Primary care providers are often patients’ only points of contact with the healthcare system, and patients can benefit greatly from management of behavioral health (BH) issues in the primary care setting.1,2 However, opportunities for intervention are often missed due to mismatched expectations and ineffective communication,3,4 and this trend is amplified in underserved populations.5,6

Aims

1. To increase knowledge about wellness and BH concerns among patients and providers.
2. To develop communication skills and facilitate effective conversations about BH concerns.
3. To promote awareness of unique BH considerations among immigrant/refugee communities.
4. To expose health professions students to best practices in medical communication and integrated care.

Methods

Curriculum design. A key informant survey of local primary care providers was conducted to identify learning objectives, as well as barriers to and benefits of care integration. Responses guided development of curriculum themes and corresponding materials (Fig. 1). Community partners (IRIS and Junta, Inc.) were identified and consulted for population-specific adaptations.

Curriculum evaluation. Qualitative data (e.g., discussion responses; Fig. 3), pre- and post-test scores (Fig. 4), insights from focus groups, and guidance from the Yale Center for Teaching and Learning were used to revise the curriculum.

Program dissemination. The program is designed to be broadly relevant; curriculum materials and guidelines will be described in a manuscript (in preparation) and distributed upon request.

References and Acknowledgments

Many thanks to the APAF Helping Hands grant, which generously supported this project to the community agencies (IRIS and Junta) that made it possible, to Julian Simera, SBH for assisting with the workshops and data collection, to the Yale Center for Teaching and Learning for key curriculum advising, and to the Yale Psychiatry Department for its continued support.

Conclusion and Next Steps

1. Health ACT effectively increases knowledge of common BH concerns, promotes collaboration between providers and patients, and is well received by participants.
2. Health ACT represents an important training opportunity for future primary care and BH providers, and a tool for patient empowerment.
3. Health ACT is intentionally general, making it relevant to any community. Next steps include curriculum finalization, publication and dissemination.