

Running Head: CHOICES PREGNANCY CENTER

Choices Pregnancy Center

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Introduction

The group volunteered their time at the Choices Pregnancy Center, located in Charleston, IL, for the legacy project. Choices Pregnancy Center is a not-for-profit organization that offers assistance and care to new or expecting mothers who are seeking free services and education on their options. The group was drawn to this organization when they found out the mission and the services that Choices provided. They provide compassionate care and essential services such as emergency contraception information, pregnancy testing, ultrasound verification, information on abortions, STD information, referrals to community resources, and women's support groups (Choices Pregnancy & Health, 2020). Choices Pregnancy Center has four different locations in Mattoon, Charleston, Casey, and Paris and serves about two hundred and fifty people annually.

During the time at Choices Pregnancy Center, the group was able to help sort through clothes, organize donations, come up with social media content, and learn how this organization benefits the community. The center relies primarily on volunteers, and the group was able to get a lot done while volunteering. Cities need to have ample resources for expecting mothers and their children. Choices provide women with these resources to ensure the mother is cared for during and after pregnancy.

Micayla Clapp:

Improving prenatal care for minority women.

The article chosen is about how prenatal care began as individualized care, but more recently, holistic prenatal care has been successful in improving birth outcomes. For all women, improving health behaviors is essential, while women regularly engage with the health care system. An emphasis on mental health promotion may decrease some of the adverse birth outcomes. Minority women are known to experience increased levels of stress, anxiety, and

depression. Providing support for pregnant women and incorporating knowledge and skills through prenatal care may promote physical and mental health in minority women (Gennaro, 2016).

Peer support during pregnancy and early parenthood: A qualitative study of models and perceptions.

The second article chosen is about peer support during pregnancy. Volunteer peer supporters have the potential to connect with and give support to in-need mothers. The peer supporters help pregnant women through active listening, providing information, and practical support. Volunteers can improve mothers' and babies' physical outcomes by increasing maternal and child health services uptake. Volunteers may also improve emotional outcomes by forming relationships that reduce feelings of isolation and stress and increase empowerment and capability (McLeish, 2015).

Elizabeth Pasieta:

Women's empowerment related to pregnancy and childbirth: Introduction to special issue.

The article by Prata et al. (2017) discusses empowering women who are pregnant. The report brings attention to the fact that many women during pregnancy can experience mistreatment. However, those who are empowered tend to have fewer complications and a more comfortable pregnancy (Prata et al., 2017). Therefore, it is essential to have resources available to women who may need additional support. Choices Pregnancy Center is a resource to assist women in Coles county during pregnancy and the first year of the child's life.

Domestic violence during pregnancy and women's health-related quality of life.

As mentioned earlier, many women, unfortunately, experience mistreatment during their pregnancies. In the article by Gharacheh et al. (2016), they say specifically that domestic

violence is a significant health problem for these women. The study utilized a questionnaire called the Abuse Assessment Screen (AAS). The results demonstrated that the women who experienced domestic violence during their pregnancy also had a low health-related quality of life (Gharacheh, 2016). For many reasons, women may not have access to healthcare, may experience abuse, or both. Luckily, there are resources available to women who may be experiencing abuse or cannot access healthcare in many areas. Choices Pregnancy Center is a free resource for newly pregnant women to support unplanned pregnancies and pregnancy options. Choices also provide referrals to outside help if necessary for their clients. First time pregnancies can be terrifying, but having the proper resources can ease fears and concerns.

Lindsey Ball:

Unintended pregnancy prevention and care education: Are we adequately preparing entry-to-practice nursing and midwifery students?

Downing (2020) discusses the barriers women face regarding access to education to prevent unplanned pregnancies from happening. The report focuses on primary prevention through health education and pregnancy prevention services. It explains how not all unplanned pregnancies end in abortion and that two-thirds of women choose to carry out their pregnancy and keep the baby (Downing, 2020). Choices Pregnancy Center is a program that offers counseling and education for those who choose to continue their pregnancy and offers post-abortion counseling to those who do not. The article explains that it is the nurse's role to give education; however, more resources are needed. The Choices program offers essential baby necessities like clothes, bouncers, bottles, and more in exchange for their educational classes.

Timely postpartum visits for low-income women: A health system and Medicaid payer partnership.

The article by Howell et al. (2020) explains postpartum follow-ups attendance among women. They found that women from a lower socioeconomic status have a lower attendance rate. The Choices program in Charleston also understands the backgrounds that people have. The article tells how a social worker and a community health worker implemented a program called new mothers after their delivery and a minimum of 3 additional times to educate the mother based on her needs (Howell et al., 2020). The goal of the program is to address barriers with education and improve the health of underserved women. The plan they implemented is like Choices because they both offer incentives for attendance in the programs. The Choices program provides clothes and other equipment, and the program in the article gives their clients \$10 through Medicaid to attend their postpartum clinic visits. After implementing their plan, the researchers found that attendance increased among these high-risk, low-income mothers.

Conclusion

Overall, Choices Pregnancy Center strives to deliver resources and education for new or soon to be moms. They offer a variety of services free of charge and are easily accessible. The organization utilizes licensed professionals and trained client advocates to provide the clients with whatever services or resources they need. They also have a donation center and shop available to all clients who participate in the program. Having a safe space for pregnant or expecting mothers to utilize free services or receive education on their options is essential. Choices pregnancy center is a hidden gem in Charleston that offers safe and compassionate care to every client who walks through the door.

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