

Ingham Impact Episode 30 – Prevention Services

Micki Fuhrman: Prevention is very broad; a lot of times people think that we're the people that are equated with prohibition, and that's not what it is. We look at prevention as really empowering youth and students to become the best that they can be. Christina Holmes: There are things at play that increase the risk for our students to engage in risky health behaviors, whether those are things like smoking, using other substances, alcohol, drugs, whether that's making risky sexual health decisions. But then there are also things that we call protective factors, and those sort of build up our students to where they can make healthy, well-informed decisions, and so we work to increase the protective factors, for example, in sexual health education, we know the more education we provide our students, and the more informed they are, the less likely they are to engage in risky behaviors, the longer they are likely to delay sex. Melea Bullock: I work in awareness, because that's our strongest tool, is education, so if you educate people to make better decisions, then they know what they're doing, versus "I'm just gonna give it a go, and see how that works." But when they say "Well I know that smoking does this, I know that alcohol does this, I know that this does this." Then they are empowered to make educated decisions. Micki Fuhrman: One of the things that we promote, as health coordinators, is called The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model, and this is a model that brings together both schools, communities, parents and families to help maximize that broad spectrum category of health. Melea Bullock: A lot of times, these are generational things, where "This is what my mother did, this is what my mother did, and so this is what I do." And then when you ever have the opportunity to look further into these studies, some of the things that we have known our whole lives, the studies are showing, oh that's actually harmful. Did you know that that actually causes this in your child, No! we didn't know that, we absolutely didn't, and so we all have the benefit of the research and this retrospective look. Christina Holmes: Healthy students are better learners. We know that students who have experienced trauma, or students in general; it's hard to learn if you are coming to school hungry, it's harder to learn if you're coming to school tired, it's harder to learn if you're coming to school and there was a big fight in the morning, so, all of these things go into supporting the whole child, and when the whole child is supported we're giving them access to learn. I really see us as being barrier busters; whether it's for the kids, or whether it's for the teachers, so they can teach, for the administrators so they can administer, how can we remove some of these barriers so that you can do your job, whether that's to be a student in the classroom, or to be the teacher who's teaching, to the best of your ability. Micki Fuhrman: Our main function is to help empower youth and the community as a whole, because prevention doesn't just stop at the school level with students, to be the best they can be; to give them the knowledge and the skills that they need in a variety of categories. So, we're talking about looking at healthy eating and physical activity; we're talking about good social-emotional learning skills; we're talking about alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention; we're talking about personal health and wellness and HIV prevention; and that is our job and our mission.

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