Planning Sustainable Health Promotion Programs

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Preliminary Results

Definition/model of sustainability

Shediac-Rizkallah and Bone’s definition and conceptual model was most used across included articles. The authors define sustainability as: a ‘global term that refers to the general phenomenon of program continuation’. They highlight three different perspectives of sustainability: 1) maintaining health benefits 2) institutionalization 3) capacity building.

Facilitators to sustainability

- Development of partnerships between practitioners and participants, and other organizations5,10-16
- Capacity building at individual and organizational levels7,12,16
- Identifying a ‘champion’ from the program5,9,15,17
- Congruence and alignment between the program and values/mandate of the organization4,7,10,12,13
- Communication between program partners; stakeholders and program participants11,14,16
- Adequate funding1,8,12,16
- Program can be integrated into existing structures (organizational; policies)5,12-14
- Creating a conceptual framework of the HPP before implementation; using an established behaviour or organizational change theory to plan the HPP2
- Sensitivity to socio-cultural environment18

Barriers to sustainability

- Funding-lack of; limited staff capacity to address it2; limited capacity to access new revenue and generate new resources1; lack of funding to conduct data analysis11; rigidity of funding structures1; lack of institutional memory4; lack of; limited staff capacity to address it2
- Gaining support from stakeholders; lack of outsourcing1,12,16
- Not having a champion2
- Limited capacity to access new revenue and generate new resources1
- Not knowing what evidence could be required to convince decision makers; not having full project findings and lack of time to translate evidence into policy11
- Staff-high staff turnover and resulting loss of institutional memory4; recruitment and retention of staff; lack of workforce development opportunities

Methodology

- A systematic search of the published and grey literature was conducted in June 2018
- Databases included: MEDLINE, PsycINFO, OAHN, SociINDEX and Scopus
- Included articles must have used or presented a sustainability framework
- Title/abstract screening was completed by two reviewers (AB and SH); initial agreement was reached
- Full text screening was completed by two reviewers (AB and SH)
- Quality appraisal was conducted on published articles by three reviewers, Tiffany Oei (19), AB (10), SH (9)
- CASP, Health Evidence and NOS tools were used for quality appraisal
- Screening criteria for grey literature was adapted from Caldwell8 and Bergeron9
- Preliminary data extraction was completed by AB and SH

Discussion

- There is considerable interest in the public health field to understand the facilitators and barriers for program sustainability
- This research describes facilitators and barriers for consideration during the program planning process
- Public health practitioners may wish to incorporate these findings into HPP
- Final results and discussion will be made available later in 2019

Background and Objectives

- In health promotion, sustainability implies the continuation of a program2
- There appears to be lack of a clear definition of sustainability and when and how to implement it into the program planning process. As such, it is not always clear what is being sustained2
- Sustainability is often addressed at the end of a program lifecycle, if at all2
- Models and conceptual frameworks for sustainability exist; however, the use of these is not generally explicit
- There are key barriers and facilitators to program sustainability that should be considered in the program planning process

Public Health Ontario (PHO) conducted research in this area to assist public health practitioners in developing sustainable health promotion programs (HPP) by:

1. Clearly describing the concept of sustainability as it relates to HPP
2. Identifying barriers and facilitators that influence sustainability of HPP
3. Demonstrating how to implement sustainability into the program planning process

Research Question

What factors facilitate or influence the sustainability of health promotion programs?

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References