

Roberta L. Howard

Steps to Integrated Health

Title: Steps to Integrated Health

Location: Northern Arizona (Counties of Apache, Coconino, Mohave, Navajo and Yavapai in the towns of Bullhead City, Cottonwood, Eagar, Flagstaff, Kingman, Prescott, Prescott Valley, Show Low.) All considered rural and some considered frontier.

Problem: In our agencies 2008 and 2009 quality assurance assessment of services, 85% of clients reported on the assessment tool in one to three categorical questions a feeling that services were being provided that applied only to their mental health status and not to the client as a whole person.

Project Plan: NAZCARE's Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer reviewed the Quality Assurance and Management Tool and decided to take the first step to integrated health, so the project was titled Steps to Integrated Health. A Research-based Approach called Peer Whole Health was selected as the first program to be implemented and measured for our adventure into integrated health.

All staff and the Board of Directors were trained in Peer Whole Health (PWH) and NAZCARE became a certified training agency for PWH. The basic premise of PWH is to view a client as a whole person and have the client self-select a **Small and Specific; Measureable; Achievable; Realistic; Time-framed (SMART) goal to improve one's health.**

Staff was asked to implement this first among the staff in order to be able to model and speak with a "peer" voice about the experience of the program.

Staff then presented and trained clients at eight of NAZCARE's recovery centers and supportive housing projects.

Project methodology was to train clients in a group setting. Clients would then select a PWH goal. Clients would track and measure the goal on a daily basis. Client would attend a PWH support group and report progress as tracked. Clients would get assistance and support in their progress to

reaching their goal. All achieved goals were celebrated i.e. certificate of achievement; recognition; annual celebration, etc.

For the staff and Board of Directors email support groups were held since staff were often hundreds of miles away. Two staff in the CEO's email support group actually took positions in different agencies and after two years are still participants in her support group.

2010:

38 staff and Board of Directors were trained and participated. All staff reported achieving 1 PWH goal and sustaining that goal within a year period of time. 15 staff reported achieving 2-3 goals within the year and sustaining the goal.

87 clients self-selected to participate in PWH. 86 achieved 1 PWH goal and sustained in in the year. (1 client moved away) 43 reported achieving 2-3 PWH goals and sustaining for a year.

2011:

43 of staff, Board of Directors and 3 Contractors reported achieving 1 PWH goal and sustaining in the year. 27 reported achieving 2-3 PWH goals and sustaining within the year and 4 reported 4 PWH goals within the year and sustaining.

245 clients self-selected to participate in PWH. 240 achieved 1 PWH goal and 239 reported sustaining that goal for a year. 4 moved and 1 dropped from the program). 138 reported achieving 2-3 goals and sustaining them for a year.

Data Collection: Data was collected on a daily and weekly basis and reported into an electron data collection tool called Credible. Data can be reported on a daily basis as to the progress of a client or of an entire support group.

Conclusion: Listening to the needs of clients expressed in NAZCARE's annual assessment performed to measure quality of services proved significant. Clients wanted to improve their health and wanted to be viewed as a whole person wishing to improve their health and not be defined as a symptom.

The project was successful and grew in population because other clients heard about and saw success: “I began to see myself as a whole person and that I was changing and I liked it, so I told everyone about it.”

Highlights: A SMART goal leads to many other positive outcomes. “I began reducing one cigarette a day and after a year I no longer smoke. I have clean curtains at home now and I have saved so much money to reward myself I go to the movies once a month.”

Goals varied greatly from drinking more water, brushing teeth more often, stretching with cans, eating smaller bites, making a daily positive affirmation, smiling at people, being positive, to managing money.

Areas of Improvement: After a year, the CEO noted that many of her staff and clients were selecting Diet & Nutrition Goals. Looking at the training materials, Diet & Nutrition was the first of the five domains discussed: 1) Diet & Nutrition 2) Rest & Relaxation 3) Spirituality 4) Service to Others 5) Activity. Noting this the CEO placed Diet & Nutrition last in the training and discussion domain and noticed a more even distribution in staff and clients selecting goals in all domains.

How Lessons Learned Can be Applied in a Global Setting: It is NAZCARE’s belief that people want holistic approaches to healing. It is NAZCARE’s belief that all people want to be healthier; how we chose to be healthy should be a person’s self-selected integrated health approach. Thus, we teach a person that it is one’s responsibility to self to be healthier and happier as one chooses and to follow good health practices. NAZCARE has found this global principle then does flow into how a person accepts and integrates treatment into one’s life, as one client states so well; “Simple and yet profound.”

References: The Appalachian Consulting Group www.gmhcn.org; Georgia’s Division of Mental Health pioneering Medicaid-billable peer support services in 1999 in partnership with the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network (GMHCN); Fellowship Project www.fellowshipphr.org; Florida Peer Network- floridapeernetwork.org/wholehealth and more upon request.

