Community-Engaged Health Research Scientific Focal Area of Excellence

Impact Exemplar: Chronic Disease Prevention and Management

The House of Peace Adult Wellness Class
Prepared by Jeana Holt, DNP, RN, FNP-BC, APNP
February 13, 2015

This exemplar describes the evaluation of a sustained, community-engaged, health promotion program, in an African American urban community that optimizes knowledge, self-efficacy, social support, and behavior change.

The Adult Wellness Class (AWC) is an innovative partnership between the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee College of Nursing Institute for Urban Health Partnerships House of Peace (HOP) Community Nursing Center (CNC) and the HOP Community Center. In this partnership, a bachelor’s prepared Registered Nurse from the HOP CNC and Social Worker from the HOP Community Center co-facilitate a community health promotion class. The purpose of the AWC is to empower Milwaukee community members to optimize their foremost health outcomes through healthful lifestyle education, stress modification, and motivational encouragement. This 22-year innovative partnership also provides unique community-based clinical experiences for nursing and other health profession students.

Qualitative thematic analysis from interviews with long-standing AWC participants, revealed individual and community-change processes (Holt, 2012). The themes reflecting individual behavioral change include: A dedication and desire for learning; benefits of revision of health promotion information; knowledge acquisition of relevant and applicable content; feeling empowered to make healthful lifestyle choices; and the ability to advocate for one’s own health. The community-change process is an organic dissemination of health and wellness information beyond the initial teachings in the AWC. The participants intentionally share learned information with family, friends, neighbors, positively affecting the health of the community.

Reference