

PROMOTORAS DE BUENA VIDA/PROMOTORAS FOR A
HEALTHY LIFE

Denise Nerio, BSN student research scholar
Cristina Van Dusen, BSN student research scholar
Janna Lesser, PhD, RN, faculty research mentor
Patricia Kelly, PhD, RN, Principal Investigator
UTHSCSA School of Nursing

Key words: Promotoras, Family Violence, Community

Purpose: To describe the experiences of a group of promotoras who participated in an innovative community based project about family violence.

Method: Using the theory and methods of Brazilian popular educator Pablo Freire, the UTHSCSA School of Nursing and Edgewood Family Network (a community-based agency) worked with fifteen promotoras to raise awareness about family violence. We partnered with the San Antonio Peace Initiative to present training on the following topics: 1) Dynamics of family violence, 2) Impact of family violence on children, 3) Teen dating violence, 4) Identification and access to local resources, 5) Techniques for organizing presentations and engaging communities, and 6) Ideas for evaluation and sustainability. After completion of the family violence training, each promotora conducted a minimum of five community presentations to share information with 358 women who were friends, neighbors and community members. Nursing students provided support for implementation and evaluation of these activities.

Summative Evaluation

Promotoras completed pre and post training surveys on knowledge and attitudes about family violence.

Process Evaluation

Each promotora kept a journal about her experiences with the project. The project was conducted in Spanish, and the nursing students translated the journal entries into English before performing data analyses.

Findings: Pre- and post-training surveys are still in the analysis process. Throughout the promotora's journal entries, a sense of newly discovered self-strength peeks through as they relay their experiences as discussion leaders. From their public speaking, or rather public listening, they have learned more about their communities, leading to a sense of responsibility, which, with the right amount of momentum, can turn these women into true agents of change.

Discussion: In this project, the promotoras' awareness of problems in their communities and of their ability to remedy them grew. Through involvement in this research process, the nursing students not only gained insight into the experiences of families living with violence in their homes and their communities, they also gained an understanding of the powerful force of community involvement.

Funded by the Orsinger Foundation