Availability and Accessability of Mental Health Services for Geneva's Children

Katherine Cushing, Airi Shiraishi, Bernard Gee
Hobart and William Smith Colleges

Abstract

This study was administered by a CCESL (Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning) at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, NY in collaboration with Success for Geneva's Children. Various agencies that work at mental health services in the Geneva area participated in this study. 40 participants responded, out of 117 that were contacted via email. Each participant belonged to a unique agency. These agencies included Non-Profit, government sponsored, private, and from schools. An online self-administered questionnaire was used, Surveyor (Object Planet). Distribution and implementation procedures of the survey were approved by the Institutional Review Board of Hobart and William Smith Colleges.

A survey was constructed to gather data about the accessibility and availability of services that children are able to receive in Geneva community. The survey was distributed in a link via email to one individual representing each agency. Participant responses remained anonymous. The survey first consisted of general questions about the agencies, and then asked about the issues of access, effectiveness, ethnic diversity and demographics. The survey consisted of 37 questions, which took subjects about 30 minutes to complete. The format of the questions included multiple-choice, and open-ended questions. The open-ended questionnaires were presented when the participants selected “other” as an option, or if they wanted to add comments about specific questions.

Method

There were a total of 40 agencies that responded to the survey. However, not all agencies completed each question. The number of respondents will be reported for each question. Of the agencies surveyed a majority reported that they were Non-Profit Organizations (21). Participants provided a broad range of responses in regards to the number of children that they serve of particular age group. Several agencies responded that they did not directly provide mental health services. Some agencies reported that they were unable to provide specific breakdowns of serving different age groups.

Results


Figure 1: Ages being served by mental health agencies in Geneva. Histograms represent the number of respondents who served specific age groups. Agencies were allowed to select multiple categories (n=34).

There were a total of 40 agencies that responded to the survey. However, not all agencies completed each question. The number of respondents will be reported for each question. Of the agencies surveyed a majority reported that they were Non-Profit Organizations (21). Participants provided a broad range of responses in regards to the number of children that they serve of particular age group. Several agencies responded that they did not directly provide mental health services. Some agencies reported that they were unable to provide specific breakdowns of serving different age groups.


Figure 2: The percentages of children that requires a translator. The first part of percentage indicates the list of percent of children the agency serves that require a translator. The second part of percentage represents the ratio from the total respondents. (n=12)


Table 2: Belief if agencies would benefit from more employees who could provide services to minorities. This is a bar graph that shows the subject’s feeling towards this topic (n=13).

Conclusions

Based on the results of this study there are several aspects that may support children’s mental health in Geneva. Most agencies had been active in the Geneva community for over 10 years. This suggests that these agencies are well established within the community, and are likely to remain as dependable sources for mental health services. The results of this survey support the conclusion that there are mental health services available to children in Geneva that are not being utilized, as most agencies are accepting new patients and are willing to expand if there is increased interest in their agency.

Specifically we suggest that the community-based approach be encouraged through the creation of a frequently updated website compiling information regarding mental health care services that would be accessible to the Geneva public. This website should include information such as: Operating hours. What services are provided that support mental health. Any requirements for receiving the services. If new patients are being accepted. How long it takes to get an appointment. How to contact the agency. This website would be helpful for the Geneva community as well as for other agencies who provide mental health services. Agencies would be able to see who is providing what services and be able to make better-informed decisions regarding recommendations of other services. Geneva public would be benefited, as we believe that if there was increased awareness of the services available the public may be more likely to access them.

References


Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge Katie Flowers, and HWS Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning, as well as Success for Geneva’s Children, Dr. Jane McCaffrey, and Dr. Peg Kennedy.