Reflection Paper

Community Paramedicine

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Before taking this course and learning about Community Paramedicine (CP), I honestly can say I had no prior knowledge on this topic, which is crazy, since I want to focus my social work career in the medical field. I took this course because I wanted to further my knowledge on how medical care was being brought straight to the communities. From the title of ‘Community Paramedicine’, I knew that this had to do with paramedics and first responders who arrive first on scene to bring medical care to those in need, but that is how far my knowledge went. I learned so much from this course, and I personally think most of my knowledge was retained when I was watching the videos assigned each week. I also enjoyed reading through the current event articles and staying up to date on what was going on with Community Paramedicine in today’s society.

The first thing I was shocked to learn about in this course was how many times paramedics get called to drug overdoses. Before this course, I knew how bad the drug epidemic was, but I had no idea that the EMS usually was called to the same person overdosing more than three times in a day. This was shocking to me to think that a paramedic could Narcan a person, revive the person, then leave. Then the person could potentially overdose later again in that day, resulting in the paramedics to do the process all over again. Not only does this use up medical tools and supplies, but it also takes a huge physical and mental tole on a paramedic. I also learned in this class how high the burnout rate is for paramedics, and a top reason is because of the opioid epidemic. Paramedics were beginning to lose hope with how many calls were just for overdoses, and it was becoming difficult for paramedics to continue to have a positive outlook on the job, but this is where Community Paramedicine comes in.

I quickly learned that one of the main goals in a Community Paramedicine Program is to try and decrease the amount of calls EMS got related to drug overdoses. To help decrease this,
the paramedics that are involved in the program go to house visits to the individuals who had a recent overdose. It is usually a social worker, a paramedic, and a police officer, that go to talk to the individual about resources and programs that they could get into, if they are receptive to the help. This is only for individuals who want to receive help. The medical workers in the CP program who make the house visits do not pressure the individuals in listening to them or going to rehab. I also learned how the CP program has many different types of employees, such as, police officers, paramedics, nurses, doctors, social workers, and etc. All of these different employees want to better the communities in their areas, and supporting a CP program is the way to do that.

Since substance abuse and use is such a common thing in communities all over the world, it is sad to say, but not shocking, that it is also prominent in my community as well. I live in the Clifton area near the University of Cincinnati, and substance use goes on in college populated areas. I think that substance use isn’t looked at in a negative light by college students because of the idea that college is the time to try new things. I think substance use can be affectively addressed in my community by Community paramedics coming on to campus to discuss the effects of drug use and how it can lead to drug abuse and overdose. It is especially a lot scarier for people to experiment with drugs in today’s society because of drugs being laced with deadly chemicals such as fentanyl. No matter if the person is an addict, or if it is their first-time trying drugs, they can fall victim to a laced substance. If there were programs in place in colleges to provide resources for students to be aware of them, it can help reduce the possible drug use in the future.

Like I said earlier in this reflection, I really learned a lot from the videos that were assigned each week, my favorite one being the video we just watched for module seven, which
was the three panel speakers that talked about the food bank, the 211 services, and the Talbert house. I think this was my favorite video because I learned so much about three different resources and each speaker was extremely knowledgeable on the resources they were talking about. Out of those three, the most impactful for me was Jennifer, and simply because I am such a fan of 211 services and loved how she talked about the goal of it becoming as popular and important as 911. Jennifer had so much information on how they have certified counselors answer the phones and be able to assess what the individual who called needs, and what resources to refer them to. As a future social worker, this is extremely beneficial and important in my line of work. Our main goal is to be able to help individuals have a better quality of life, and a way to do that is find the resources and programs they need to help them. I also liked how Jennifer brought up that it is extremely important for different organizations to work together and for paramedics in the CP program to give out the 211 number to those they talk to. This way, if there are things an individual does not feel comfortable saying to the paramedic on sight, or if they need further help in the future, they can call 211 and get more information.

I learned quite a lot about new and different types of resources in this course, and also learned how important a CP program is to have implemented in all communities. I can take my knowledge from this course with me as I continue my future as a social worker. As a future social worker, I will be working in a micro, mezzo, and macro settings, and being able to go out in a community and learn all of the different factors that can affect a person and to see the issues in the community, will be extremely important. I also want to take my social working career into the medical field, so being a part of a Community Paramedicine program could be something I would want to be a part of in the future. After taking this course, my appreciation for first responders has continued to increase as the more I learned. Community Paramedicine is a
program that focuses solely on helping the people of the community and bringing medical care and resources directly to them. I believe that Community Paramedicine will continue to grow and be the future of progressing medical care and quality to people in need.