

Applied Equity Example: Behavior Change Wheel and Theoretical Domains Framework

Full citation: Kubi B, Enumah ZO, Lee KT, Freund KM, Smith TJ, Cooper LA, Owczarzak JT, Johnston FM. Theory-Based Development of an Implementation Intervention Using Community Health Workers to Increase Palliative Care Use. *J Pain Symptom Manage*. 2020 Jul;60(1):10-19. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpainsymman.2020.02.009>.

Overview:

The purpose of the study was to identify behaviors that most consistently impact palliative care use and to assess the potential for community health workers (CHWs) to implement an approach that would make care more accessible to African Americans. Over a 12-month period, the team conducted five engagement sessions with actors at Johns Hopkins Hospital. The stakeholder groups that participated in the engagement sessions were: providers, patients and caregivers, purchasers/hospital administrators, policy makers and investigators. Themes were organized into the two frameworks' components and corresponding implementation strategies were specified and ranked. Through this process, the team integrated different perspectives in the design phase of an intervention aimed at making palliative care accessible to African Americans. The five prioritized strategies engaging CHWs were: 3-part communication approach for patients, CHW meetings with families, CHW-initiated palliative care discussions within first two visits post-diagnosis, train CHWs to initiate and track advanced care planning documents, and development of brochures explaining palliative care and its differences from hospice care.

Population: Patients and providers at Johns Hopkins Hospital

Topic: Palliative care

Setting: Health care

Socio-ecological level(s): Individual and Organizational levels

Sector(s): Health care

Type of study: Qualitative

Implementation stage: Pre-implementation

Health equity dimension(s): Marginalized groups; Community co-design/participation

Implementation strategies: Community health worker delivery of multiple strategies

Dissemination and Implementation Science Framework: Behavior Change Wheel and Theoretical Domains Framework

How TMF is operationalized: The authors combined the Behavior Change Wheel (BCW) and Theoretical Domains Framework (TDF) in order to identify specific domains for the proposed intervention.

How equity is applied: With respect to marginalized groups, the project team determined that the focus of the project would be to identify an intervention approach and implementation

strategies aimed at addressing the low levels of palliative care use among African Americans served by the Johns Hopkins hospital. In terms of community co-design/participation, the team clearly stated the different types of participants who were important to engage in the intervention design process and hosted five sessions during a year long process to collaboratively develop an intervention approach and prioritize five implementation strategies.

Contribution to Dissemination and Implementation Science: This case details a process for involving partners in the design phase of an intervention approach and implementation strategies aimed at increasing reach of palliative care among African Americans. This project recognized that the approaches that had been used by the hospital were insufficient for ensuring equitable reach in palliative care. This article is an example of how to capture and document community-engagement in the design phase of an intervention and implementation strategies with representation from the community of interest.