

From Mental Health to Behavioral Health: Essentials of Transformative Practice

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Goals for Presentation

- Gain a fuller understanding of the context that is generating a shift from focus on “Mental Health” interventions to “Behavioral Health” Interventions
- Consider a working definition of Behavioral Health
- Consider markers of fidelity in effective and efficient delivery of Transformative Practice

What do we Mean by Behavioral Health?

- An emerging concept that attempts to address the personal goals and challenges faced by people who cope with substance use, addiction, mental illness, poverty, involvement with multiple systems, discrimination, alienation, marginalization, oppression and lack of access to resources and opportunities.

Behavioral Health (continued)

- Behavioral Health calls our attention to multiple factors that converge to affect peoples' thoughts, feelings, and, ultimately, their decisions which are reflected in their behavior. Behavioral Health challenges policy makers, funders, and providers to validate interventions that attend to the "whole person" and to address factors in the environment that influence decisions.

Working Definition (continued)

- This concept demands that we critically examine the extent to which we are responding as a community in a manner that is both efficient and effective. We must maximize the limited resources we have, and expand peoples' connection to sustainable, naturally occurring resources. How do we collaboratively develop timely, evidence-informed interventions that yield observable social/behavioral outcomes?

Systems and Program Integration

- In order to accomplish the goals reflected in the shift to Behavioral Health we must strive for consistency, communication, and a shared philosophy regarding the ultimate purpose of our interpersonal helping efforts in a concerted effort to realize systems integration to promote citizenship, inclusion, and productive engagement to the fullest extent possible for all citizens of Missouri.

Purpose of Strengths-Based, Person-Centered Transformational Practice

- To collaboratively engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities, within the context of a mutually enriching partnership, to identify, secure and sustain, the range of resources, both External and Internal, needed to promote inclusion, citizenship, social responsibility, and behavior that reflects “Normal Interdependence.”

Transformational Practice

- Traditional Practice: Change is about making improvements in current practices, thus effectively maintaining the status quo.
- Transitional Practice: Change aims to modify current practices to improve outcomes, with tangential impact on status quo.
- Transformational: Change aims to expand range and levels of interventions in order to co-create a new paradigm that disrupts the status quo.

Critical Analysis

- Must occur at all levels: Practitioner, Supervisor, Director, Board, County Commissioners, Public Safety, Schools, State Legislators/Policymakers and the Governor.
- What are the goals that connect efforts and actions on all levels?
- What are we doing in an effort to achieve these goals?
- What evidence can we present that our efforts are accomplishing these goals?

Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability

- David Mechanic: "We do not need more money in order to be effective, in fact we are not likely to secure more money...we need to use the money and resources we currently have more efficiently."
- Graduated Disengagement (Kisthardt, 2003).
- The focus right from the beginning of the relationship to expand the presence of natural supports to promote wellness and social well-being.

Indicators of Transformative Practice

- Attention to Importance of Engagement as a unique and essential helping function.
- Development of a Collaborative Partnership.
- Every Intervention Reflects Elements of Participatory Action Research.
- Service Participant vs. Client, Patient, or Consumer.
- Strengths Perspective, Asset Based, Positive Psychology, Recovery Focused, Resiliency.

Attention to Power

- Emerson: Power is the capacity to influence the thoughts, feelings, and or behavior of another.
- Foucault: The question is not whether power exists...power is reflected in every social discourse...the key question is, What form does power take?
- The desire for power, autonomy, self-determination, equal opportunity, must be recognized in any comprehensive assessment of another's situation and behaviors.

Re-Considering Key Concepts

- Motivation
- Problem
- Change
- Transforming our Lexicon

SAMHSA's Three Pillars of Behavioral Health

- Prevention Works
- Treatment is effective
- People Recover

Trauma Informed Approaches

- Realize the widespread impact of trauma and understand potential paths to recovery
- Recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma in work with individuals, families, groups, staff, and organizations
- Seek to actively build capacities and resilience to prevent re-traumatization

SAMHSA's Six Principles of a Trauma Informed Approach

- Safety
- Trust and Transparency
- Peer support
- Collaboration and mutuality
- Empowerment, Voice and Choice
- Cultural, Historical and Gender Issues

Being a Part of the Transformation

- Begins with my own practice and daily interactions with service participants, colleagues, and community partners
- Truly integrating a practitioner/researcher mindset...Praxis
- Critically examining policy and acting as an agent for transforming policies to support creative, innovative treatment approaches

Being a Part.....

- Key question moves from “Is this Therapy?” to Is this Therapeutic?”
- Integrating Social Justice and Equal Opportunity into the comprehensive behavioral health intervention. “Just Practice” (Finn & Jacobson, 2008).
- Critically examining our purpose: what we are doing in an effort to achieve our purpose? Are we allocating resources efficiently? How can we become even more effective and efficient?
