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Project 4: YourVoice

**Introduction: Brooke**

After volunteering for several hours at Genesis II House of Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries (DRMM), it was evident that communication was a topic that could be improved upon. In order to improve communication within the facility, a research method, YourVoice, was created that will closely mimic PhotoVoice. PhotoVoice is a research method that encourages those without a voice to get involved in their community ("PhotoVoice » Vision and Mission."). This method allows community members to go out and photograph/digitalize their lives. PhotoVoice is used to analyze unsafe environments or show concerns for the areas that are being photographed ("Section 20. Implementing PhotoVoice in Your Community."). In this project, we will revamp the method of PhotoVoice by making it cheaper and easy to use by everyone in order to avoid extensive training as well as changing the ultimate purpose from showing unsafe areas to recording where the clients go during the day, ultimately answering one of DRMM’s main research questions.

**Problem: Stephanie**

The question, “Where do residents go when they aren’t at genesis 2?,” has been asked by the staff of the DRMM but it remains unanswered. The DRMM is searching to find out what their residents do during the hours that they have to leave the shelter. The residents spend a good amount of time outside of the shelter and what they encounter during that time is unknown. The DRMM’s problem is that they do not have a way or a plan to efficiently find the answer to the question they are asking.

* **Research Question(s):**
  + **Where do you go during the day when you aren't at the shelter?**
  + **What places do you frequently visit when not in the shelter?**
  + **Can you describe your routine during the time away from the shelter?**

These questions can be used to prompt a response from the residents. They are all derived from the original question stated above. Each question is asking what the residents did during their time away, but in slightly different ways to help better the responses from the residents. These research questions will help the DRMM answer their original question once implemented into a sufficient research method.

**Solution: Leah**

In order to solve the question at hand a research method must be put in use. While implementing our research method we must keep in mind that we do not want residents to feel like test subjects, because of this a photovoice mapping technique would be best. A photovoice technique is a simple technique that can easily be changed based on what the facility has. This research method could be used with disposable cameras or with notebook paper to save on cost. Residents can take pictures of where they go or they can draw the places they have been as a cheaper alternative. If residents know the address of the places they go these can be used too. Drawing pictures would be the best way to go because education levels between the residents vary. These addresses and places would then be collected and placed on a map of Detroit. This information is not only useful to determine where residents go but it could also be useful in determining safe places, which can help new residents.

These personal maps would eventually need to be collected and put on a larger map of Detroit. The DRMM is already understaffed so we felt that journals could be collected when residents are checked in. After this, women in the facility could run a group discussion to reflect about where they have been and to help them grow. The group discussion will be a time for the women to physically place points on the map of Detroit. This will help the residents develop leadership skills and it will aid newcomers in coming in and participating, not only this but everyone there will develop a better understanding of Detroit. This reflection time can take place at a time where the women are already together for example before or after church.

The criterion for the photovoice project is pretty simple. The DRMM would need paper for residents to write down where they have been. The paper would also need a holding place so it does not get damaged or lost this can be in the form of a folder or notebook. Notebooks are considerably cheap but they can also be donated by outside sources. The facility would also need a leader to run the focus group. The leader would be a female in the facility; this could rotate weekly and would allow residents to develop leadership strategies. This reflection period would also be a time for residents who cannot read or write to learn how to or to get help. The photovoice method has already been used among homeless adults in Ann Arbor Michigan therefore; this technique would not be difficult to emulate in Detroit.

**Methodology: Gigi**

Team Flower Power’s research methods involvedprimary and secondary research. By volunteering on a regular basis at the DRMM we were able to witness parts of the facility that were in need of improvement. We recorded our observations and reasoned out our reflections through field notes. From our field notes we were able to narrow down a topic and devise interview questions to ask the staff. After collecting responses from the staff, we then filled in the blanks through secondary research. Our secondary research was discovered through online databases and varying but similar key terms. We also made sure to refer back to the DRMM memo ensuring our research answered one of their research questions.

In order to successfully complete our research task, there are a few essential resources: background information about the research topic, a need for the research task, field notes, and a computer with internet access. However, we are still missing a lot of important data. Questions that will determine this research task’s success are still unanswered.

Team Flower Power tried to stay organized at all times. This would help each team member know what was happening and when it was happening. To assist in our organization we made a schedule. Our completion timetable looked like this: rough draft for P4 was due Dec. 13th, the revised draft of P4 after Susak’s critics would be Dec. 16th working together in class, and the final draft P4 is due Dec. 19th. Along with this completion timetable, we also stay organized through face-to-face meetings when needed at 11:00AM on Tuesday’s and Thursday’s. However, a lot of our discussion occurs through our iMessage group chat where we send pictures, ask questions, and give updates. The organization doesn’t stop there. We made sure everyone followed a similar process of research to make certain that everyone was doing their part. (1) Define the research question. (2) Split up the research among team members. (3) Gather field notes on topic. (4) Share your findings. (5) Outline the paper as a group. (6) Assign sections of the paper to each team member. (7) Go further into research for your designated section. (8) Write section. (9) Revise together. (10) Rewrite. After this process, we would end up with a research paper, a detailed proposal for a research task, and eventually an answer for the research question.

Although we are not nobel prize winners, we do have qualifications to be conducting research and making recommendations. Our qualification would be our experience with researching other scholars’ work, writing research papers for other classes, as well as being familiar with different research methods. We also have a genuine interest on the topic, and a willingness to serve. With our audience being the staff at the DRMM, we have already established that interest and willingness through our relationship, but we should still provide examples of other facilities conducting a similar research task and the rationale for the research question.

Team Flower Power, as I mentioned before, stayed organized throughout the entire process. Our team management is divided as follows Brooke is handling the introduction, Stephanie is handling the problem section, Leah is handling the solution section, Gigi is handling the methodology section, and Aleksandra is handling the conclusion. To help the team communicate, we used a group chat, our wiki page, face-to-face meetings, and google docs. To help make sure everything's running smoothly, the team manager, Brooke, make sure all facets of our methodology function efficiently. For the rest of the responsibilities, the remainder of the team members would just volunteer at what they’re best at and fulfill that task task. To make sure everyone holds up their end, we created a contract, agendas, timelines, and conduct meetings. Team Flower Power performed this methodology throughout the course of the semester, and with that we were able to become better researchers, a small community, and a resource.

**Conclusion: Aleksandra**

To use Photovoice, the residents at the Genesis II house would need to have notebooks, disposable cameras, or a map. All three of the materials would be helpful, but the goal would be to at least have one of the three. One of the main constraints that could negatively impact this research method is funding. The faculty at the Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries would not be paying for this out of pocket, so they would have to rely on donations or government funding in order to supply the materials they need. If the materials were supplied, the project could be successfully implemented.

The faculty would have a meeting with the residents to describe the project to them and to give them the required materials. The women and children would take pictures of the places they go to or stay at and also write down addresses, if possible. Once they returned, one of the women would lead a focus group in order to practice leadership and also reflect on the different places they spend their time, when not at the shelter. By finding out the answer to this research question, the Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries could relay the information to others in order to show them safe spots, dangerous areas, places where they can get free meals, and also places to stay. This would result in a safer homeless community and a sense of togetherness in the shelter’s focus groups. The focus groups led by the women would teach them skills of leadership and speaking, and in turn help build up their resumes.

In terms of limitations,our project will most likely not cover areas of high crime. Residents or clients who are involved in any type of illegal acts will not give away the area, as a way to protect themselves. There may be a few instances where people notice these areas and mark them, but it will be difficult to track. Through photovoice, we won’t be considering the individual. This means that while constructing maps and focus groups, all evidence, addresses and pictures will be taken into account. It will not be separated into ages, length of homelessness, or other individual factors that describe the person. The method will be a group project that includes every resident’s feedback, without splitting them into categories of age, race, ethnicity, etc.

Works Cited

"PhotoVoice » Vision and Mission." PhotoVoice. N.p., n.d. Web. 05 Dec. 2016. <https://PhotoVoice.org/vision-and-mission/>.

"Section 20. Implementing PhotoVoice in Your Community." Community Tool Box. N.p., n.d. Web. 06 Dec. 2016. <<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/> assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/PhotoVoice/main>.