Poverty Simulation Case Studies:
Understanding the Conditions of Poverty as Determinants of Health and their Impact on Access to Health Promotion and Health Care

Overview:

This Poverty Simulation is a series of four problem-based, interprofessional case studies which detail the health challenges, as well as social context, cultural dimensions, and practical barriers experienced by members of the Cleveland, Ohio community as they endeavor to maintain their health and access health care. They focus on the determinants of health and the most common health conditions in the community. The program is geared to students in the first year of graduate study in nursing, medicine, law, and applied social sciences. The goal is to penetrate the healthcare workforce with professionals who are aware of and motivated to collaboratively mitigate the negative impact of many social determinants of health. These case studies will increase understanding of cultural influences on clinicians' delivery of health services by increasing awareness of the culture in the community, community entities, provider groups, and patients themselves.

Case studies are taught using a Poverty Simulation model. This approach provides opportunities for students to appreciate the significance of social determinants of health and to engage in collaborative problem solving, in the context of certain roles and restrictions. The result will be a deep first person understanding of the challenges, competing priorities, structural impediments, and frustrations family members experience as they struggle to meet needs of all family members.

Core Competencies:

- Describe factors affecting the health of a community or population (equity, income, education, environment). [A1A]

- Describe the ways public health, health care, and other organizations can work together or individually to impact the health of the community. [8A3]

The Poverty Simulation is a scenario where students spend a simulated day, over a couple of hours, navigating the life of a family in poverty. Every 15 minutes of real-time equates to two hours in the simulation. The participants have to survive their family/individual case scenario. They will have the opportunity to visit simulated clinics, schools, employers, child care centers, health and human services, and more.

- **4 case studies**. Each case study includes:
  - Scenario (8:00 am-8:00 pm)
  - Community agencies needed for the scenario
  - Family members and identifying information
  - Family budget

- **Room Set-up**
  - Large room including a designated space/table for all the community agencies included in all 4 scenarios.
  - Designated area in the room that the family members can call home (for example, one chair for each family member in a circle).
  - Prepare a family envelope with play money according to the family budget. Give the family 3 envelopes with the budget for 3 separate days. Also include the individual family scenario in the family envelope (Attachment C).

- **Simulation**
  - Poverty simulation is a scenario where students spend a simulated day, over a couple of hours, navigating the life of a family in poverty. Every 15 minutes of real-time equates to two hours in the simulation. The participants have to survive their family/individual case scenario. They will have the opportunity to visit simulated clinics, schools, employers, child care centers, health and human services and more**.**
  - Every 15 minutes will equate to 2 hours in real-time:
    - 8:00-10:00 am
    - 10:00 am-12:00 pm
    - 12:00-2:00 pm
    - 2:00-4:00 pm
    - 4:00-6:00 pm
    - 6:00-8:00 pm

- **Facilitator Role**
  - Prepare family package. The family package includes:
    - Attachment B (3 bus passes/family)
    - Attachment C (specific family scenario)
    - Attachment D (individual member directives). Cut the individual directives and place them in an envelope with the name and time the individual should review.

- Prepare the community stations.
  - Each community station needs a name plate for identification and a copy of the case scenario (Attachment A).
- Guide the simulation. Sound an alarm/whistle every 15 minutes to end one 2-hour simulated segment and start a new 2-hour simulated segment.

- **Community Member Role**
  - Community members will have access to each of the case scenarios (Attachment A).
  - *PLAY the ROLE*
  - Always ask for a bus pass (B). If the family does not own a car they must use a bus pass. If they do not have a bus pass they must buy one before they can ride a bus.
  - When the whistle blows you are closed. Do not speak with the family members after the whistle blows.
  - You may be helpful or you may not be helpful in your role.
  - Language barriers may cause you to give out the wrong forms and information.
  - Families must eat 3 meals a day. They can buy food at the restaurant or store. Families use the money in the budget envelopes to buy food and meals.
  - Must complete the prior task so timing may be off (that is OK). For example, how long does it take to get a prescription, or food, or to be seen at the clinic. These tasks may overlap into the next time segment.
  - Will not be unusual to have a lot of organized chaos in the room.

- **Student Role**
  - Students will either play the role of a *community member* or a *family member*.
  - *Community Member Role*
    - Students playing the role of a community member follow along with the community members and review the copy of the case study scenario (Attachment A).
  - *Family Member Role*
    - Each family will be given a large envelope that will have a family description (C), family budget (C), and some small cards with the family member name and time that it should be reviewed (D). The small cards are to be viewed only by the individual listed on the card.
    - PLAY the role. Be spontaneous. Be realistic. A 3-year-old cannot advise her parents about finances. It is common to be frustrated when you cannot accomplish a task.
    - At the end of the 15 minutes, when the whistle blows, you must return to your family "home." You will have 3-4 minutes to review your situation. When the whistle blows, begin the next 2-hour segment.

- You must complete your task before moving on to the next task. This may cause timing to be off (that is OK). For example, how long does it take to get a prescription, or food, or to be seen at the clinic.
- Your family should eat 3 meals in the day. If they don't they will be very crabby.
    - If you planned ahead you can purchase one of the pre-made meals as priced.
    - Fast food – McDonalds as priced
- Unless you have a car that is available, you need to ride the bus. To ride the bus you need a bus pass. You must give the community member a bus pass before you can start your interaction.
- Use your money wisely. You have 3 envelopes for 3 days. If you borrow from another day, write that on your envelope.
- If you have to take money from your monthly budget, indicate that too.

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