

Project Sprout: Assessment of Training Efficacy through Qualitative Analysis

Sadie Vernon

Introduction to and Rationale for Project Sprout

Homelessness

- Homelessness is a major issue that impacts different groups, including families and children, in every society.
- Homelessness is caused by increasing prices in the cost of living, violence, and health issues.
- Homeless families experience mental health problems, economic instability, and physical health problems. Children who are homeless also experience negative impacts on their physical and mental health, development, and education.

Community Need

- 39% increase between 2023 and 2024 of individuals who experienced homelessness in families with children in the United States
- Families with children under the age of 18 account for 36% of the homeless population in the state of Virginia

Student Opportunities

- Connection to community
- Application of information learned in courses
- Development of Interprofessional collaboration
- Professional development

Project Implementation

This project focused on the training of Radford University (RU) students to participate in a program that addresses the needs of homeless families with children from birth to five years old in the New River Valley.

Project Sprout timeline

- 2012-2019: Project Sprout was created and implemented; more than 100 families were served by 60+ RU students
- 2023-2024: Project Sprout training materials were updated with evidence-based content and practices
- 2024-2025: New student advocates were recruited and trained

Training Outcomes by Theme



Student Reflections

"I like how this project is trying to help us address a problem, I think that's meaningful."

"This experience has contributed to learning about myself by telling me I might end up enjoying working with younger kids."

"Project Sprout is here to help families and children by reassuring them and providing resources for development to close these gaps."

Methods and Discussion

Training Methods

- Full-day, in person training session
- 2 graduate students & 1 undergraduate (Honors) student provided the training
- 9 undergraduate volunteers completed the training

Training Modules

- Module 1: Demographics of Homelessness and Poverty
- Module 2: Responsibilities of Advocates
- Module 3: Key Areas of Child Development
- Module 4: Early Childhood Milestones and Expectations
- Module 5: Overview of Lessons and Referral Process
- Module 6: Role Play Activities for Delivering Services

Data Analysis

Post-training student reflections were coded using NVivo

- Each reflection was coded
- Codes were used to identify themes
- Mindmaps were created

Discussion

Based on the analysis of the survey results, Project Sprout provided effective training to students in the following areas:

- Preparation to participate in the service-learning program
- Increased knowledge about homelessness and important information necessary to engage and support families in natural environments
- Creation of connections between students and content in their fields of study

Outcomes indicated a need for the training to include more hands-on activities and open-ended discussions to aid in students' learning.

Acknowledgements:

Thank you to Dr. Corey Cassidy for her mentorship, the SMART Lab for their contribution to this research, and the OURS Office for printing this poster.



SCAN ME