

School Nurse Practice Stories: Public Health Interventions

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Background and Acknowledgements

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Study Purpose

- Explored school nurses' experiences with understanding and using public health interventions from the Public Health Intervention Wheel framework.



Design

- Qualitative
- Sample: School nurses
 - Baccalaureate degree
 - Minimum of one year school nursing practice
 - Included urban, suburban, and rural settings across the state of Minnesota
- Data Collection: Focus groups (1.5 hours)
 - Can you share an experience from your practice as a school nurse about when you used interventions from the ...wedge?
 - Can you tell us a story about a time when you used the intervention of... ?

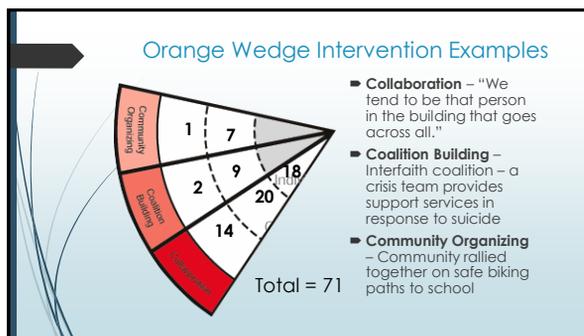
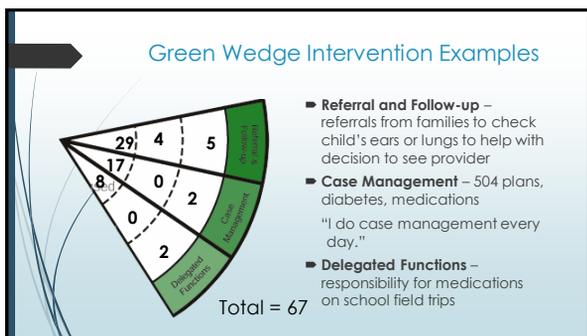
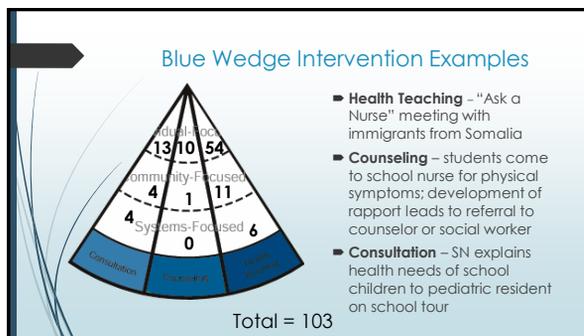
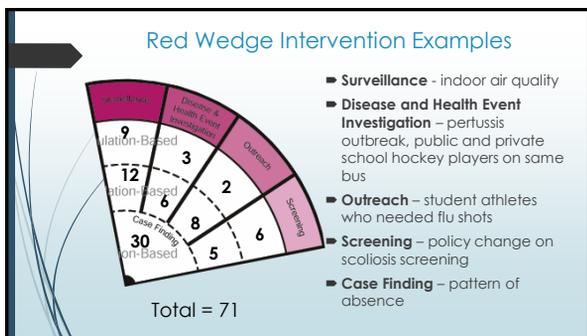
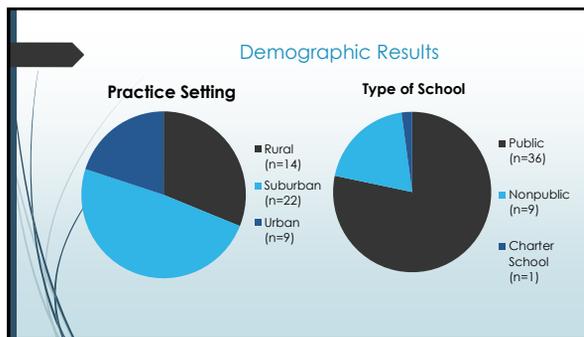
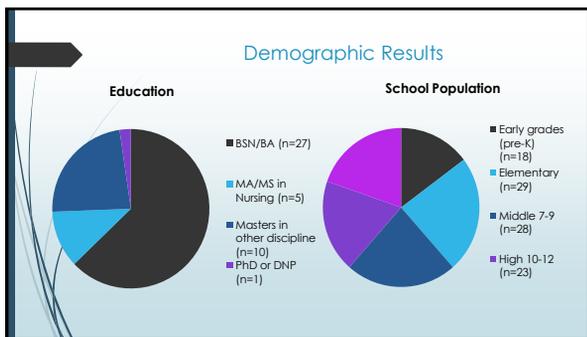
Focus Group Intervention Wedges

Focus Group	Red	Blue	Green	Orange	Yellow
#1	x	x			x
#2	x		x	x	
#3			x		x
#4	x			x	x
#5	x	x	x		
#6		x		x	x

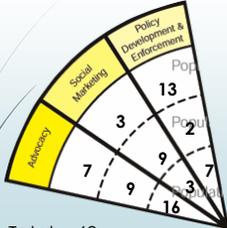
Demographic Results (n = 43)

- Caucasian (n = 43)
- Female (n = 42)
- Age
 - 50 and under (n = 14)
 - Over 50 (n = 29)
- Over 15 years in nursing practice (n = 38)
- Supervisor/Coordinator (n = 21)





Yellow Wedge Intervention Examples



- Advocacy** – "Part of core is to advocate for all people around us."
- Social Marketing** – Communicating school nursing role to public, physicians
- Policy Development and Enforcement** – Medication policy, provide input on policy committee

Total = 69

Other Themes

School Nursing Role (n = 20)

- "I think it's important that nurses start to toot our own horn and tell what we do and how much time we save the teachers, how much time we keep kids in their desk at school."
- "I think we have to really bring it down to what is the impact on students...What we really want to be doing is saying because there is a school nurse here, we've had this impact on students."

Other Themes

- Complex families (n = 5)
- Economic issues (n = 4)
- Trust in school nurse (n = 3)
- Social media problems (n = 2)

Discussion

- SN Demographics**
 - Many worked across grade levels and school
 - Represented rural, suburban, and rural practice settings
 - White women (one exception), with expertise in school nursing
 - Nearly half in coordinator or supervisor positions
 - Focus groups with greater number in administrative roles had more discussion of systems interventions

Discussion: Intervention Wedges

- RED WEDGE**
 - 30 practice examples for Case Finding at individual level
 - Good representation of community and systems level examples for all 4 interventions in the Red Wedge
- BLUE WEDGE**
 - Has most practice examples (n = 103)
 - Highest # in health teaching at individual level
 - No counseling at systems level; fewer counseling examples (may see counseling as role of school counselor, which has an academic focus)

Discussion: Intervention Wedges

- GREEN WEDGE**
 - High # of Referral and Follow-up examples at individual level – SNs know resources
 - No practice examples at community level for Case Management and Delegated Functions
- ORANGE WEDGE**
 - Collaboration examples at all 3 levels
 - Collaboration with county public health varies across counties
 - Many fewer examples of Coalition Building and Community Organizing, which are only at the community and systems levels

Discussion: Intervention Wedges

Yellow Wedge

- All intervention levels represented
- Some confusion of social media with social marketing
- SNs talked about the potential of using social media, while expressing concerns about safety, negative experiences, and privacy

Discussion: School Nurse Role

- Role Confusion – Who is the school nurse?
- Many concerns about delegation and competence/skills of para-professionals/assistants
- Misperceptions about school nurse responsibilities
- Schools have different expectations about school nurse activities
- Language used by SNs is important for explaining what they do (more than technical skills)

School Nurse Practice Implications

- Educate school community about school nursing role. Others see tasks but do not understand the thinking and decision-making in the work of SNs.
- The SN is an independent leader, often without the presence of other nursing colleagues in immediate school environment.
- SNs need to analyze own strengths and abilities to manage "uncontrollable variables" in the school environment.
- When new to the role, seek out a mentor. With more experience, seek to mentor others new to the role.

School Nurse Practice Implications

- Language
 - Documentation, not "paperwork"
 - Name work using Public Health Wheel Interventions when reporting activities accomplished.
 - SNs need to talk about what they do.
- Example:** When doing hearing and vision screening, the SN is doing *Surveillance and Case Finding*. The SN does *Referral and Follow-up* based on *Screening* results. For more complex hearing and vision results, the SN may provide *Case Management*.
- Example:** SN is using *Disease and Health Event Investigation* when analyzing chronic absenteeism, discovers lost days due to asthma, and makes a plan to respond.

School Nurse Practice Implications

- Provide rationale for decisions/plans
 - Explain the impact on students.
 - Explain that improving health contributes to better learning.
- Include community and systems intervention levels when possible to affect a greater number of students.

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