



THE EFFECT OF COMMUNITY COUNSELLING AND THE HEALTH OF A BOY CHILD ON DRUG ABUSE IN OGOJA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, CROSS RIVER STATE

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ABSTRACT

The fight against drug abuse among boy children in Ogoja Local Government Area of Cross River State necessitates a comprehensive approach that goes beyond counselling. This article explores additional strategies to enhance the existing approach, including peer support groups, mentorship programs, policy changes, law enforcement reforms, mental health services, and media collaborations. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of community-based activities and sports programs in preventing drug abuse. It is important to note that ensuring safe and inclusive spaces is crucial for the well-being of young individuals in the region, ultimately contributing to the prevention and reduction of drug abuse among boy children in Ogoja LGA. Drug abuse among boy children in Ogoja Local Government Area of Cross River State has become a significant public health concern. It also examines the impact of counselling on health and drug abuse among these young individuals. Counselling provides a safe space for discussing drug-related issues, fostering self-worth, and promoting healthy relationships, which can help prevent drug abuse. Furthermore, community involvement and collaboration among stakeholders are crucial for the success of counselling programs aimed at addressing this issue. By focusing on counselling and community engagement, the overall health and well-being of boy children in the region can be improved, ultimately combating the growing problem of drug abuse in Ogoja LGA.

KEYWORD; Drugs, Health, Boy Child, Counselling, Community.

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INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse among boy children in Ogoja Local Government Area of Cross River State is a pressing concern that requires a multifaceted approach to address. Counselling has been identified as a vital tool in mitigating the impact of drug abuse on the health and well-being of these young individuals. However, to maximize its effectiveness, it is crucial to explore additional strategies and collaborations that can amplify the positive outcomes of counselling.

Drug abuse has become a significant public health concern in Nigeria, particularly in Cross River State. Among the various demographics affected, young boys are particularly vulnerable to the allure of substance abuse. Ogoja Local Government Area (LGA) in Cross River State has not been spared from this menace. In light of this, it is crucial to examine the role of counselling in addressing drug abuse among boy children and its effect on their overall health. Counsellors, in conjunction with parent, caregiver, government and entire society should adopt good parental care love and concern for their children and mention goods societal values, moral norms which should be subject to change (Effiom, Arop, Elizabeth, Otu, 2022). Therefore, this paper focused on the effects of community counselling and health of the boy child on drug abuse in Ogoja LGA of Cross River State.

The Prevalence of Drug Abuse in Ogoja LGA

Ogoja LGA, like many other regions in Nigeria, has witnessed an increase in drug abuse among young people. This alarming trend has led to numerous social, economic, and health issues. Drug abuse can lead to various health problems, including addiction, mental health disorders, and even death. Furthermore, it can contribute to criminal activities and hinder the personal and academic development of affected individuals. The role of secondary education is to lay the foundation for further education and if a good foundation is laid at this level, there are likely to be no problem at subsequent levels (Effiom, & Stella, 2019)

The Importance of Community Counselling in Drug Abuse Prevention

Counselling plays a pivotal role in addressing drug abuse among boy children in Ogoja LGA. It offers a safe, non-judgmental space where young people can discuss their struggles, emotions, and experiences related to drug abuse. Counsellors can help individuals understand the root causes of their drug use and provide them with coping mechanisms and alternative strategies for dealing with stress, anxiety, and other triggers.

Community counselling can also help young people develop a strong sense of self-worth and self-esteem, which can act as a protective factor against drug abuse. By fostering a positive self-image and promoting healthy relationships, counsellors can empower boy children to make better choices and resist the temptation to engage in risky behaviors, including drug abuse.

Community counselling can have a profound impact on the overall health of boy children who are struggling with drug abuse. By addressing the psychological, emotional, and social aspects of drug abuse, counsellors can help young people develop resilience and coping skills that can improve their mental and emotional well-being.

Moreover, community counselling can lead to better communication between the boy child and their family members, which can improve the overall family dynamics and support system. This, in turn, can contribute to a healthier environment that discourages drug abuse and promotes recovery. (Montare Behavioural Health, 2025)

The Role of Community and Stakeholders in Counselling

Effective counselling for drug abuse among boy children in Ogoja LGA requires a collaborative effort from various stakeholders, including the community, schools, religious institutions, and local government. These stakeholders can work together to create awareness about the dangers of drug abuse, provide resources for counselling services, and support families affected by substance abuse.

Community-based counselling programs can be particularly effective in reaching young people who may not have access to professional counsellors. These programs can involve peer counselling, where trained individuals from the community can provide support and guidance to those struggling with drug abuse.

I. Enhancing the Impact of Counselling In Combating Drug Abuse among Boy Children In Ogoja LGA

Expanding Counselling Services and Resources

To ensure that counselling services are accessible to all boy children in need, it is essential to expand the availability of resources and trained professionals. This can be achieved through collaborations between local government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other relevant stakeholders. By pooling their resources and expertise, these entities can establish more counselling centres, train additional counsellors, and develop online or telephonic counselling services to reach those who may not have access to in-person support.

Incorporating Traditional Healing Methods and Cultural Practices

Incorporating traditional healing methods and cultural practices can enhance the effectiveness of counselling for boy children in Ogoja LGA. These methods often hold significant cultural and spiritual significance for the community and can provide unique insights into the root causes of drug abuse. By integrating traditional healing practices with modern counselling techniques, professionals can create a more holistic approach that resonates with the local community and increases the likelihood of successful recovery.

Promoting Preventive Education and Awareness Campaigns

Preventive education and awareness campaigns are crucial in reducing the prevalence of drug abuse among boy children in Ogoja LGA. These campaigns can be designed to target various age groups, from primary school children to adolescents and young adults. By educating young people about the risks associated with drug abuse, the importance of mental health, and the benefits of seeking professional help, these

initiatives can help prevent substance abuse before it starts.

Collaborating with Schools and Religious Institutions

Schools and religious institutions play a significant role in shaping the values and behaviours of young people in Ogoja LGA. By partnering with these institutions, counsellors and other stakeholders can integrate drug abuse prevention and recovery programs into the curriculum and religious teachings. This collaboration can help create a supportive environment where boy children feel encouraged to seek help and engage in open discussions about drug abuse and mental health.

Strengthening Family Support Systems

Family plays a vital role in the overall well-being of boy children in Ogoja Local Government Area. Strengthening family support systems can significantly contribute to the effectiveness of counselling services. This can be achieved through workshops, seminars, and counselling sessions designed specifically for parents and caregivers. These programs can educate families on the signs of drug abuse, the importance of open communication, and the benefits of seeking professional help. By fostering a supportive family environment, it becomes easier for boy children to overcome drug abuse challenges.

Involving Peer Support Groups and Mentorship Programs

Peer support groups and mentorship programs can play a significant role in the recovery and rehabilitation process of boy children struggling with drug abuse. These groups provide a safe space for young people to share their experiences, learn from each other, and develop coping mechanisms to overcome addiction. Mentorship programs, on the other hand, can pair recovering individuals with experienced mentors who can offer guidance, support, and encouragement throughout their journey to sobriety.

Advocating for Policy Changes and Law Enforcement Reforms

Policy changes and law enforcement reforms can contribute to the prevention and reduction of drug abuse among boy children in Ogoja LGA.

By implementing stricter penalties for drug trafficking and distribution, authorities can deter potential drug dealers from operating in the region. Additionally, policies that promote drug rehabilitation and treatment programs for offenders can help reduce recidivism rates and provide opportunities for recovery.

Encouraging Community-Based Activities and Sports Programs

Community-based activities and sports programs can serve as alternative outlets for boy children in Ogoja LGA, providing them with opportunities to channel their energy and develop new skills. These programs can foster a sense of belonging, camaraderie, and self-worth, which can help prevent drug abuse and promote overall health and well-being. By engaging with their peers and mentors in positive activities, young people can learn valuable life skills and build resilience against the temptations of drug abuse.

Promoting Access to Mental Health Services and Resources

Mental health services and resources are crucial in addressing the underlying psychological factors that contribute to drug abuse among boy children in Ogoja Local Government Area. Many individuals experiencing chronic mental health condition may face, in addition to symptom that may be long-lasting or debilitating and are often difficult to deal with, the added challenges of public stigma, which arises in many case due to misconception about mental health issues (Effiom, Cyril, & Brenda, 2020). By providing access to professional mental health support, stakeholders can help young people manage stress, anxiety, and other emotional challenges that may trigger substance abuse. Over 450 million individual are suffering from mental disorder one in four individuals have risk of being affected by the mental health disorder (Effiom, Ebuara, Ekwok, Sarah, Julia, Undie, Elizabeth, 2022). Furthermore, mental health services can play a vital role in the recovery process, helping individuals overcome addiction and reintegrate into society.

Collaborating with Media Outlets for Public Awareness Campaigns

Collaborating with media outlets can help amplify public awareness campaigns aimed at preventing drug abuse and promoting the importance of counselling and mental health services. By leveraging various media platforms, such as

television, radio, newspapers, and social media, stakeholders can reach a wider audience and educate the community about the risks associated with drug abuse and the available support systems.

II. Expanding the Impact of Community-Based Activities and Sports Programs in Combating Drug Abuse among Boy Children in Ogoja LGA

According to Adebajo and Adeyemi (2018) community-based activities and sports programs hold immense potential in preventing drug abuse among boy children in Ogoja Local Government Area (LGA) of Cross River State. By providing alternative outlets for their energy and interests, these programs can help young people develop valuable life skills, build resilience, and foster a sense of belonging. The counsellor must explore ways to expand the reach and effectiveness of community-based activities and sports programs in the fight against drug abuse in Ogoja LGA.

Partnering with Local Organizations and NGOs

Partnering with local organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can help expand the scope and impact of community-based activities and sports programs. By pooling resources, expertise, and networks, these entities can create more diverse and inclusive programs that cater to the unique needs and interests of boy children in the region. Additionally, these collaborations can help secure funding, facilities, and volunteer support, ensuring the long-term sustainability of these initiatives. (Adewuya & Adebayo, 2013).

Engaging Local Volunteers and Mentors

Local volunteers and mentors play a crucial role in the success of community-based activities and sports programs. By engaging community members who share a passion for sports or other recreational activities, stakeholders can create a more authentic and relatable environment for boy children. These volunteers and mentors can serve as positive role models, offering guidance, support, and encouragement to young people as they navigate the challenges of growing up.

Developing Diverse Activity Options

To cater to the diverse interests and backgrounds of boy children in Ogoja LGA, it is essential to develop a wide range of community-based activities and sports programs. This can include traditional sports like football, basketball, and track and field, as well as non-traditional options such as martial arts, dance, and creative arts.

By offering a variety of activities, stakeholders can ensure that there is something for everyone, increasing the likelihood of participation and engagement.

Incorporating Educational and Vocational Elements

Incorporating educational and vocational elements into community-based activities and sports programs can help young people develop essential life skills and prepare them for future opportunities. For example, sports programs can include elements of teamwork, discipline, and goal-setting, while other activities can focus on leadership, communication, and problem-solving. By combining recreational activities with skill-building components, stakeholders can create a more holistic approach to personal development and empowerment.

Creating Safe and Inclusive Spaces

Ensuring that community-based activities and sports programs are safe and inclusive is crucial for the well-being of boy children in Ogoja LGA. This involves creating a supportive environment where young people feel comfortable expressing themselves, sharing their experiences, and seeking help when needed. By fostering a culture of respect, understanding, and empathy, stakeholders can create a sense of belonging and encourage participation from all members of the community.

CONCLUSION

Addressing drug abuse among boy children in Ogoja LGA requires a comprehensive approach that goes beyond counselling alone. By expanding counselling services, incorporating traditional healing methods, promoting preventive education, collaborating with schools and religious institutions, and strengthening family support systems, stakeholders can create a more robust and effective strategy to combat drug abuse and improve the overall health and well-being of young individuals in the region.

Drug abuse among boy children in Ogoja LGA is a significant concern that requires immediate attention and intervention. Counselling plays a crucial role in addressing this issue by providing a supportive environment for young people to overcome their struggles with substance abuse.

By fostering a healthy mind-set, improving family dynamics, and promoting community involvement, counselling can contribute to the overall health and well-being of boy children in the region. It is essential for stakeholders to work together to implement effective counselling programs and raise awareness about the dangers of drug abuse to curb this growing public health issue in Ogoja LGA and beyond.

The comprehensive approach to drug abuse prevention and counselling in Ogoja Local Government Area requires a collaborative effort from various stakeholders, including the community, schools, religious institutions, local government, and other relevant entities. By integrating peer support groups, mentorship programs, policy changes, community-based activities, mental health services, and media collaborations, stakeholders can create a more robust and effective strategy to combat drug abuse and improve the overall health and well-being of boy children in the region.

Expanding the impact of community-based activities and sports programs in combating drug abuse among boy children in Ogoja LGA according to Chikobwe and Mudavenhu (2015) requires a collaborative effort from various stakeholders, including local organizations, NGOs, volunteers, and mentors. By developing diverse activity options, incorporating educational and vocational elements, and creating safe and inclusive spaces, stakeholders can create a more robust and effective strategy to prevent drug abuse and promote the overall health and well-being of young individuals in the region.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The community counsellor must be willing to work with and lead support groups so as to provide a safe and supportive environment for individuals to share their experiences and receive support
2. The community counsellor must collaborate with other professionals so to enable him/her refer drugs cases that are beyond his professional responsibility.
3. The community counsellor in conjunction with other professionals should carry out assessments and diagnosis to identify the underlying causes of individuals' drug abuse.

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