

ABSTRACT for NZSSD Conference 2021

HELP...OUR JOB IS COMMUNITY HEALTH PROMOTION, WHERE'S THE COMMUNITY?

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Introduction/Aims

Health promotion often involves working face-to-face with people, it's where the most direct action happens. This is especially true in the high risk groups where predominant learning styles tend to be tactile and visual and relationships of trust and respect are fundamental. Suddenly in 2020, in-person communication was removed. The pandemic had negative effects on communities, widening disparities, making vulnerable people more vulnerable, providing barriers to food sourcing, normal routines and provoking desire for stress-related comfort eating. There was also an apparent higher Covid related risk to those with lifestyle related health conditions which made support and input even more important. This presentation describes our experience and learnings as a community provider, trying to access our now locked-down target audience, with staff who were no longer able to get out and about.

Methods

Description of the experience and observations from the Diabetes Foundation Aotearoa team, clients and providers we work with.

Results and Conclusions

The general public, schools, groups and organisations we work with were not accessible by usual means. We found that technology and reliable internet, a safe and quiet place to work/concentrate was often not possible for everyone. Where these things were present, online communication itself did work for some, and for many 'zoom' exhaustion set in very quickly where it was used. Other 'things', the stuff of life took priority over health and external health promotion and survival was the name of the game for staff and clients. We managed to alter some of what we did, increase delivery of aspects that were possible while doing less of what was not. Overall we met our contract objectives and with an uncertain future we continue to apply what we learned, always ready to adapt...ultimately though we found that nothing beats being able to work alongside people.