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The Hidden In Plain Sight Program — A Novel and Interactive Approach to Substance Abuse Prevention and Education

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Hidden In Plain Sight (HIPS) Substance Abuse Prevention

Caribou, Maine

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Problem Identification and Need

▶ BACKGROUND:

- ▶ Substance abuse is pervasive throughout Aroostook county and although informational resources are available, their utility and effectiveness has been subpar.
- ▶ In effort to address this shortcoming, Aroostook Substance Abuse Prevention (ASAP) developed the Hidden In Plain Sight program, a novel approach to substance abuse prevention education.
- ▶ The program allows participants of the workshop to explore a mockup of an adolescent's bedroom where over 100 items are concealed throughout the room, items that point towards risky behavior, ranging from alcohol abuse and sexual activity to mental health issues and illicit drug use.
- ▶ To date, 6 workshops have been completed with overwhelming praise for the program's effectiveness and eye-opening experience.

- ▶ GOAL: Continue workshops throughout Aroostook County (Holton, Presque Isle, Washburn, Fort Kent, Fort Fairfield, Limestone) to raise awareness and spread the HIPS program throughout the greater Maine community.

▶ PROBLEM:

- ▶ Although well-received, there is no current way to evaluate the effectiveness of the program statistically.
- ▶ Given that other public service departments (Limestone Fire Department, Caribou Police Department, Maine State Fire Marshall Department) have shown interest in implementing the program with their personnel, there is currently no technical guideline in place so that others could implement the HIPS program.

Public Costs of Substance Abuse

- ▶ The estimated total cost of substance abuse in the US: ~\$600 billion annually.
 - ▶ Economic cost of alcohol and drug abuse in Maine: ~\$1.4 billion annually.
- ▶ Aroostook County, where Caribou is located, holds 5.4% of Maine's population, totaling to a cost of ~\$756 million annually in alcohol and drug abuse.
- ▶ A part of this cost is shared by adolescent alcohol and drug abuse, and in Aroostook County:
 - ▶ 33.7% of 9-12th graders reported previous 30-day alcohol use
 - ▶ 17.5% of 9-12th graders reported binge drinking within the last 2 weeks
 - ▶ 5.4% of 9-12th graders reported prescription drug misuse
 - ▶ Substance abuse admission rates are 1527 per 100,000 (both adolescent and adults)
- ▶ By implementing a program like Hidden In Plain Sight, where the cost runs at only a fraction (~\$500 per workshop), the long-term benefits can more than likely defer the enormous costs of substance abuse.

Community Perspective

- ▶ Name Withheld, Acting Director, Aroostook Substance Abuse Prevention
 - ▶ “Different officials from other public service departments have approached me regarding this workshop and say they want to run the workshop with their employees as well.”
 - ▶ “If only I had something that I can give to them so that they could easily and effectively learn how to coordinate such an event.”
 - ▶ “I would like the opportunity to share the HIPS program with the greater Maine community to help raise awareness for substance abuse prevention, but I need to be able to show that this program really works.”
- ▶ Name Withheld, Maine State Fire Marshall
 - ▶ “I am interested in learning more about the HIPS program and possibly presenting the workshop at the Pine Tree Burn Conference to be held in October 2015.”
 - ▶ “Hidden In Plain Sight could be very valuable training for public safety personnel, to help eliminate surprises when responding to a call. I would like to get an outline of your presentation so we could discuss more in detail.”
- ▶ Name Withheld, Firefighter/EMT-B, Limestone Fire Department
 - ▶ “This workshop could be very useful to us, especially because we work a lot with the police department to respond to calls regarding substance abuse.”
 - ▶ “Helping us recognize common items found in an adolescent’s bedroom could be very useful in recognizing and preventing ongoing substance abuse.”

Intervention & Methodology

▶ INTERVENTION

- ▶ Collect data on workshop effectiveness to allow for statistical validity to back the program, and hence share the results with the greater Maine community.
- ▶ Develop a Technical Guideline that allows others to implement the HIPS program at other locations in a step-by-step manner.

▶ METHODOLOGY

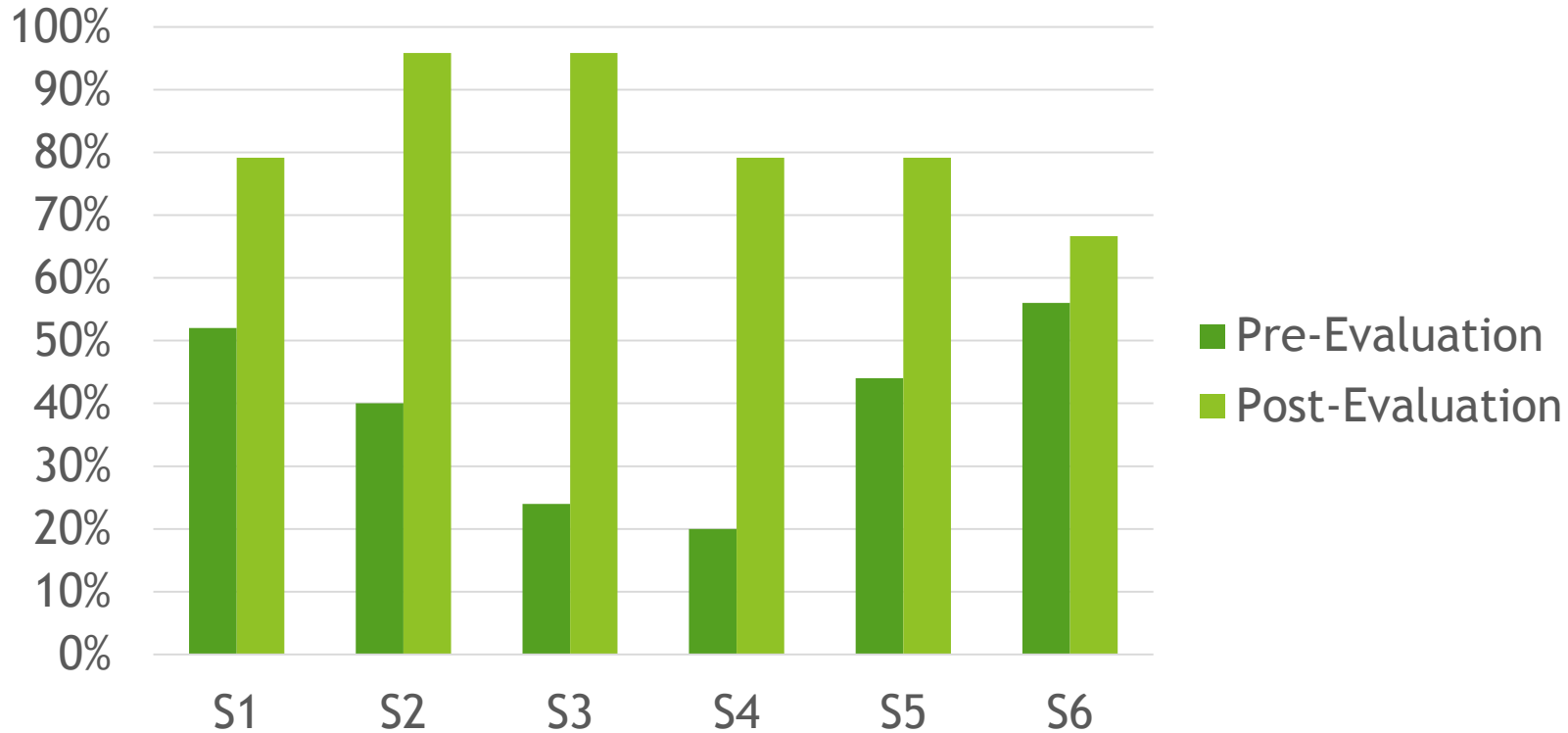
- ▶ Develop pre and post workshop surveys that measure the objectives of the HIPS workshop among participants.
- ▶ Create a Technical Guideline that can serve as a resource for other public service organizations to use (Fire Department, Police Department, and School districts).
 - ▶ The guidelines will aim to address every concern of running and implementing the Hidden In Plain Sight workshop, from finding the equipment to raising event awareness and budget costs.

Results

- ▶ After attending 2 workshops, a 12-page technical guideline was developed that aims to address the multiple aspects of running this workshop, from start to finish.
 - ▶ The guideline will be distributed to the Maine State Fire Marshall and Limestone Fire Department.
- ▶ A pre and post workshop survey was developed and implemented over the 2 workshops attended.
 - ▶ 25 evaluations were completed, and the results are shown in the following slide.
 - ▶ Data will be collected in an ongoing process as more workshops are being held over the next few months.

Results (continued)

Workshop Evaluation



The figure above reflects the percentage of participants that either agreed or strongly agreed with a statement (S1-S6) before and after the workshop. The statements posed to participants were as follows:

S1: I know the signs that may reveal risky teen behavior.

S2: I know the hiding places that teens may use to hide risky behavior.

S3: I know the supplies and tools that teens may use to hide risky behavior.

S4: I know drug types, how they are used, and why.

S5: I know what to do if I suspect risky behavior.

S6: I know where to get help for substance abuse and other risky behavior.

Evaluation of Effectiveness & Limitations

▶ EVALUATE EFFECTIVENESS

- ▶ Technical guideline: Have a community member interested in implementing the HIPS workshop in their location use the guideline developed and allow the users to provide feedback.
- ▶ Pre and post workshop evaluation form: Continue to collect data from the forms and have a statistician/public health expert review the quality of the survey.

▶ LIMITATIONS

- ▶ The HIPS program naturally attracts parents who are overly concerned about their child's current habits as opposed to the general population, and therefore pre and post evaluation forms may reflect that bias.
- ▶ The technical guideline was influenced by the opinions and experience of the guideline development authors, potentially limiting its applicability to different settings.
- ▶ The technical guideline gives a snapshot in time of the current state of the HIPS program. As the methods in the workshops continue to evolve and improve over time, the guideline may become outdated if not updated regularly.

Future Interventions/Projects

- ▶ Continue to collect data regarding the effectiveness of the Hidden In Plain Sight workshop and share this research with the greater Maine community to strengthen the validity of the program and spread awareness.
 - ▶ The Maine Public Health Association is accepting Abstracts and Posters for their 30th Conference to be held in October 2015, for which this research may be presented.
- ▶ Continue to develop the Technical Guidelines as the Hidden In Plain Sight program evolves and improves over time and share the guidelines with leading organizations in substance abuse prevention like Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the National Institute of Drug Abuse and the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation
 - ▶ Potentially develop a partnership to hold workshops in other locations to spread awareness of the program's effectiveness.
- ▶ The pre and post surveys can be used not only to share how valuable the HIPS program can be, but also as a quality improvement tool.
 - ▶ Possibly creating a focus group (of both adults and adolescents) that uses the data collected and further develops the workshops to make each event more impactful.

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