Safety = Access
Lessons and Questions about Establishing Safety in HCH Projects

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Overview

• Origins of the safety discussion: 2016 Consumer Participation Outreach Survey by the National Consumer Advisory Board and the National Health Care for the Homeless Council

• Lessons from the Safety Guide

• Open Conversation about Safety
Origins

What is a CPO?

• The CPO is a survey designed by consumers, for consumers.

• The CPO helps us learn about the concerns and needs of Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) clients, gives consumers a platform to voice their thoughts and share their experiences and helps HCH clinics improve their services, practices and policies.

Who is NCAB?

• NCAB is group of people who have experienced homelessness and received services from a HCH program

• NCAB works to engage the voice of consumers at their local projects and in national advocacy
Focus
• NCAB identified physical, emotional and psychological safety at HCH sites as an important consideration effecting accessibility, as well as quality of care; especially considering the histories of trauma for people experiencing homelessness

Topics
• General Feelings of Safety
  • What makes consumers feel safe or unsafe?
  • Do you feel safe at HCH?
• Experiences and Preferences with Staff
  • Does staff make you feel safe and treat you with respect?
  • What can staff do to make you feel safe?
• Overall Feelings of Safety
  • What can organizations do to improve feelings of safety?
Important Findings

• Respect from staff in the clinic is critical

• The physical presence of security makes people feel safe

• Being around dangerous or disruptive individuals contributes to clients feeling unsafe.

• Environment and surroundings of the clinic can impact patient feelings of safety in accessing or being in the clinic.

• People generally feel treated with respect at their sites
Lesson: Important questions with complex answers

• How do our sites balance access for people struggling with mental and behavioral health concerns and those who may be re-traumatized by different behaviors?

• How do our organizations support staff in ensuring clients feel safe and treated with respect?

• What is our role is the spaces around our clinics?

Led us to create a Safety Guide with some ideas from the field, with input from consumers, providers, and administrators at HCH projects
Safety Guide

3 Core Components:

• Creating physical environments that support emotional well-being

• Supporting all staff in creating a trauma-informed environment for consumers and themselves

• Developing a process to consider how to best address these questions locally, based on what the needs and input of your community
Physical Environment

• Creating a welcome, safe environment where individuals can feel vulnerable

• Fostering calming, relaxing spaces

• Staff attitudes are critical

• Importance of reinforcing non-judgmental responses
Staff Support

• Organizational polices
• Trainings and Skill development
• Opportunities for Self care
• Recruitment and retention
• Supervision
Developing Local Solutions

• Develop a safety committee of staff from each discipline, executive leadership and consumers.

• Hold open conversations about safety at the health center.

• Review organizational policies related to safety at the health center.

• Incorporate a wide range of training into all positions on a regular basis, including front desk and security staff.

• Implement recommendations for improving physical and emotional wellbeing of staff and consumers.

• Continue to evaluate recommendations and broader safety concerns at the health center.
Discussion

• What do you see as the needs for safety for the HCH project in your community?

• What information here may help? What other resources or support could be useful?

• How can you develop a process to address these concerns?
Stay tuned later this summer for the release of the Safety Guide