support (Espino, 2016) and having health insurance (Towne et al., 2017). This prevention project aims to reduce these risk factors and increase these protective factors.

Recommendations

Programs that embrace Social Cognitive Theory can address this problem (Better-Bubon & Schultz, 2018; Buzzetto-Hollywood et al., 2019; Carey, 2019; Promising Practices Network, 2014), as well as projects that embrace culture competency techniques (Garcia-Joslin et al., 2016; Parra-Cardona et al., 2017). Recommended advocacy actions to push toward preventing poverty include bending the rules or disagreeing with superiors, finding nontraditional transportation options for students, or teaching families how to advocate for themselves (Crawford et al., 2019).

Objectives/Strategies/Interventions/Next Steps:

Objectives, Strategies, and Interventions

Hispanic children experiencing poverty can be identified and can participate in focus groups. Information gathered from these focus groups can provide an outline for appropriate family counseling for interested families. School counselors can act as consultants to help with educational assistance and in setting up an evidence-based program such as “Teaching And Reaching Every Area” (TAREA; n.d.).

Next Steps

A brochure can be created and handed out at the focus groups that lists currently available resources for undocumented families and their children. We can additionally raise public support for this region's initiative.

INTRODUCTION

Preventing Future Children from Living in Poverty in Port Isabel, Texas

I live near Port Isabel, Texas. One striking observation I have made over the last four years is how many students at all levels barely pass each grade; their report cards reflect failing grades for most of the school year. My three children have consistently reported that teachers identified numerous students in all of their classes as failing, which they had never experienced in other cities. The majority of students live in Mexican American families, having immigrated to the United States. The United States Census Bureau (2018) recorded the Hispanic population in Port Isabel to be 70.3% of the people who live here. Espino's research (2016) indicated that Mexican American children routinely face a choice between family involvement or school involvement from their bicultural life. When school becomes difficult, students may begin to lean toward family businesses and traditions rather than school. According to Espino (2016), most families would welcome this choice. However, letting go of school would perpetuate the same socioeconomic status for these children as their families, low-income, rather than using education as a means to rise above poverty. Many Mexican American families in Port Isabel experience poverty. The County Health Rankings and Roadmaps website (2018) showed that 40% of children in Cameron County, and 45% of Hispanic children, live in poverty. According to this website, this number compares with 21% of children in Texas overall who live in poverty.

Part of traditional Mexican American family life in Port Isabel is getting married and having children at a young age (S. Zavaletta, personal communication, October 1, 2020). Another part of traditional Hispanic life in Port Isabel is to keep information about sexuality and birth control away from teenagers, especially teenage girls, to protect their innocence (Michelle, personal communication, January 28, 2020). These factors have the potential to lead to adolescent pregnancy. According to County Health Rankings and Roadmaps (2018), the Hispanic population in Cameron County, TX has a teen birth rate of 53 for every 1,000 females,

compared with a value of 34 in Texas overall. This county statistic points to teenage pregnancy in the Hispanic population of Cameron County as significantly higher than in other parts of Texas. Practically, pregnancy would steer adolescent girls, and some adolescent boys, toward choosing traditional family life (and poverty) over educational progression. However, investigating this statistic revealed that the teenage pregnancy rate, though not the percentage of children living in poverty, decreased significantly since 2011 when the rate was 90 for every 1,000 females locally and 64 in Texas overall (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2018). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website (2019) confirmed that the teenage birth rate has continued to drop in the United States, even in the Hispanic population. Therefore, adolescent pregnancy rates are not related to the relatively steady number of children living in poverty in this community. High school graduation rates are also high in this county (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2018), which does not correlate with numerous reports of failing grades and a high percentage of childhood poverty in this community.

What could be responsible for this high poverty rate? Espino (2016) indicated that information in the literature regarding Mexican American families inaccurately reflects them as not caring about education. Help needs to be extended to families to pull the divide of biculturalism together and help students succeed in school and life. I believe focus groups targeted toward families living in poverty would help to understand these conflicting statistics. It would uncover specific details related to the current child poverty. This activity's goal would be to begin research toward creating a program to prevent children in the future from living in poverty. In this assignment, I will discuss the scope and consequences of child poverty in Cameron County, how this fits with the Social-Ecological Model, a theory of prevention that relates to this local circumstance, which diversity and ethical considerations to consider and act

on, and how to advocate for children and families. I begin with the scope and consequences of child poverty in Port Isabel, Texas.

PART 1: SCOPE AND CONSEQUENCES

Preventing Future Children from Living in Poverty in Port Isabel, Texas

The Target Problem I Identified in My Community

The target problem in my community of Port Isabel, Texas, I have identified as needing a prevention project is the high child poverty rate. Though teenage pregnancies have dropped significantly since 2011 and high school graduation rates were recorded as high in Cameron County, the percentage of children living in poverty remains high (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2018). Statistics appear mixed concerning the cause of this situation, and Espino's research (2016) indicated the problem might lie in the biculturalism that children and families are facing in this community. When families move to a new culture, they may change their traditions to increase their chance of survival, or they may not change enough to be successful in the new culture educationally and financially (Espino, 2016). The first step in a prevention project to address child poverty in Port Isabel, Texas, would be to initiate focus groups for families currently experiencing poverty to bring students, families, and the educational system together. Through this channel, discussions could explore the difficulties biculturalism causes and how it relates to persistent child poverty. With more information, family counseling could further address these problems.

The Scope of the Problem

The County Health Rankings and Roadmaps website (2018) shows that 40% of children in Cameron County live in poverty, while 21% of Texas children live in poverty. For the

Hispanic population, the poverty level for children is 45%, per this website. These statistics have remained consistent over time. In 2019, 46% lived in poverty, with 21% for Texas children overall (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2018). In 2011, 44% of Hispanic children lived in poverty, with 23% for Texas children overall. Though child poverty levels in Cameron County have been stable over the years, teenage pregnancies have decreased from 90 for every 1,000 females in 2011 to 53 for the Hispanic population in 2020 (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2018). These statistics indicate that falling adolescent pregnancy rates did not affect the percentage of children in poverty. This lack of association between the statistics surprised me.

Is the high school graduation rate related to child poverty? The high school graduation rate listed for Cameron County as the best information available in 2020 was 90%, with 95% for Texas overall (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2018). For 2019, the data showed 91% for Cameron County and 89% for Texas, going back to 87% and 86% for 2013. That year, they changed their method for collecting data and warned that readers should not compare the data with earlier years. These statistics reflect a relatively stable, high rate for high school graduation, a positive outlook. These positive numbers do not make sense to me, however. How can the students be reflected as doing so well in the county statistics when I know, year after year, I have heard of the students failing? Perhaps Port Isabel is too small and too different from the other towns in the community to be reflected in the county statistics. Or, maybe the students are being allowed to graduate even if they have not learned the material. The school district curriculum is significantly behind Sacramento, CA, where my children learned concepts a year earlier in CA than in TX. How is this related to child poverty?

Something is missing here. The county statistics and my personal experiences reflect the poverty rate in my community. That is the problem. What is causing poverty? My initial thought was incorrect because teenage pregnancy has decreased, while the poverty level has remained the same (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2018). It also does not appear to be related to a low rate of high school graduation. I believe this is where the answer lies. I need to talk with the Hispanic families in Port Isabel to understand what children are doing after graduating from high school and why the community remains poor. Are students leaving their families behind to live in other communities? Are students graduating without enough knowledge and skills to go to college or secure a good job? Focus groups and follow-up family counseling for Hispanic families in poverty are excellent places to start with a prevention project. These actions would allow me to understand the challenges these families face and why their children continue to remain in poverty over time.

The Consequences of This Problem in My Community

The main physical consequence of child poverty in Port Isabel, TX, is malnutrition and hunger in children. There are children in my community who would have nothing to eat if it were not for the school district giving food to children at school. According to the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Website (2018), 87% of children enrolled in a public school in Cameron County are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The Point Isabel Independent School District, which serves Port Isabel, serves free breakfast and lunch to all four schools.

The mental health consequences of child poverty in Port Isabel, TX, include lack of access to mental health services for both children and parents, often resulting in harsh parenting practices (Parra-Cardona et al., 2017). Without access to the same things other children have, kids may also experience peer rejection and anxiety over not fitting in with other students at

school. I was a child who lived in poverty, and I learned to copy others' actions and dress so as not to stick out and draw attention to myself, though this did not always work. This idea of copying others also relates to the social/educational/family consequences of child poverty in Port Isabel. Though most of the population is Hispanic, there is still a strong push, especially in school, to adopt mainstream America's values and knowledge. Students are required to speak, read, and write in English after fifth grade. Also, Americans in other states created most of the curriculum taught here. Therefore, in addition to children experiencing poverty, most are also experiencing a conflict with biculturalism. Espino (2016) explained that biculturalism creates a conflict in children's minds between taking on the school community's American culture and their neighborhood versus respecting and following their family's traditions. This internal conflict may perpetuate child poverty. Children may continue to follow their family traditions and remain in their neighborhoods rather than pursue professional diversity through education and find a path to a higher socioeconomic status. Research conducted by Carey (2019) confirmed this outlook. This internal conflict could also lead to mental illness.

The economic consequence of childhood poverty in Port Isabel, TX, is a low socioeconomic status for children. Treatment for this public health issue would involve giving money or resources to the children or their families, which the Point Isabel Independent School District does as often as possible. They even send food home for all children in the community under 18 during the week, on weekends, and during holidays, which they started once the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions began. On the other hand, prevention is a method for solving or decreasing the underlying problem (Conyne et al., 2013). Future children will then not experience poverty to this extreme, which Laureate Education called working upstream (2018).

Working with families to see how biculturalism interacts with poverty may be a starting point in preventing this public health issue.

My Goal Statement

This prevention project aims to decrease Hispanic child poverty in Port Isabel, TX, from the current rate of 45% to 40%, the child poverty rate of all Cameron County children (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2018). In five years, accomplishing this goal can be achieved by connecting with Hispanic families who live in poverty through focus groups and then with family counseling to address bicultural issues affecting educational success. By raising high school grades, success getting into college, and attaining jobs after high school, students can achieve a higher socioeconomic status as adults than their caregivers. Their children, then, will not experience child poverty. Families can target these goals in family counseling interventions.

PART 2: SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL MODEL

Preventing Future Children from Living in Poverty in Port Isabel, Texas

Risk and Protective Factors

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, n.d.) defined risk factors as elements or characteristics that can come from many levels of a person's life and will most likely lead to adverse outcomes. SAMHSA described protective factors as elements or attributes that can help weather or buffer these risk factors' impact. Research has tied specific risk and protective factors to specific public problems. What factors contribute to child poverty in Port Isabel, Texas (risk factors), and what factors protect people in the face of child poverty (protective factors)? It is possible to look at these risk and protective factors from the perspective of the Social-Ecological Model. Swearer and Hymel (2015) explained this model as it related to bullying through the multiple relationships that contribute to bullying behavior at the

individual, peer, family, teacher, neighbor, and societal levels. The authors explained how relationships and interactions at one level could cause reactions and consequences at other levels, making bullying behavior complex. Similarly, I will look at child poverty in Port Isabel, Texas, and how people in poverty must contend with multiple influences as they attempt to cope with poverty or struggle to get out of poverty.

At the Community/Cultural Level

I wanted to take a broader view of child poverty at the community/cultural level and slowly narrow it down to an individual perspective of how poverty affects Port Isabel and what is causing it in the first place. In researching poverty in Texas, I came across information about colonias. These are "...extremely low-income communities along the Texas-Mexican border. [They] consist of irregular communities, generally created on unincorporated country land, that for the most part initially lack most basic facilities – water, sewerage, electricity, paved streets and sidewalks, and the like..." (Dietz, 2008, section 4). According to this university website, this unusable and unimproved land was divided into small plots and sold to low-income people who had no means of owning land. Colonias exist in California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, with the largest number of colonias in Texas, 2300, Dietz reported. The best estimate is that 450,000 people live in colonias in Texas (Dietz, 2008). The majority of people living in these colonias are Hispanic, two-thirds of them being US citizens, and 85-90% under eighteen years old being born in the United States (Dietz, 2008). These facts indicate that contrary to what many would think, people living in colonias are not necessarily illegal immigrants. The blog specifically mentioned Cameron county, the county that Port Isabel is located in, as one of the nation's poorest counties containing colonias (Dietz, 2008).

My husband is the assistant city manager in Brownsville, TX (which is 30 minutes from Port Isabel), and has worked with the residents of a colonia near the airport. Most of the homes have no running water or electricity. The airport needs this land for future building, and administrators asked residents to leave in exchange for money to buy housing elsewhere. Most were thrilled to hear this news, as they could not get this amount of money otherwise, but the airport has yet to take over the land. Other neighborhoods within Port Isabel, such as Laguna Heights, were once considered colonias, I believe, and are slowly being purchased and improved. It is also common knowledge that it is these areas in which the most impoverished students live, many with several families in one household. One risk factor, then, for child poverty in Port Isabel, is parents living in these neighborhoods. The cost of living inside these neighborhoods is so much lower than standard housing that it is difficult for residents to move out of these areas.

At the School Level

Dietz's blog (2008) indicated that colonias are often remote, and many cannot access public education. A lack of access to education, then, is another risk factor for child poverty. As Port Isabel's community has grown over the years, companies have built more neighborhoods, and businesses have invested in the area. I have seen a significant amount of building in this region over the last four and a half years. This growth has given residents in Port Isabel, Laguna Heights, Laguna Vista, and South Padre Island (small towns in this rural area) access to four public schools in the Port Isabel area. I already indicated that child poverty in this area is high, 45% for Hispanic children (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2018). This resource also showed that the high school graduation rate in this area is high, at 90%.

I was skeptical about this statistic because I have consistently heard reports about failing students, so I looked up the STAAR test results for Port Isabel High School. Out of the 100% of

Hispanic students who took the STAAR test in 2017, only 7% scored as advanced, 36% scored as meeting the grade-level standards, and 70% scored as at or above approaching grade-level standards (Texas Education Agency (TEA), 2017). There is some overlap in these numbers, but most Hispanic students are not meeting grade-level standards. White students, the only other race reflected, had similar numbers: 22% for advanced, 58% for meets grade level, and 80% for approaching grade level (TEA, 2017). There appears to be a relationship, and a risk factor, between child poverty and the low scoring test grades at the high school.

At the Family Level

To look at risk and protective factors for child poverty at the family and individual level, I looked at an article from the Walden Library by Towne et al. (2017). It investigated health and access to health care, keeping race, ethnicity, and location in mind, of lower-income adults of working age. They studied these factors before, during, and after the Great Recession of 2008-2009. Studying low-income individuals during this recent era intrigued me. I believe what families are experiencing now with COVID-19 would be similar, or worse, than what they experienced during the Great Recession. Considering child poverty at the family level is complicated. It involves working or nonworking parents and children who are in school or not in school. At this level, numerous influences come together, and it is here, I believe, where the biggest hope for reducing child poverty lies. A parent or child could use education or a business opportunity to pull themselves out of poverty, which would affect the entire family. Similarly, a parent or child could leave home, abandoning the other family members, making child poverty for that family even worse. For this reason, my prevention project focuses on bringing the family together into focus groups and family counseling for positive change.

The research study authors analyzed data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) (Towne et al., 2017). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conduct this telephone-based survey. They found that residents who lived in rural areas (like Port Isabel) had less education, a lower income, and higher disability. They reported that those who lived in the South (Texas is in the South) or the Western/Pacific regions had the most individuals in the lowest income category (less than \$15,000) and the least education, below high school graduation. These statistics point to living in rural Texas as a risk factor for families experiencing child poverty. Espino's research (2016), referred to earlier, also talked about biculturalism that Hispanic children face, pulling them in two different directions. According to this qualitative research, they feel pressured to help their families with a local business or family needs and want to do well in school and make a future. This conflict in responsibility at a young age could also be a family risk factor for child poverty, as only half of a young person's focus may be on education at one time. However, family support could also be a protective factor, perhaps keeping child poverty from turning into homelessness.

At the Peer/Work Level

Dietz (2008) noted that the unemployment rate in colonias could be five or six times the state's unemployment rate. For the most part, unemployed individuals do not have health insurance, though the Affordable Care Act tried to address this issue (Towne et al., 2017). Towne et al. (2017) found that having health insurance was a protective factor toward reporting fair or poor health overall. This information shows how a neighborhood, linked to limited resources of the poor, can be tied to unemployment and poor individual health. As SAMHSA noted (n.d.), risk factors can act together to make a situation even worse.

At the Individual Level

Considering child poverty at the individual level, Towne et al. (2017) found that rural areas and individuals in the South had lower self-reported health than urban areas. Rural areas also had a higher rate of individuals not seeking medical care because of the high cost. Dietz (2008) also noted that colonias had a higher disease rate than standard housing because potable water was not always available. Further, Towne et al.'s research (2017) discovered that individuals were more likely to forgo medical care during the Recession than before the Recession, mainly Hispanic, black, and white adults. This research only examined low-income, working adults, representing the parents of children living in poverty. Given this information, individual risk factors for parents of those experiencing child poverty are adults living in a rural area in the South with fair/poor health. They are not likely to seek medical care. Encountering further global economic hardship (such as COVID-19) makes it even more challenging to seek medical care, especially for those who identify as Hispanic. As I try to identify risk and protective factors and their reciprocal relationship, it is hard to separate them and determine their causes. From all the research, it appears that the majority of people in Port Isabel can identify with most of the risk factors covered for experiencing poverty. Given what I have read, it is no surprise that child poverty is high in this area.

Summary

In summary, the risk factors for child poverty in Port Isabel include parents living in a colonia or low-income housing (Dietz, 2008; Towne et al., 2017), a neighborhood's lack of access to public education (Dietz, 2008), attending a high school with low standardized test grades (Texas Education Agency (TEA), 2017), and living in a rural part of Texas (Towne et al., 2017). Further risk factors include identifying as Hispanic (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2018), parents who are unemployed (Dietz, 2008; Towne et al., 2017), not having

health insurance (Towne et al.), having fair or poor health (Towne et al.), parents not seeking medical care (Towne et al.), and living in a time of global economic hardship (Towne et al.). Protective factors for child poverty in Port Isabel include family support (Espino, 2016) and having health insurance (Towne et al., 2017). My prevention project should aim to reduce these risk factors and increase these protective factors. For example, suppose students can raise their standardized test grades in high school and secure a job after high school through family and school support interventions. In that case, they have a better chance of having health insurance and earning enough money to live outside of a low-income neighborhood. Now I will look at a theory of prevention and evidence-based programs to demonstrate how students, families, and counselors can achieve these outcomes.

PART 3: THEORIES OF PREVENTION

Preventing Future Children from Living in Poverty in Port Isabel, Texas

A Theory That Applies to This Prevention Program

The prevention theory that is most appropriate to support this prevention project is Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). SCT observes that change occurs with the interaction and reciprocal influence of three elements: people and their characteristics, their environment, and their behavior (National Cancer Institute, 2005). Within the impact of these three things, change can occur when people believe they can change (self-efficacy), have a goal to change, and expect that change will happen (National Cancer Institute, 2005).

Why This Theory is Appropriate

SCT is an appropriate prevention theory to address this prevention project because it acknowledges the multiple and reciprocal influences that play a part in child poverty in Port

Isabel, Texas. As just discussed, the Social-Ecological Model identified risk and protective factors at multiple levels that contribute to this issue. The neighborhood and region children live in, in addition to the family they are a part of, are environmental factors contributing to poverty (Dietz, 2008; Espino, 2016; Towne et al., 2017). Children's' access to education, access to health insurance, and their current health status are personal factors contributing to poverty (Dietz, 2008; Towne et al., 2017). Finally, children's' performance in school is a behavioral factor that can contribute to poverty (Texas Education Agency (TEA), 2017; County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2018). Focusing on these elements to produce positive change is what Social Cognitive Theory does, through the concept of reciprocal determinism (National Cancer Institute, 2005). SCT helps people increase their self-efficacy by providing skills training and improving their behavioral capability, as explained by the National Cancer Institute. These concepts apply to helping children and teenagers do better at school, increasing their class and test grades, and gaining the skills to acquire a job or enroll in college after high school. To achieve this, children, teenagers, and their families must have the goal to change. If they believe there are rewards to achieving better test grades, attaining a job, or getting into college, they will set these goals for themselves. SCT embraces the idea of identifying reinforcements, or rewards, for clients (National Cancer Institute, 2005). Learning about and setting these goals can be done in focus groups and family counseling sessions. Finally, SCT establishes the need for clients to expect change, also explained by the National Cancer Institute (2005). Modeling by older students, examples that families set in the community, or counselors' and administrators' actions in the school can create an expectation for others to change. Social Cognitive Theory is a good match for a framework to guide the existing elements of child poverty toward positive change.

Research Support for This Theory

What research exists to support my declaration that this is the theory to follow for my prevention project? Buzzetto-Hollywood et al. (2019) presented research tying mindset interventions to increased grit, self-efficacy, and students' academic performance. Their focus was on minority students and those attending college for the first time. They created a lesson plan that evaluated and then taught first-year college students about the concepts of grit, self-efficacy, and a growth mindset (versus a fixed mindset). The lesson plan presented the UMES Self Growth Model to students, which emphasized that self-growth is a combination of a rise in self-esteem, self-efficacy, a growth mindset, and an increase in grit. It further assessed and presented information on goal setting. This lesson plan, and these concepts, were directly based on Social Cognitive Theory (Buzzetto-Hollywood et al., 2019). I could potentially share these ideas with high school students and their families, which would help prepare them for the possibility of attending college or persevering in high school to graduate with job-ready skills.

In another research study, Carey (2019) interviewed five eleventh-grade students in a college preparatory high school with mostly low-income and minority students. He used Social Cognitive Theory to frame his outlook and interviews. Carey examined black and Latino boys' internal dilemmas about going to college. These included their concerns over altered grades due to racial stereotyping, perceptions from their school that college classes would be rigid and unforgiving of a lack of focus, and worries about making new friends in college and living in a safe environment. Carey then examined these boys' external dilemmas about attending college. These included not understanding how financial aid or scholarships worked, how much college would cost, or how to keep their families from shouldering a financial or familial burden if they went to school. The interview framework identified the goal of students attending college after graduating from high school. This research highlighted many of the same concerns that high

school students and families face in the Port Isabel community. Using Social Cognitive Theory as a framework for interviewing to figure out what concerns black and Latino boys had about going to college outlined similar goals I have for focus groups with students and families in my community as part of my prevention project.

An Evidence-Based Program to Support This Prevention Project

I identified two evidence-based programs that also support my prevention project. One of them is still in operation today. I found the first project by looking at the archived information available on the Promising Practices Network website (2014). It was called the New Hope Project, which operated in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from 1994 to 1998. "...adults whose earnings were below 150 percent of the federal poverty level and who were willing to work full-time were eligible to apply for enrollment in the program" (Promising Practices Network, 2014, p. 328). The program helped get employment for those who could not secure it themselves through job searches, child care, and other employment resources. The New Hope Project also gave families additional money each month to raise their income above the poverty level. They further provided participants with subsidized health insurance and subsidized child care. This program's mission was to provide family support, reduce poverty, behavior problems, and violent behavior, and increase cognitive development and school performance in children.

Their design allowed them to measure their success in these areas. Administrators randomly assigned adults to a treatment group that received the benefits just described for three years (678 people) and a control group that did not receive these benefits (679 people) but had access to other community programs (Promising Practices Network, 2014). Of these adults, 51 percent were black, 27 percent were Hispanic, 13 percent were white, and 9 percent were of another ethnicity, while 70 percent lived in households with children. Five years after the

program began, they found it to be associated with a “20 percent reduction in the number of families living below the poverty line” (Promising Practices Network, 2014, p. 331). Children of the families participating also achieved statistically significant higher academic performance. The increase in income also “improved parents’ effective child management, which in turn was associated with improvements in children’s test scores and teacher- and parent-rated school performance” (Promising Practices Network, 2014, p. 331). The Promising Practices Network rated this program with its highest rating of "proven." This high rating is exciting because it aimed to reduce family poverty and increase children's' school performance, which my program also strives to do. The New Hope Project also showed that increasing family income was associated with better school performance by children in that family (Promising Practices Network, 2014).

I found the second program through research at the Walden library. This program is called "Teaching and Reaching Every Area" (TAREA, which spells homework in Spanish), located in Madison, Wisconsin (Teaching And Reaching Every Area (TAREA), n.d.). The program still exists and can be contacted via their website, <http://getarea.weebly.com/>. The program began when school counselors noted a large discrepancy between reading and math test scores of English-language learners (ELL) and non-ELL students (Betters-Bubon & Schultz, 2018). Their elementary school received a \$5,000 grant “to improve teaching and learning for students living in poverty” (Betters-Bubon & Schultz, 2018, p. 3), and they began an action research project. The program evolved over seven years.

They began a homework club twice a week at a location outside of school, close to where Hispanic students and their families lived, with an average of 20 students attending per week (Betters-Bubon & Schultz, 2018). Seventy -five percent of the teachers involved in the program

agreed that the homework club helped engage parents and students in school. They offered family engagement nights at the school and in the community for an average of 200 people, which led to more ELL students signing up for summer programs. They also offered a reading program, staffed by local university students who used the experience to fulfill their practicum requirements, twice a week until 2017. Ninety percent of the school-age students who participated said it helped them get excited about reading and school. Finally, they offered a parent meeting in Spanish every 6 to 8 weeks, attended by an average of 10 parents per session, and published a Spanish student newsletter. Middle and high school students wrote the Spanish newsletter called "Nuestras experiencias." They distributed it to 500 families in the community. This action research project positively changed the community. It helped Hispanic students living in poverty to do better in school. I would like my prevention project to achieve the same goal in my community.

Summary

I discussed how Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) is a good prevention theory to serve as a framework for my prevention project. I gave research examples of how SCT is supported to view the target population and issue in my community. Children and teenagers living in poverty can avoid poverty as adults and prevent poverty in their children through a program that can connect with families and improve children's and teenagers' school performance. One research study pointed to a plan based on SCT that can help pull teenagers through school difficulties and obstacles (Buzzetto-Hollywood et al., 2019). Based on SCT, other research pointed to the specific issues low-income students face as they consider the idea of going to college (Carey, 2019). I then presented two evidence-based programs whose goals were similar to my own for their communities. One program that operated from 1994 to 1998 in Wisconsin (the New Hope

Project) endeavored to pull families out of poverty and help students in those families do better in school, which they successfully achieved (Promising Practices Network, 2014). The other program, still in operation, began as an action research project to help English-language learner students, primarily Hispanic students living in poverty, to do better in school (Betters-Bubon & Schultz, 2018). They were able to help students, parents, and an entire community through their efforts. Now I will consider diversity and ethical considerations in my prevention project, some of which will overlap with what I have already discussed.

PART 4: DIVERSITY AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Preventing Future Children from Living in Poverty in Port Isabel, Texas

A Population Subgroup That Is Impacted Differently by Child Poverty

I discovered early in this research project that child poverty is higher in Hispanic individuals in my area than in white individuals who are not Hispanic. County Health Rankings and Roadmaps (2018) reports that Cameron County, TX, experiences a child poverty rate of 40% overall, with Hispanics encountering a child poverty rate of 45%. Beyond this subgroup, is there a specific population affected differently by child poverty in my community? What statistics can I find about Port Isabel specifically, not just county statistics? I found another database with demographic statistics that presents charts and trends based on Census Bureau data (DATAUSA, 2018). The website reports community statistics for the demographics they have information for and state statistics when that is all that is available. As stated in the United States Census Bureau website (2018), this website reports that 70.3% of the Port Isabel population, 5,057 people, are Hispanic (DATAUSA, 2018).

I looked up poverty by race and ethnicity on this site. Child poverty in Cameron County is higher in the Hispanic population than in the white population (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2018). However, overall poverty in Port Isabel, TX, is higher in the white demographic, but not by much, and only over the last two years (DATAUSA, 2018). The white population in poverty exceeded the Hispanic population in poverty by 144 people (1,578 people versus 1,434 people). The more significant point is that many people live in poverty in a small town of a little over 5,000. Given the margin of error, the website lists the percentage living in poverty in Port Isabel at 32.1% (DATAUSA, 2018). The national average, according to the information given, is 13.1%. This website also breaks these statistics down into age and gender. Looking at the Census Bureau data back to 2014, females under the age of 5 are the largest group of people living in poverty in Port Isabel. This data brings the importance of this prevention project back into focus. In Port Isabel, the percentage of females under the age of five living in poverty is 9.72%, or 158 little girls (DATAUSA, 2018). The statistics do not specifically break down these 158 people into ethnicity. However, based on the other numbers, it would make sense that at least half of these girls are Hispanic or the Hispanic community impacts them.

The Unique Impact Child Poverty Has on This Group

To evaluate the impact child poverty has on these little girls, I have to examine the research of Hispanic or Mexican American parents and of those who work with small children in school. Parra-Cardona et al.'s study (2017) examined the effects of two types of culturally relevant parenting classes with 130 Latino parents in Detroit, compared to a wait-list control group. The authors reported that parents who had experienced extreme poverty, abusive parenting practices of physical punishment or yelling, or the social expectation that children should not be given respect or recognition as children themselves parented their children the

same way. Many participants in the study were first-generation immigrants from Mexico, 75% of whom made a family income of less than \$40,000 per year. Their children were between the ages of 4 and 12. Most did not have access to mental health services or parenting classes, especially those given in Spanish. Therefore, without parent access to relevant help, many of the children of these Latino, low-income families received harsh, non-nurturing parenting. Also, many parenting practices came from another culture, not the one in which they currently lived. Parra-Cardona et al.'s research (2017) also addressed biculturalism concerns regarding parenting within their interventions. I believe that many of the young girls in Port Isabel face the same dilemma of harsh parenting and parenting disconnected from the culture they are now living in.

Garcia-Joslin et al. (2016) noted that children of Hispanic immigrant families frequently do not speak English and live in low-income neighborhoods with higher crime and violence. These children need to begin to learn English when they start school, which is their most significant school focus. However, these children may not receive credit for the skills they have already learned in their native language and are often placed wrongfully in special education classes (Garcia-Joslin et al.). Those not sent to special education usually only get three years to master English and compete with native English speakers. However, it usually takes seven years for people to acquire a language at a high enough level to compete in this way (Garcia-Joslin et al.). Many children focus on learning English and abandon concerted Spanish efforts, causing problems between them and their family members. The authors stressed that these children often suffer from the "immigrant paradox." The children of first-generation immigrants have more behavioral problems, including engaging in risky behavior and more problem attitudes with school than their parents did. This problem exists in Port Isabel as well. Teachers separate half of the elementary school students into Spanish classrooms, with half placed in English-speaking

classrooms. Students must learn English and other academic skills and complete all school work in English by sixth grade.

Research Suggestions for Increasing Cultural Relevance For This Group

Parra-Cardona et al.'s research (2017) focused on cultural relevance in teaching parenting practices to Latino families. They took the Parent Management Training, the Oregon Model (PMTO), and adapted it for Latino families in Detroit. Vera and Kenny (2013) pointed out that prevention projects are not always the best for their clients or necessarily culturally relevant when they are simply programs made for other populations adapted to a specific cultural population. They advised that prevention programs involve local community members in creating the program, its implementation, and its evaluation. Further, Vera and Kenny noted that adaptations made for a specific population should be more in-depth and aimed at that group's behavior, rather than just a shallow adaptation of language alone.

Parra-Cardona et al.'s adaptations (2017) involved changing the program's language to Spanish, with a review by bilingual experts in the United States and Latin America. This change encompassed the first intervention for parents, CAPAS (Criando con Amor, Promoviendo Armonía y Superación – Raising Children with Love, Promoting Harmony and Self-Improvement) with just the core of the translated program. It was also given by bilingual professionals with the same ethnic background as the parents, with role-playing and two booster sessions in a well-known safe space, a local church. The second intervention in Parra-Cardona et al.'s research was CAPAS-enhanced. It contained all the elements of the first intervention but included extra culturally relevant factors. Two sessions included in this enhanced research focused on cultural issues, such as immigration and biculturalism. Also, they introduced and discussed culturally relevant quotes from participants in their qualitative study as related to the

topics at the beginning and end of the intervention format, which lasted 12 weeks, 2 hours per week. Finally, they conducted role-playing activities that emphasized difficult situations involving parenting as related to immigration and biculturalism. Parents in the second group reported high satisfaction with the culturally relevant elements (Parra-Cardona et al., 2017). My prevention project could also introduce these concepts. For example, family counseling could be conducted in Spanish and could focus on immigration and biculturalism issues. Focus groups could clarify parents' current perspectives on discussing these issues in counseling. As Parra-Cardona et al. (2017) related, these topics are especially relevant to Hispanic parents who have immigrated to the United States and are now raising young children with an income at or below the poverty level.

Garcia-Joslin et al. (2016) emphasized the federal programs that make a sound, bilingual education available to Hispanic immigrant children. Their research focused on programs in Texas. They listed two elements as crucial for making these programs culturally relevant: making sure teachers and staff understood English language acquisition to comprehend student academic difficulties related to language skills and involving families in education. Inviting families to take part in the educational process through regular communication and interventions at home can also be achieved if the school counselor or psychologist is bilingual, they noted.

Garcia-Joslin et al. (2016) explained Project SUPERB (Scholars Using Psychology and Education to Reach Bilinguals). Faculty recruit bilingual graduate students in Texas to serve immigrant students by developing the multicultural competencies of awareness, knowledge, and skills. These are essential concepts to consider and include in my prevention project.

Core Ethical Considerations for Child Poverty in Port Isabel, TX

Informed Consent

In Section A.2.a, the American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics (2014) outlines the importance of informed consent for all counseling relationships. Informed consent involves clients' freedom to choose whether to be a part of a counseling relationship, based on precise information about the counseling intentions and activities (ACA). Hage and Romano (2013) emphasized that involving community members at every prevention program stage is an ethical obligation. They also pointed out that informed consent in a prevention project is problematic because it involves so many people at so many levels. Therefore, a big part of informed consent consists of pulling the community into all aspects of a prevention project to know what is going on and how it will affect them. In this way, they can influence the prevention project's course and opt-out when they are no longer comfortable. Concerning Hispanic families and children experiencing poverty, the best approach for informed consent in this community is to get feedback from parents, students, and educators in focus group meetings. Explaining program goals and letting them know what is happening as the program progresses can help them decide whether to participate.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality and informed consent are closely related. The ACA Code of Ethics (2014) talks about this in different contexts. Section B.1.c covers the importance of generally ensuring that others cannot access client information. Section B.1.d outlines that counselors must tell clients the limits of confidentiality. Section B.1.a. identifies the multicultural aspect of information privacy, which needs to be respected. Also, Section A.7.b addresses confidentiality and advocacy, involving client knowledge of advocacy efforts on their behalf. Hage and Romano (2013) acknowledged that confidentiality, like informed consent, is hard to ensure when working with multiple individuals at many levels. Participants need to understand that it cannot be

guaranteed, but counselors must still try to keep information protected, the authors emphasized. The authors suggested that prevention practitioners can arrange interventions that do not bring unwanted attention to the participants. Those in charge must also consider and share with participants the nature of sensitive issues covered in prevention programs and the possibility for harm (Hage & Romano). The biggest threat to confidentiality for participants in Port Isabel, I believe, would be the tight-knit community in which we live. Word travels fast in the community, and participants actively singled out because of their socioeconomic status would give away information they would not otherwise share. Perhaps the best remedy for this would be to involve as many community members as possible, giving them a role in this large project, rather than stakeholders believing the project represents only specific individuals. In this way, everyone's focus would be on the bigger picture, not on the shortcomings of one person or a group of people.

Stakeholder Collaboration

Hage and Romano (2013) stressed the importance of collaborating with stakeholders and other local community members from the planning stages of a prevention project to its implementation, maintenance, and evaluation. They also advised prevention practitioners to present evaluation data to stakeholders at every possible step. In this way, stakeholders can give feedback and advise on how best to continue the project, the authors explained. This stakeholder involvement can also support the continued maintenance and improvement of a prevention project over time. Additionally, stakeholders can use their connections to help with funding when necessary. In a small town like Port Isabel, consistent communication with stakeholders through the same channels could provide good outreach to essential stakeholders and make the

prevention project much more successful. Without the support of the community, no prevention project would have much success.

Summary

In this section, I examined the diversity and ethical issues involved in my prevention project. I identified the Hispanic population and females under five as groups most affected by child poverty in Port Isabel (DATAUSA, 2018). I gave examples of the impact poverty has on these children and their parents (Garcia-Joslin et al., 2016; Parra-Cardona et al., 2017).

Additionally, I cited research that gave suggestions for supporting cultural relevance in working with this population and the issue of poverty (Garcia-Joslin et al., 2016; Parra-Cardona et al., 2017). Finally, I presented ethical considerations for my prevention project, including informed consent, confidentiality, and stakeholder collaboration. I will now examine my prevention project from the perspective of advocacy.

PART 5: ADVOCACY

Preventing Future Children from Living in Poverty in Port Isabel, Texas

Barriers to Addressing Child Poverty

Many barriers exist to advocating for low-income, Hispanic, rural communities and the children living within them. The main obstacle is having access to these communities (Calva et al., 2020). How can professionals help people who will not speak with outsiders, participate in research efforts, or go outside of their community to access help? Calva et al. conducted a research study to answer this question, gain access to a low-income, isolated Hispanic community, and record survey answers from a large sample of this community to find out what they needed.

Institutionally

I believe three main obstacles prevent Hispanic children in poverty in Port Isabel, TX, from accessing high paying jobs as adults, which could take them and their families out of poverty. First, many families in low-income, Hispanic communities near the border have a mixture of documented and undocumented family members. Whenever someone consults an outsider, they fear they will share too much information, and authorities will deport a family member. Calva et al.'s research (2020) echoed this fear. Families are in constant angst concerning the possibility of deportation, according to the authors. Removal is a genuine threat. Before COVID-19, there were six flights per day that transported people back to their home countries from the international airport in my area (Walker, personal communication, 2019). The researchers in Calva et al.'s study (2020) went to great lengths to ensure that documented information from their focus groups had no identifying information within it to protect their research participants. Students who carry this fear with them to school are hesitant to get involved too deeply in school activities or talk to school authorities extensively.

Second, there are many undocumented and poor students, leaving them little choice for attending college. Calva et al.'s focus groups (2020) revealed that the low-income Hispanic community they talked with knew there were limited well-paying jobs and college opportunities for those who were undocumented or underdocumented. A lack of information also disconnected them from any current public policy information that might help with this problem.

Third, the COVID-19 pandemic has pushed the low-income, Hispanic community away from attending public school. Administrators shut down face-to-face schooling in Port Isabel in March of 2020. It was not until November of 2020 that the schools allowed some students to return to school face-to-face with their parents' permission. Those who did not return to

face-to-face schooling are still attending school via videoconferencing on Zoom meetings from home. Many parents were afraid of their children becoming sick. Also, I believe some families were taking advantage of the fact that older students were now at home and could help with household and child care. My daughter, a 10th grader at the high school who recently went back to face-to-face schooling, reported that only 45 students were back at the high school, and very few of them were girls. I believe the high school enrollment before COVID-19 was approximately 500 students.

There is a large percentage of students who are not participating in face-to-face schooling or Zoom meeting schooling at all. Comments from the school administration led me to believe that some of this problem is from lack of internet access, which the school tried to solve by giving students hotspots. Calva et al.'s research (2020) pointed to the lack of internet access that many low-income families have, cutting them off from society. COVID-19 has only added to this problem. The Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (2015), concerning counseling and advocacy interventions, talked about connecting marginalized clients with individuals in institutions, like schools, to help overcome inequities and barriers that are in the way of their success. I believe my prevention project takes that stance, trying to connect families with schools to discuss bicultural obstacles that obscure student success, such as those just discussed.

In the Community

Community barriers that get in the way of professionals advocating for low-income Hispanic individuals include language barriers, transportation issues, and a lack of trust in the outside world (Calva et al., 2020). Calva et al. recruited locals who spoke Spanish and identified as Latino/a to help them spread the word about their research. Other researchers had approached

this community before but had never followed up with them to present the research results or give them benefits from the study. Therefore, the residents were distrustful of Calva et al. and tired of participating in surveys with no help.

The researchers talked with local businesses and gave away coupons for people who participated (Calva et al., 2020). The researchers also attended local religious services, weddings, and concerts to show the community they were authentically interested in helping them. They wanted to gain the participants' trust. They also posted and distributed their research study results to the local community to show them what they had learned. This gesture helped secure a bond with the community because they spoke the local language, made themselves vulnerable in local celebrations, and went into the community, rather than expecting residents to come to them. The residents also shared in the focus groups that there was limited public transportation available to them. Those who were undocumented could not get a driver's license, and most could not afford to buy a car or pay for taxi services (Calva et al.).

Similarly, there is little public transportation in Port Isabel. Many people do not have the money or resources to get a driver's license (as reported by my children). Many older people in the lower-income sections of Port Isabel only speak Spanish, and many in this community are wary of outsiders.

The Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (2015), concerning counseling and advocacy interventions at the community level, talked about exploring how community norms, values, and regulations play a part in marginalized clients' lives. I believe norms and values are created from traditions, religion, history, and from adapting to current events. The Spanish spoken in Hispanic communities comes from tradition and history. The English spoken in Hispanic communities comes from adapting to a new culture and is becoming

a new tradition. Transportation difficulties and a lack of trust of outsiders are also adaptations to a new culture and current events. These are part of the Hispanic norms and values. Prevention practitioners need to explore them in my prevention project to get a better sense of community needs.

At the Public Policy Level

A significant barrier to advocating for low-income Hispanic communities at the public policy level is a lack of access to the internet and a lack of resident information about accessing community services (Calva et al., 2020). Participants in the research study had little access to the internet because of its cost. The same problem is evident in Port Isabel. The public library in Port Isabel has a computer lab and is within walking distance for some families. However, authorities shut this resource off to the public once the COVID-19 restrictions began.

Community members in Calva et al.'s research (2020) were also ignorant about services such as Medicaid and immigration policies. Outreach and social services did not come to the community to help them understand the benefits available, and they were distrustful of the consequences of speaking to outsiders. Even in Calva et al.'s focus groups and surveys, community members were hesitant to answer questions about the place they were born or their income level. Some community members who had applied for and received benefits before, such as for Medicaid, got frustrated at figuring out the application process and gave up renewing services.

Any public policy decisions made or social services provided to these communities have little hope of helping them if they do not know about the policy decisions or services. Also, people have little motivation to wade through the application process to apply. I think low-income Hispanic residents of Port Isabel have the same concerns and limits as the study

participants. The Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (2015), concerning counseling and advocacy interventions at the public policy level, advised counselors to have discussions with marginalized clients about how public policy decisions affect them. I think community members need to be made aware of public policy decisions that affect them. They need a voice to let society know how these policies interfere with their ability to succeed.

Advocacy Actions to Take to Address Child Poverty

Institutionally

As mentioned above, the undocumented status of family members significantly impacts some low-income Hispanic children. Living in a border community in Texas makes this an especially prominent consideration for a prevention project. Up to 13% of K-12 students in Texas have one or more undocumented parents (Crawford et al., 2019). Crawford et al. interviewed seven school counselors and a family intervention specialist from a Texas border community to determine how and why each of them advocated for undocumented students in their schools. Their reasoning for supporting these students was their belief that all students deserved quality education. They felt it was their ethical duty to do so. The Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (2015) outlined that culturally competent counselors should use social advocacy to remove systemic barriers for clients, and these counselors took that obligation seriously. Crawford et al. (2019) noted that to help these students, they often had to bend the rules or fight with their superiors to have policies changed because the rules as written did not support their students.

At the institutional level, one counselor helped a student by finding a school bus route outside of their school boundaries and convinced school personnel to allow him to board school buses in a manner not typically permitted to provide the students transportation to school. This

action was effective because it helped provide transportation to the student so he could succeed in school. It also proved to some school personnel that it was possible to accommodate students in a nontraditional manner without hurting anyone.

In the Community

Helping undocumented students at the community level was also undertaken by a school counselor. She became aware that one student family lived in an apartment that was dangerous and unsafe (Crawford et al., 2019). Mice overran the apartment, and the ceiling was falling in. The school counselor called the landlord and then the city to complain about the living conditions and filed a complaint. The landlord did nothing, and the city lost any record of the school counselor calling to complain. She continued to call and follow-up on the status of her complaint. She knew they were not taking action because the family had undocumented individuals living in the apartment. This school counselor tried to teach families who to call when they needed help and how to stand up for themselves. She knew she had learned how to do this as a child growing up in the United States, but the family was unaware of how things worked, and they did not want any family members to get deported.

The Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (2015) recommended that counselors determine how cultural norms, values, and regulations affect clients' development. In this case, the dominant society's cultural norms, values, and laws directly aimed to exploit the undocumented family, and the school counselor stood up to challenge this. Although her advocacy was not well received and did not immediately bring positive results for the family, it was an effective tactic to let those in charge know that they could not take advantage of people without hearing about it. Eventually, filing complaints would affect city policies.

At the Public Policy Level

Another school counselor in Crawford et al.'s research (2019) took action to help undocumented students at the public policy level. Financial aid officers came to the school to talk with students about applying for federal college aid. However, they refused to speak with students who did not have a social security card. According to the research, undocumented students (who do not have social security cards) cannot apply for federal financial aid but can apply for state financial aid. However, the federal representatives refused to help the students. The school counselor knew the policies and sat down individually with each undocumented student to help them figure out how to complete the state financial aid forms. She refused to take the same stance as the financial aid officers. The Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (2015) recommended that counselors discuss how public policy shapes clients' lives. Having this discussion is what this school counselor was trying to do for her undocumented students.

Pirog and Good (2013) gave many examples of public policies and initiatives that worked and did not work. Some initiatives, such as trying to make the Golden Gate Bridge less accessible for suicide attempts, received funding but could not seem to garner public support and failed to come to fruition. Others, such as the DARE program, continued to operate despite threats to its funding and numerous empirical studies that showed it did not help prevent substance use. Pirog and Good indicated that public opinion played a large part in the success or failure of a prevention project. Crawford et al.'s research (2019) showed that public opinion does not currently support undocumented individuals. Changing society's perspective of undocumented people, such as through sharing their stories with others without identifying individuals, would help garner support needed for prevention projects to succeed.

Summary

In this advocacy section, I reviewed barriers to helping low-income Hispanic individuals. These barriers included the undocumented status of individuals (Calva et al., 2020), the lack of opportunities for attending college for this population (Calva et al.), COVID-19 stressors, language barriers (Calva et al., 2020), transportation issues (Calva et al.), a lack of trust for the mainstream population (Calva et al.), a lack of internet access (Calva et al.), and ignorance of available community services (Calva et al.). Then, I reviewed advocacy actions that can help this population. Possible advocacy actions include bending the rules or disagreeing with superiors (Crawford et al., 2019), finding nontraditional transportation options for students (Crawford et al.), or challenging landlords, city policies, or calling the police to complain (Crawford et al.). Further advocacy actions could include teaching families how to advocate for themselves (Crawford et al.), helping students individually (Crawford et al.), and garnering public support for change (Pirog & Good, 2013). These are necessary considerations in moving forward with my prevention project because they point to the practicality of what I am trying to do.

I have covered several perspectives of my topic: the scope and consequences, the Social-Ecological Model as it relates to my prevention project, a theory of prevention that relates to helping low-income Hispanic children, diversity and ethical considerations, and advocacy. Now I have a better idea of how to begin to help my community. To put my prevention project into action, helping to prevent poverty in the children of Hispanic individuals in Port Isabel, TX, I will begin with focus groups.

Working with the Point Isabel Independent School District, we can examine school records to identify the Hispanic families living in poverty in the community. These parents and children can receive invitations to participate in focus groups (in Spanish in a community building close to residents' homes) to discuss how biculturalism affects their ability to succeed in

this community. Information and resources discovered within these focus groups can help outline a series of family counseling sessions that will be made available to these families. In these sessions, they can identify goals for change to succeed. School counselors can be involved in creating these counseling sessions through consulting work (Dougherty, 2013). This process will be for the benefit of all involved and the most comprehensive access to available resources.

A brochure can be created and handed out at the focus groups that lists currently available resources for undocumented families and their children, including state funding for college. Information about free phone applications for learning English, such as Duolingo, can also be listed in the brochure. We can additionally contact local university students majoring in film or art to document some family stories (with permission from these families) to be shared on YouTube to raise public support for this region's initiative. Please help us to help these families succeed. Please support us with whatever resources you have available. Thank you.

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