GIVING YOUR CLIENTS A VOICE

SELF-DIRECTED AND PEER PROGRAMMING

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OBJECTIVE

PARTICIPANTS WILL LEARN THE IMPORTANCE OF EMPOWERING THEIR CLIENTS AND GIVING THEM A VOICE IN HOUSING FIRST PROGRAMS BY USING SELF-DIRECTED PROGRAMMING AND PEER PROGRAMMING.

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO TAKE HANDOUTS!!

BY THE NUMBERS...

- IN THE UNITED STATES, WE HAVE:
  - OVER 610,000 PEOPLE WITHOUT HOMES
  - OVER 50,000 ARE VETERANS
  - 1/3 OF HOMELESS PEOPLE ARE UNDER 24
  - 40% OF HOMELESS YOUTH IDENTIFY AS LGBT
  - 16% HAVE A MENTAL ILLNESS

- National Coalition for the Homeless[1]

"THEY COME TO DO FOR US, NOT WITH US." [2]

WHY INVOLVE CLIENTS? [3-6, 8-10]

- PERSON-CENTERED PLANNING: BECAUSE ONE SIZE DOES <u>NOT</u> FIT ALL! [5]
  - PCP IS EVIDENCE-BASED
  - PERSON FIRST, NOT THE LABEL
  - IDENTIFY & DEVELOP STRENGTHS, MAKE CHOICES
- TRANSFER OF POWER (EMPOWERMENT THEORY)[7]
- MORE LIKELY TO TAKE OWNERSHIP AND TAKE ACTION
- ***<u>BETTER RESULTS!</u>***
  - WE'LL REVIEW SOME CASES

SELF-DIRECTED PROGRAMMING[3-6]

- GOAL SETTING
  - WHAT DOES THE CLIENT *WANT* TO DO? WHY & HOW?
  - EX: CREATE A BUDGET, LEARN TO COOK, APPLY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, WELLNESS REGIMEN, ETC.
- RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACTIONS
  - SELF-ADVOCACY, PERSONAL TIMELINE, SELF-EDUCATION, SELF-CONTROL
- DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY
  - WHAT CHOICES DO I HAVE?
  - GUIDED DECISION MAKING
    - "WHAT WOULD THAT LOOK LIKE?"

SELF-DIRECTED PROGRAMMING[3-6]

- PLAN A & CONTINGENCY PLAN B
  - WHAT HAPPENS IF THE PLAN DOESN'T WORK?
  - FIND OUT WHAT WENT WRONG
  - CAN I FIX IT? SHOULD I TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT?
- SUPPORT SERVICES[8]
  - IF YOU CANNOT OFFER, AT LEAST PROVIDE REFERRALS
  - CHILD CARE, PET CARE, MEDICAL/DENTAL, TRANSPORTATION, COUNSELING, EDUCATION, ETC.

SELF-DIRECTED PROGRAM "WHAT IFS"

- WHAT IF THE CLIENT'S GOALS DON'T NECESSARILY FIT WITH THE PROGRAM GOALS?
- WHAT IF THE CLIENT'S TIMELINE DOESN'T ALIGN WITH THE PROGRAM TIMELINE?
- WHAT IF THE CASEWORKER AND CLIENT DISAGREE?
- WHAT IF THE CLIENT DOESN'T ACHIEVE HIS OR HER GOALS?
- ANY OTHER "WHAT IFS?"

SELF-DIRECTED PROGRAMMING: SUCCESS STORY!

- **BEFORE:**
  HOMELESS
  UNEMPLOYED
  NO/LIMITED VISITATION WITH CHILD
  SUBSTANCE ABUSE DISORDER
  CHRONIC DEPRESSION
  ANGRY & DEFIANT

"Kate"

- **AFTER (3 MONTHS):**
  TRANSITIONING TO LOW-INCOME HOUSING
  EMPLOYED
  REGULAR VISITATION WITH CHILD
  IN PROGRAM FOR SUBSTANCE USE
  MANAGES DEPRESSION
  COOPERATIVE

PEER PROGRAMMING 9-11

- LEVEL OF COMFORT/TRUST
  - RELATE THROUGH LIVED EXPERIENCE
  - SENSE OF BELONGING
- FORMER CLIENTS UNDERSTAND NEEDS OF CURRENT CLIENTS
  - S/HE "GETS" IT
  - IMPROVED COMMUNICATION
- EMPOWERMENT
  - EMPOWER FORMER *AND* CURRENT CLIENT

PEER PROGRAMMING

9-11

- CREATE PEER GROUPS BASED ON NEEDS OF CLIENTELE
  - GRIEF/LOSS/TRAUMA
  - ABUSE/SEXUAL ASSAULT
  - SUBSTANCE USE
  - MENTAL ILLNESS
  - CRAFTING/PAINTING
  - COOKING
  - GENERAL PROGRAM GUIDANCE
- STILL NEED SUPPORT SERVICES

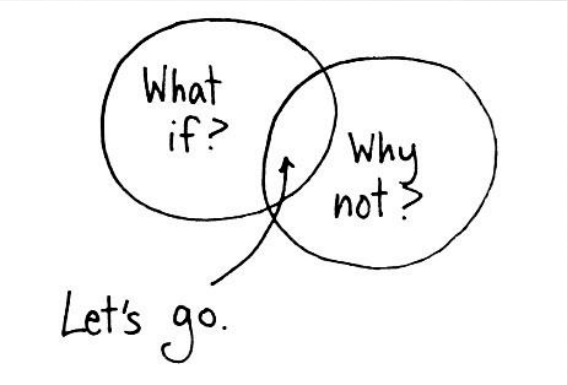
PEER PROGRAMMING

BASIC STEPS FOR CREATING PEER PROGRAMS (PLEASE SEE HANDOUT)

- IDENTIFY CLIENTS/FORMER CLIENTS WITH LEADERSHIP SKILLS
  - WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?
- ASSESS NEEDS (WHAT TYPES OF GROUPS WOULD BE HELPFUL?)
- DEVELOP CURRICULUM ***OR*** USE EXISTING CURRICULUM
- ADVERTISE AND/OR INCENTIVIZE (YES, REALLY)
- PLAN TO BE AT ***EVERY MEETING*** AS A GROUP PARTICIPANT (NOT THE FACILITATOR)
- CONSIDER DOING A PRE- AND POST-EVALUATION

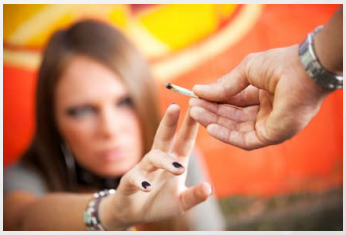
PEER-PROGRAMMING "WHAT IFS"

- WHAT IF NONE OF MY CLIENTS HAVE "LEADERSHIP SKILLS?"
- WHAT IF A CLIENT DOESN'T GET ALONG WITH ME?
- WHAT IF A CLIENT DOESN'T GET ALONG WITH OTHER CLIENTS?
- WHAT ABOUT MIXED NEEDS GROUPS (VS. LIKE NEEDS)?
- ANY OTHER "WHAT IFS?"



PEER PROGRAMMING: EVIDENCE FOR SUCCESS

- MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA
- HOMELESS SUPPORT SERVICES
- PATHWAYS TO HOUSING
- ALI FORNEY CENTER
- SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION



PEER PROGRAMMING: SUCCESS STORY!

ALI FORNEY CENTER: PEER OUTREACH PROGRAM

- "OUR PEER OUTREACH EDUCATOR INTERNSHIP OFFERS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR AFC CLIENTS TO SUPPORT THEIR PEERS WHILE CREATING THEIR OWN WORK HISTORY. BECAUSE THESE YOUTH HAVE THEMSELVES ONCE BEEN HOMELESS, THEY CAN QUICKLY DEVELOP TRUST AND A RAPPORT WITH OTHER HOMELESS LGBTQ YOUTH. OUR PEER EDUCATORS INFORM LGBTQ HOMELESS YOUTH ON SAFER SEX PRACTICES, COACH THEM ON HOW TO REDUCE HIV/STI TRANSMISSION, AND MUCH MORE. … UPON COMPLETION OF THE INTERNSHIP, PEER EDUCATORS ARE PAID A STIPEND."[12]

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QUESTIONS??

Giving Your Clients a Voice

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This handout is meant to accompany the speaker presentation and is not intended as a substitute.

Objective

Participants will learn the importance of empowering their clients and giving them a voice in Housing First programs by using self-directed programming and peer programming.

Self-Directed Programming Guide

1. What are my *strengths*? What do I need to *improve*?
2. What goals do I want to set?
    a. Most clients need guidance in determining objectives to reach their goals. Help them with the whys and hows.
3. When do I want to accomplish these goals?
    a. Help the client come up with a personal timeline, but stress the importance of being flexible and being patient with oneself.
4. I resolve to take responsibility for myself.
    a. Teach clients how to advocate for themselves. Do they know how to ask for help? Do they know *who* they can ask for help?
    b. Often, clients need support with self-control and accountability. Always check in with your clients during case management.
    c. If possible, provide resources for self-education.
5. I resolve to make my own decisions.
    a. Avoid making decisions for clients. Let them make their own choices as often as possible.
6. I will make a contingency plan if my first try is not successful.
7. I will use the support services that my program provides.

Things to remember:

- The guide may need to be adapted for the needs of individual clients.
- Your clients will likely fail *many* times on the road to success. It's okay.
- Avoid paternalism when working with clients.

Peer Programming Guide

1. Identify clients/former clients with leadership skills.
2. Assess needs (What types of groups would be helpful?).
3. Develop curriculum *or* use existing curriculum.
    a. Your curriculum must be adapted for your target population. For example, working moms that are homeless have different needs than abused teenagers that are homeless.
    b. Supervise your client during this process.
4. Advertise and/or incentivize.
    a. Your clients need to know that this program is available. Something as simple as a flyer in the common area would help.
    b. Find ways to incentivize resistant clients. A client that does not respond well to other interventions may thrive in peer programming. An incentive may be that the client can skip his or her chore for the evening if s/he plans to attend the group meeting, for example.
5. Plan to be at *every meeting* as a group participant (NOT the facilitator).
6. Consider doing a pre- and post-evaluation.
    a. This may be a requirement if your program is receiving grant funding.

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