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Module 5: Application-Reflection

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**Part 1: PEN-3 Model Completion**

African Americans living in the USA have at least two identities and cultures they identify with, most of the time. Some have more and others might only have one but the majority have their African side and their American side. When those two are combined they create a sometimes confusing set of standards that they have to navigate through. On the health and wellness side a lot of that comes into play with exercise as well as dietary choices. "Healthy lifestyle was more frequently promoted within their mainstream American culture than in their African American culture" (Swierad, Vartanian, & King, 2017, pg 9). This quote does a good job at summarizing much of the back and forth many African Americans go through in our society.

Dietary choices can be heavily swayed by the different sets of identities African Americans feel and it is very hard to mix them at times. "Most African Americans realize that some aspects of their traditional cuisine are unhealthy, ethnic food is comforting and allows for connectedness, expression of one's cultural identity, and connection to African American culture" (Swierad et. al., 2017, pg 9). Culture and togetherness is very important to the African Americans so having an extended family and community has a massive influence on their behavior and identity. So having support from those around them can help alter negative health behaviors and create lasting positive ones. "Having people who do it [lead healthy lifestyle] can help - if you know that a group of people workout and run from Central Park and back, i feel like that you're more likely to engage in that type of behavior if you know your friends are doing it" (Swierad et. al., 2017, pg 12).

As a health educator the biggest thing one can do is to continue education on healthy food choices. Within that education one must not try to take away their cultural foods but give options on how to make those dishes healthier as well as educating them on the potential impact on them if they do not make a change. “Food makeovers” have been adopted to typically unhealthy dishes was something that has also been a push in many African American communities (Swierad et. al., 2017, pg 12). So taking the traditional dishes and giving options to make them healthier is a big way for the population to still use their heritage and cultural dishes but also be healthier while doing it.

To make a sustainable and lasting impact on this population one must make sure that the population’s input and feedback is given so that they feel they are part of the process. Obviously a lot of these changes that are being made are to be done at home so giving out any information that can help lead to the change will be vital. Getting community members and other stakeholders input on the fallout of a failed program will also be important. Making sure there is plenty of feedback from those who will be impacted will help keep the interventions sustainable and realistic.

## **Part 2: Reflection on Behavioral Diversity**

### **Autism and Fitness**

Compared to the same age elementary school population students on the Autism Spectrum are behind when it comes to physical fitness. There are many reasons for this but a few of the biggest issues is their social interactions and communication issues at

that age. This prevents these students from excelling and growing with their peers unless there are supports in place and extra help to ensure the students participate the same time as their peers. Even if they are in the same class the teacher and teacher's aide need to have adaptations for everything or have completely different lessons depending on where the student is on the Autism Spectrum (Oh, Escalante, & Gentry, 2018).

To best help this population will depend on the resources of the schools where the students are. If there are TAs and extra teachers to help work closely with these students then there is a better chance of success. Physical Education classes need to have adapted and differentiated lessons so that the students who might not be able to succeed in a big classroom setting without support have the ability to achieve the same goals and success as the rest of the students. In PE class many fitness lessons should be targeted at gross motor skills (running, skipping, jumping, and swimming) or task oriented skills (picking things up, throwing things, rolling) to ensure growth (Lee, Vargo, & Porretta, 2018).

### **The Black Athlete**

This population is a bit trickier and is not the typical health and wellness behavior but it fits in perfectly. The population is black athletes and the issue comes into play when college athletes are pushed forward just for their athletic ability rather than academic. This starts at a very young age when some black athletes are identified. It happens mostly in basketball and football because those are revenue driven sports. When these athletes are younger they are much more likely than white athletes to be

pushed forward because of their ability, forgetting that they might not academically be ready to move forward. “Sailes (1993) found that White college student participants believed that Black athletes were not academically prepared to attend college, were not as intelligent, and did not receive high grades as compared to White athletes” (Comeaux, 2018, pg. 35). Much of this has to do with the early stereotypes and discrimination of black athletes and people. They are not thought of as smart as white people so they are pushed forward using athletics.

Health educators, and all educators, need to figure out a way to make sure that students are not pushed through school when they are not ready regardless of their athletic ability. If we, as educators, can help prepare these young kids for a higher education setting we can then reverse the process by which college student-athletes are given up on once they are done with athletics. When they get to the college level they need to take courses that will prepare them for the world and prepare them for a job outside of athletics. It is a lot easier said than done since many places in the USA still pride themselves more on athletics than academics so educators at those schools can only do so much before they get in trouble or possibly fired. It is very sad and unfortunate that the money that is pulled in by athletics outweighs the academic support and education of those athletes. But our society has shown that we need athletics for entertainment and that the individual does not matter more than the whole sport. So sacrificing an athlete's post athletic career is worth it because many do not see the future, only the present.

### **E-Cigarette and Vape Use Among Teenagers**

Vaping and E-Cigarettes are the new “thing” for teenagers. Being able to use them discreetly is a huge advantage to them. Students use them in bathrooms, outside of school, and even in class because of the smokeless nature of them. What is really allowing them to grow at such a rapid rate is the lack of regulation from the FDA (Teen Vaping, 2019, pg. 20). What has also caught the attention of adults and youth is the THC containing JUULs. This is an easy way to get some of the effects of marijuana without smoking. The CDC estimates 1 in 5 high school students use some sort of vaping product (Teen Vaping, 2019, pg. 20). Flavoring the products has also helped the growth. But this has also recently been shown to be one of the biggest drawbacks. There are so many more chemicals in these products than what many think because there is no smoke. The marketing strategies have been the top reason why more teenagers are using them.

As educators we need to be able to help break down certain advertisements and social media influences to show that what might look “cool” and “fun” has lasting and sometimes deadly consequences. Educating the students on what to look out for in ads and how to think for themselves is vital. Also, educating them on what is actually in these products will hopefully give them the tools to make health decisions when being pressured to use vaping products. Also showing that the statistics show that using vaping products leads to the use of regular cigarettes at an almost 7 times higher rate than those who do not use vaping products (Teen Vaping, 2019, pg. 21).

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