Clinical Technical Assistance: Client Engagement and Retention

Know Your Clients

- Analyzing data, such as length of treatment and discharge reason, enables informed decisions for client engagement and retention tactics. (PERU can assist with data analysis!)
  - » Do your male or female clients prematurely terminate services more?
  - » Is there a common barrier that your clients face?

- Consider obtaining client feedback: Are your clients satisfied with their treatment? How severe is their substance use?
  - » TCU Client Evaluation of Self and Treatment (CEST) - http://ibr.tcu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/UsingCESTGuideAug08.pdf
  - » Addiction Severity Index – 5th Edition - https://adai.washington.edu/instruments/pdf/Addiction_Severity_Index_Baseline_Followup_4.pdf

- Understand the common characteristics of clients who terminate services prematurely and develop an individualized approach to maintain treatment engagement. Lower education level, younger age, being in an ethno-cultural minority group, injection substance use, and being female are all associated with premature termination of services.

Address Barriers

- When clients are unable to tend to their basic needs (physiological and safety) the importance of treatment is overshadowed by the need to survive.
- The more services that can be offered in one location reduces the stress/demand on the client and can increase retention rates.
- When barriers are addressed, clients feel respected and supported which contributes to therapeutic rapport.

Client Engagement/Retention — **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

- Counseling/Recovery
- Peer Supports
- Therapeutic Rapport
- Eliminate Barriers

Self-actualization — desire to become the most that one can be

Esteem — respect, self-esteem, status, recognition, strength, freedom

Love and belonging — friendship, intimacy, family, sense of connection

Safety needs — personal security, employment, resources, health, property

Physiological needs — air, water, food, shelter, sleep, clothing, reproduction

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Discussing Disengagement with Clients

- *Strengths-based: What have they achieved in treatment?*
  - » Staff: "You've accomplished a lot of goals in treatment and lately it seems like you're losing steam and I'm concerned."

- *Reflect on their motivation: Why did they initially engage in treatment?*
  - » Staff: "I know how much it means to you to reach six months without using. You're a few weeks away, how would leaving treatment impact you achieving your goal?"

- *Utilize peer supports: One of the greatest benefits of having peer supports in your program is their ability to connect with clients on a level of mutual experience.*
  - » Peer Support: "Yeah man, I remember how hard it was keeping all these appointments. I lost my license, struggled to afford a bus pass. It sucked. I left a lot of treatment programs before I finally got my recovery to stick. You know why I kept going the last time? The time that worked? Cause I didn't give up on myself. I knew if I stopped going to those appointments it was only a matter of time before I was back to using."

- *Meet them where they are – validate their experience: What's going on for them? What isn't being acknowledged?*
  - » Counselor: "I can't imagine how hard it is for you right now – you just lost your mom. It's understandable all you want to do is stay at home, maybe you even want to use to feel better. It must be really hard to be grieving and keeping your treatment appointments."

- *Avoid: Judgement, shame, unrealistic expectations*
  - » Staff: "What's going on, Rick? You said this time would be different – you said you weren't going to run from treatment again."

- *Staff: "Looks like you're going to keep doing the same thing over and over. You don't seem to care about getting your kids back or what's best for them."*
  - » Staff: "Aaron, I get it, you're having a hard time getting a ride, but the rules are the rules. You missed our individual session yesterday, so you have to go to two extra groups to make it up."

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