

Taking Strides to Decrease Depression in Adolescents in The South Bronx With Intramural Sports



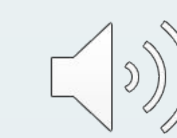
Kimberly Fetto WC-NS, Ashley LaGrange WC-NS, Courtney Hughes WC-NS
Evelyn L. Spiro School of Nursing, Wagner College

INTRODUCTION

- Adolescent depression is a widespread problem that can easily go unrecognized.
- Without resources in communities, children may begin to struggle with their mental health, leaving them at risk of declining and having mental disorders go undiagnosed.
- Undiagnosed depression puts adolescents at risk for future health problems and even worse, this can lead to suicide.
- The community we focused on is the Bronx, N.Y. Currently, data shows that the Bronx has the highest rate of depression in the adolescent population, ranging from ages ten to nineteen years old.
- Evidence has shown some of the reasons contributing to depression is the low economic status of the Bronx which leads to a lack of resources and undiagnosed depression [5].
- Our proposed program encourages exercise and sports participation as a solution to decrease depression in adolescence.

PROBLEM WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

- ‘Mental health services in low-middle income countries face many challenges such as culture based resistance to mental health, financial and human resource limitations, and lack of robust health care delivery systems’ [1]
- This relates to the poor community of the Bronx, which could explain why they have the highest depression rate in adolescents of New York City.
- The low-middle income areas, such as the South Bronx, put adolescents at a great risk for not being able to seek or attain mental health, letting depression increasingly become worse.
- Low income areas have the option of discontinuing sports programs in schools due to their insufficient funds for these programs.
- Funding for afterschool programs was cut in 2012, causing anger and anxieties for many families who can't afford to stay at home to make sure their children do their homework or are safe. [6]
- A principle states, “In a community like mine, where there’s a lot of poverty and gang violence, we want to keep the children with us as long as we can. The extended learning time assisted us in doing that.” in response to cutting the after school hours. [10]
- Therefore when a community has low economics it may prohibit them from having enjoyable opportunities such as sports and activities that could ultimately bring children happiness.

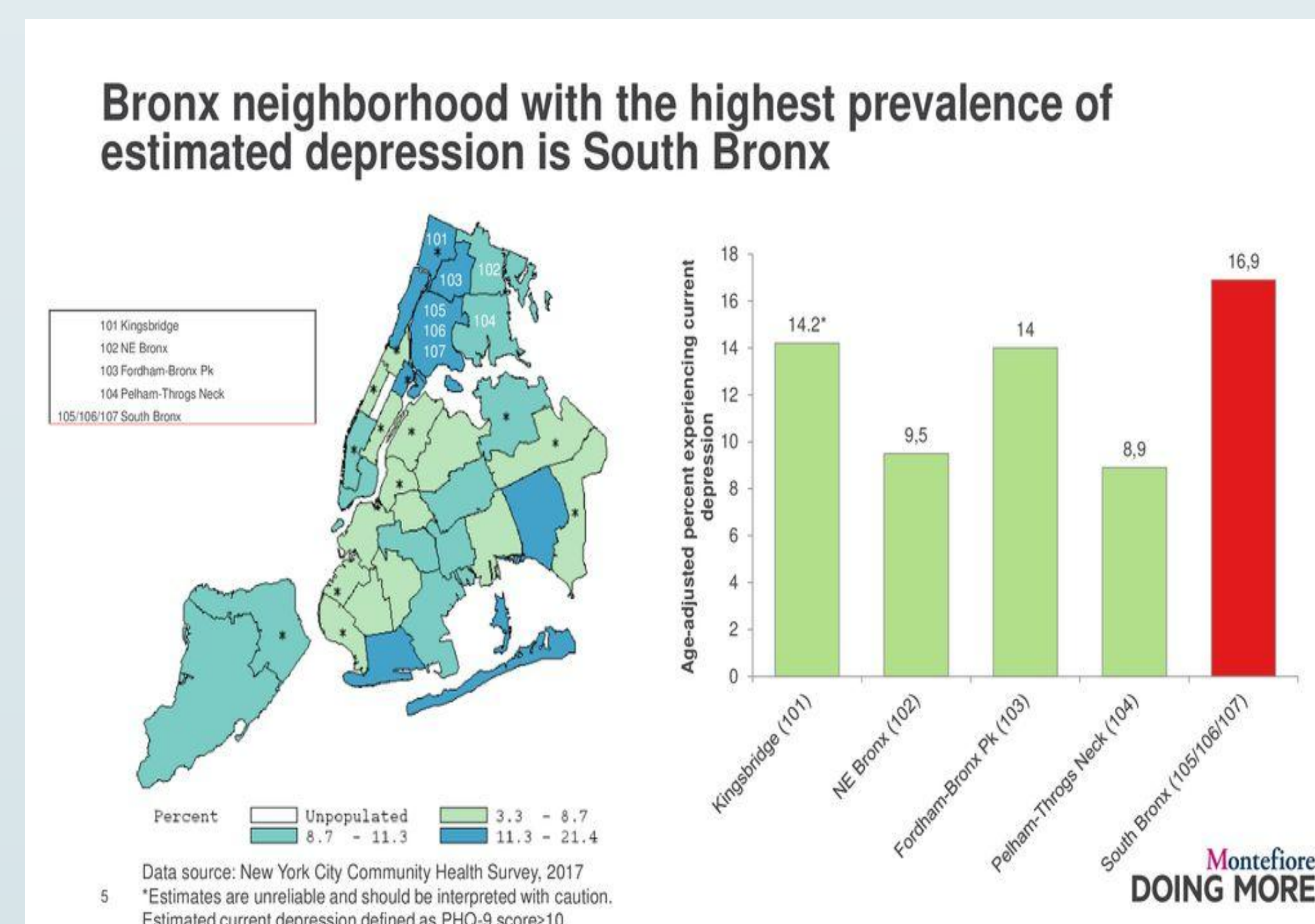


PROPOSED SOLUTION

- We feel our proposed solution “Happy and Healthy Program” will help decrease depression with increased activity. This intramural activity program is free and all volunteered based. Considering that the Bronx is ranked the lowest in all areas of the annual rankings done by the county health committee, it is critical that parents encourage their children to get involved in this program.
- It is supported by evidence that increasing activity will decrease the risk of depression, with that being said, getting adolescents involved will decrease the depression rate in the Bronx dramatically. [4]
- This program is meant to be an entertaining, stress free, and a noncompetitive time for adolescents to gain team skills and grow as individuals. The atmosphere will be laid back, allowing the participants to come out of their comfort zones and to exceed their own expectations. Being involved in sports can have an effect on mood, self-esteem, cognitive functioning and decline depression. [4]
- Activity is essential for this age group to not only reduce the risk of depression but reduce obesity and drug or alcohol abuse as well. Depression is a crucial matter and for this reason, activity is an exceptional way to prevent it before it is too late. [4]
- PAL is a Police Athletic League that has been used throughout all of New York. It is an organized sports and recreation league for the youth of New York City that organizes and facilitates leagues, tournaments, and special events for young people who want to engage in positive youth development activities and reinforce the concepts of discipline, leadership, teamwork, and sportsmanship. [7]
- PAL seems to have a high impact on young adolescents and was designed to improve the mental and physical health of the young population. With this league’s contribution to our program with the funding and staff we will need, we feel our intramural sports could have a great impact on the South Bronx youth. [7]

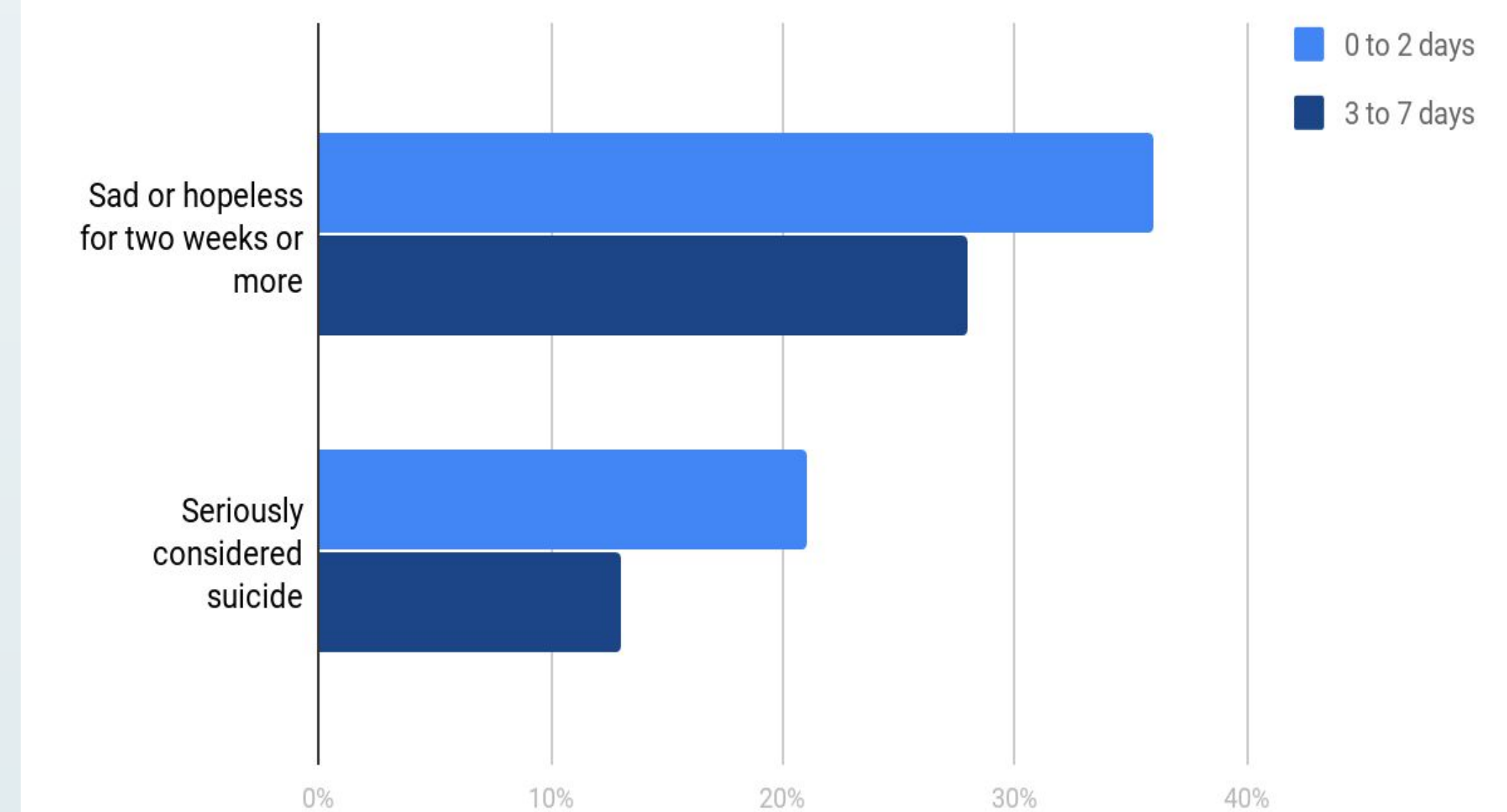
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS

- The Bronx is the only borough in New York with a Hispanic majority population [9].
- The Bronx is listed as “the worst place in New York to live for ‘quality of life’, with 28 percent of the Bronx residents reporting having only poor or fair health” [8].
- In 2015, the South Bronx school district was interviewed by the *NY Daily News* in regard to their schools and resources or lack of, in this instance. The article’s analysis also touches on the fact that there seems to be no high performing schools in the surrounding area to begin with. In the South Bronx, “one in ten students are homeless, and the average school attendance rate is among the city’s lowest” [3].
- *County Health Rankings* listed the Bronx’s last in perceived health against 62 other communities in New York. Factors included in the ranking were high school graduation rates, obesity, mental health, and accessibility to healthy foods, etc [8].
- The Bronx is the largest part of New York that has depression intertwined into their everyday life.



- Being that the Bronx is ranked low in economic standings, it has caused depression to rise in the adolescent population. In order to make a difference and improve the overall well-being, it is vital to incorporate physical activities into our everyday routine. With the use of the happy and healthy program, this will result in elevated self-esteem, improved social skills, and most importantly better mental health. It is important to prevent further mental health damage and suicide by addressing depression in adolescents early. Although there are economic boundaries in the Bronx, this should not stop adolescents from making interpersonal relationships within free sports teams and physical activity. The Bronx should take into consideration that the lack of resources has a negative impact on the community, but it is never too late to improve the overall mental health.

Prevalence of adverse mental health by number of days of physical activity among New York City public high school students, 2017



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