



Milwaukee Brighter Futures / May 2009

IMPACT ready for youth facing drug, alcohol issues

A new telephone program, mPower, is aimed at youth under the age of 21 who are having questions or issues with substance abuse.

Bob Waite, of IMPACT's 211 line, said the new program began six months ago and is reminiscent of the old Underground Switchboard that was the originating predecessor of the 211 service many years ago.

Jennifer Schroeder, of the Medical College of Wisconsin, who directs the new program, said it developed after a well-publicized heroin death that drew attention to the need for young people to have access to information and services while they are involved in situations of substance abuse. It was important to develop a hotline program that would address youth issues while they are happening, she said.

The program is a nonjudgmental, safe information resource, she said. It's a resource of the moment, a 24 hour hot-line service and texting service, Schroeder added. The program is unique in that it is directed to youth having drug or alcohol issues.

She said the program also is working to develop a community wide educational program to include easy access to resources through text-messaging and an interactive web site. Currently, mPower is advertising on Facebook, and is directed to people in southeast Wisconsin on ages up to age 25. There are cinema slides in many local movie theaters.

Also, the program has developed "mobile alerts" that are monthly tips about teen use of alcohol or drugs. She described
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Jennifer Schroeder, of the Medical College of Wisconsin, outlines the new mPower program serving youth.

Summary of Brighter Futures meeting: April 21, 2009

Youth Survey Plans Outlined for 2009

Again this year, Milwaukee Brighter Futures will be conducting a Youth Survey, the third such time the initiative has done it.

The survey looks at the answers of hundreds of youth, ages 12 through 17, to determine their attitudes and behaviors. The youth are participants in the many programs of the BF agencies. Jan Wilberg, BF consultant, said the survey based on national model.

She said BF agencies will urged to participate in the process, which is voluntary. Those agencies are asked to assemble at least 20 youth for the group survey to be taken together at a time to be selected. The results of the survey will be returned to the participating agencies, and will be included in the overall survey results.

Wilberg said the survey is similar to a Milwaukee Public Schools survey, but is done by a different process and "we think makes for a quality survey."

She said agencies that are not funded are welcome to participate. It is totally confidential, she said.

To review the last Youth Survey, go to http://milwaukeebrighterfutures.org/documents/Youth_Survey_BF_2007.pdf

Creative ways used to approach youth

(Continued from page 1)

them as “informational and nonjudgmental.” She showed a slide on “Why call mPower?”

While the age groups covered are 15 through 25, the program will accept younger children as the need arises, she said.

Bob Waite said he was unable to find any other teen hot-lines that target young adults. “We learned that kids get information in a lot different ways than they did in the past,” he said. “We had to educate ourselves about that.”



Bob Waite

Youth today are able to access numerous websites that provide them information on how to use drugs and alcohol, according to Karen Kolberg, also of IMPACT

Waite said IMPACT has 8 to 10 counselors on duty during normal work hours and

calls can be transferred immediately to them from a youth who finds himself or herself in need of assistance. He said the other partner is Children’s Hospital Poison Hotline, which provides information on substances that may have been ingested. The other primary contact is the 911 system.

Waite described how the 211 calls operate, noting that the staff makes no judgment about the caller, nor does it ask how or why. There are four-steps taken in the process.

First, 211 staffers check for safety issues: he cited a situation in which a caller asked about someone who drank rubbing alcohol. Even though the caller kept hanging up, 211 was able through caller ID to send the call to 911, which eventually responded., sending emergency services. He noted that 211 uses caller ID only in emergency situations. “We’re trained to listen for those situations,” he said.

The next step is to listen to the situation, he said. “We get few young people calling and it’s a new experience for us, since the young people ask questions in a different way,” he said.

How reach mPower:

Website:

<http://www.mpowersupport.com>

Ph: 866-661-6797

Text to: 5535, Keyword: MPOWER

The next step is to help callers make an informed decision about how to remedy their situation. Finally, persons may call 211 to be linked to community resources, he said.

For data collection purposes, 211 asks about the drug or substance name, the amount ingested, where the caller heard about IMPACT and whether they are calling about themselves or another person.

In completing the call, he said, “We will try to summarize the situation with the caller and leave them with a plan.” Waite said many callers are persons other than the abusing person, often from a teen who is concerned about a parent. “It’s distressing to hear those calls,” he said.

Waite said IMPACT is currently in 20 high schools, providing information about mPower. He said mPower is looking to make presentations to all BF agencies.

Karen Kolberg described some of the calls she has received under the program, noting the calls we get are not those that make you smile. “The calls we get are those seeking for help. The panic of the stories is very gripping.” When resources aren’t available, IMPACT seeks to alert funders to that fact, she said.

Teen Pregnancy Prevention Network

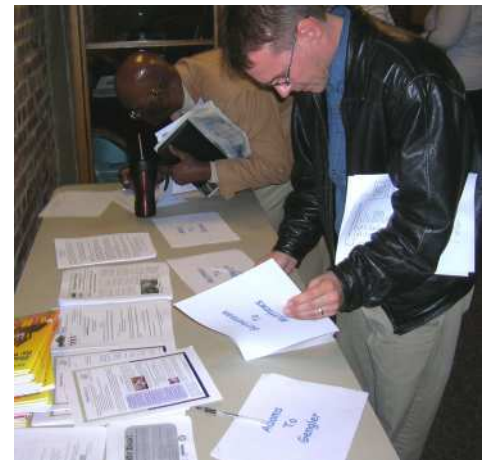
Anthony McHenry, reporting:

The **Youth Ambassadors** program is being implemented to get youth involved. The program has a two-prong approach: first, it is to have the youth inform the agencies and their workers as to what teens think and feel; the other is to train the young people to become ambassadors within the youth community. Jody Rhodes should be thanked for her support in the training sessions.

Teen Summit. There will be a different approach this year in an effort to reach out to those youth who do not participate in agency programs. Summits will be held at various schools, particularly where the need is the greatest.

Family Unity Night. The goal to increase communication between parents or other caregivers and their children. The 3rd annual Family Unity Night (F.U.N.) is to be held from 5 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 8, when families will be encouraged to have a meal together, either at home, at a restaurant or at a community gathering.

To encourage participation, families will be asked to sign a pledge sheet which will provide an opportunity to judge how many people participated. There will be three \$100 baskets given in a raffle among families who signed the sheets. In addition, efforts are being made to interest sponsorship from among radio



Sign-in time at Brighter Futures!

Agency of the Month: Pan-African Community Association

Fessahaye Mebrahtu, director of the Pan-African Community Association, said the agency serves a need that has come about as more and more African refugees come to Milwaukee; the demographic shift of African refugees shows more are coming from rural areas to refugee camps. They are coming without urban experience and it becomes difficult for them to adjust to city life in the United States, he said. The PACA began in 1999



and only recently got funding for capacity building.

“We need to build self-confidence for the refugees to function in the community,” he said.

He explained that many children come to the USA at ages of 10 or 12 and are placed in grade levels where they are not prepared or in grades with younger children. This makes it hard for the young refugees to be accepted and to feel welcome in the

class and to be ready to learn. The agency has an after-school program called *Aspire* to help the youngsters with their homework and assist them in dealing with the system.

Mebrahtu said parents cannot help them because they usually are illiterate themselves or are working two and three jobs.

African and Asian refugees have similar issues, he said, and therefore a coalition has been formed under the UWM Center for Urban Development. “We become cultural navigators with them,” he said, using staff that can speak the languages of the refugees.

Co-sleeping with infants raises numerous questions

Some four infants have died in the last six weeks in co-sleeping situations, Jan Buchler, executive director of The Parenting Network, reported in opening her report on the Milwaukee Child Abuse Prevention Services (MCAPS) coalition. “It is 4 infants too many,” she said.

Not all of the feedback about warnings over the harm of co-sleeping has been positive, she said. Many parents often find they accidentally may fall asleep with an infant next to them, or that there seems to be no other way to have the child fall asleep, several persons mentioned.

Buchler suggested some agencies, like The Parenting Network, have cribs available for families. Others suggested other ideas, such as co-sleeping buffer units that are available

for \$70.

It was suggested there’s a need to develop a community strategy that looks at the realities facing parents when it comes to co-sleeping. The Parenting Network shared it’s “The Promise” on positive parenting ideas.

Child Abuse Prevention Month.

April was Child Abuse Prevention Month, Buchler reported. Among the activities was a Family Resource Connections outing at the Betty Brinn Center which attracted some 300 families, Trudy Ranallo reported.

The next MCAPS Public Policy Committee will meet at 2:30 p.m., Monday, May 11; the next Teen Parent Task Force will meet at 1 p.m., Monday, June 8.

The Family Resource Connections group will meet on Tuesday, May 26th at 9:30 at La Causa, 804 W. Greenfield Ave.

Visit our Website:

<http://milwaukeebrighterfutures.org>

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