Supporting Families Through a Comprehensive Approach to School-Based ADHD Intervention: A Grant Proposal

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Introduction

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is characterized by a continuous pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity (American Psychiatric Association, [APA] 2013).
- The number of youth diagnosed with ADHD has steadily risen in recent years, with annual rates increasing 5% for the past 8 years (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2013).
- It is estimated that as many as 11% of children ages 4 to 17 years old, or 6.4 million children, received an ADHD diagnosis in 2011 (Visser et al., 2014).
- Research indicates that children diagnosed with ADHD are far more likely to drop out of high school (31.1%) compared to children with no diagnosis (4.4%; Klein et al., 2012).
- **Project Goal:** To locate a potential funding source and write a grant to implement an ADHD intervention program at Westchester Secondary Charter School, a culturally diverse middle and high school located in Los Angeles, California.
Social Work Relevance

- Children diagnosed with ADHD often face difficulties at school, home, and within peer groups. School social workers are able to play an important role in the treatment of children with ADHD, as they are able to intervene and increase functioning among all these areas (Berzin & O'Connor, 2010).

- Addressing the symptoms and behaviors associated with ADHD will not only benefit the students exhibiting them but will also decrease the stress and frustration experienced by their teachers and parents.

- As children learn to better manage their symptoms, and teachers and parents become equipped with the skills and knowledge to support them, the overall wellbeing of children with ADHD will increase.
Cross-cultural Relevance

- While the lifetime prevalence rate of ADHD is highest among Caucasian children (9.9%), Latino children are also highly affected (5.8%; CDC, 2012).
- Caucasian children are twice as likely to receive treatment for ADHD compared to African American children (Bussing, Schoenberg, & Perwien, 1998).
- African American and Caucasian parents may possess beliefs about ADHD that are unique to their cultures (Bussing et al., 1998).
  - Study results found that 69% of African American parents had ever heard of ADHD compared to 95% of Caucasian parents.
  - African American participants were more likely to report that high-sugar diets caused ADHD (59%) compared to Caucasians (30%).
  - Caucasians were more likely to report that their child’s school was to blame for the development of ADHD symptoms (35%) compared to African American parents (9%).
Methods

- **Target Population**
  - The intervention will target children in grades six through eight at Westchester Secondary Charter School (WSCS), as well as their caregivers.
  - WSCS serves an ethnically diverse range of students with different learning capabilities including traditional learners, gifted and high-achieving students, those with special needs, and English learners.

- **Strategies Used to Identify and Select a Potential Funding Source**
  - The grant writer utilized Internet search engines, as well as the links and resources provided by the library at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) social work page.
  - The grant writer ensured that the selected grant foundation was the best match possible in regards to mission statement, funding, and populations served.

- **Funding Source Selected**
  - The Eisner Foundation was selected as the grant’s funding source because it aligns with the writer’s proposed project by supporting disadvantaged youth in Los Angeles County and funding public school programs.
Methods

- Needs Assessment Sources
  - In order to assess the need for a school-based ADHD program, this grant writer used various methods of data collection including a thorough review of existing literature.
  - Databases provided by the CDC, Los Angeles County Public Health, Data Quest, and the United States Census Bureau were accessed.

- Program Budget
  - The total amount requested for the program is $106,436. The program budget includes one full-time, bilingual MSW, intervention program training and materials, travel costs, and office equipment.
Grant Proposal

- Program Summary and Description
  - The program will include parent training workshops and afterschool group intervention for students with ADHD.
  - Two evidence-based programs will be utilized:
    - Challenging Horizons Program (CHP): Increases the functioning of children with ADHD both at school and home by enhancing skills such as organization, studying, socialization, and behavior self-regulation.
    - Incredible Years (IY): Equips parents with the skills needed to more effectively manage their child’s disruptive behaviors and support their academic growth.

- Population Served
  - The ADHD intervention program will serve WSCS students who exhibit symptoms of hyperactivity and/or inattention, as well as their parents/caregivers.
Grant Proposal

- **Sustainability**
  - After its initial implementation, the program’s main costs will be MSW salary and office supplies. It is a sustainable program that can be repeated each school year in order to support students with improving their social, emotional, and academic functioning.

- **Program Objectives**
  1) Twice Weekly Student Groups
     - Improve academic/study skills and social functioning
  2) Weekly Parent Sessions
     - Educate parents on effective strategies for decreasing their child’s disruptive behaviors
  3) Regular Teacher Consultations
     - Receive updates on student progress and provide teachers with behavior management strategies

- **Program Evaluation**
  - The Behavior Assessment System for Children—Second Edition (BASC2) instrument will be used both pre- and post-intervention in order to measure the students’ internalizing and externalizing behaviors.
  - The Parenting Practices Inventory (PPI) will be used to determine the parents’ parenting strategies and consistency of interactions with their children both pre- and post-intervention.
Lessons & Implications for Social Work

Lessons Learned

- Location of Potential Funding Source
  - Challenge: Lack of government departments and foundations funding public education.
  - Solution: Consulting with an experienced school-based mental health professional who was able to provide insight on potential funding sources.

- Program Design
  - Challenge: Few empirically-supported interventions that target ADHD-related symptoms. Many interventions were also designed for young children and were not developmentally appropriate for the grant’s target population.
  - Solution: Modify existing interventions in order to design a culturally competent, developmentally appropriate, and comprehensive ADHD intervention program.

Implications for Social Work

- Given the increasing number of ADHD diagnoses among school-age children, it is essential that social workers increase their involvement in research in order to identify new and promising interventions that are culturally appropriate. It is also essential that social workers advocate for increased public school mental health funding in order to provide students and their families with comprehensive support.


