

# **MEHA Seminar 2024**

## **Outreach: Trauma-Informed Connections from a Pretreatment Perspective**

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# 3 Questions for Consideration

- ▶ How do we unleash the expertise that both the client and the worker bring to the table?
- ▶ Why is it important to understand people's stories or What is the advantage of thinking in terms of a person's narrative?
- ▶ What is Pre-treatment and its 5 guiding principles of care?

# We are Interpreters and Bridge Builders!

- ▶ Michael Rowe states, “Outreach takes place at a border that divides one world from another.”
- ▶ One Side of the border is the Client or prospective client and the other side is the world of resources and services
- ▶ Many Houses of Language so the outreach counselor needs to be fluent and nimble with engagement and translation

# From Homelessness to “Making Meaning”

- ▶ The Trauma of homelessness and the Process of Transition & Adaptation to challenging environments
- ▶ Review Old Man Ray’s Narrative – “I am the Night Watchman!”
- ▶ Central Question of Outreach: “How do you help those who are clearly in need, yet communicate no need for help?” (Levy, 2013) The folks who are not raising their hands!

# Pretreatment: Person-Centered Approach

- ▶ 4 Basic Tenets: Getting where people are at; Developing a trusting relationship that upholds client autonomy; Common Language Construction to foster communication; Connect with people's stories
- ▶ Gestalt Reversible Figure exercise: Ground + Focus = Gestalt  
Our roles and assessments only give us a limited view of the person and their opportunities to flourish
- ▶ Pretreatment provides a fuller perspective by focusing on the whole person: Their strengths, challenges, values, sense of meaning... Their Narratives!

# Stages of Relationship Formation

- ▶ **Pre-Engagement** – The goal is to facilitate an **initial welcomed communication** between outreach staff and person experiencing homelessness (Issues of trust & Safety)
- ▶ **Engagement** – The goal is to develop a welcomed **ongoing communication** between worker and homeless person, while setting appropriate boundaries (Issues of safety, trust, autonomy & the challenge of setting professional boundaries by defining roles)
- ▶ **Contracting** – The goal is for the worker and client to establish **mutually acceptable objectives** for their work (Issues of Autonomy/Control & the challenge of promoting client initiative)



# Pretreatment Principles 1 – 3

1. **Relationship Formation** – Promote trust, uphold safety and respect client autonomy, while developing goals (Stages of Engagement include Pre-engagement, Engagement, and Contracting)
2. **Common Language Construction** – try to understand the person's world by learning the meaning of his/her gestures, words, and actions –promote mutual understanding, communication, and productive dialogue in order to create jointly defined goals
3. **Cultural and Ecological Considerations** – Prepare and support person for successful transition and adaptation to new relationships, ideas, services, resources, treatment, housing etc.

# Pretreatment Principles 4 – 5

**4. Promote Safety – Harm Reduction strategies; Crisis Intervention**, use opportunity for further work

**5. Facilitate and Support Change** – point out discrepancies, explore ambivalence, reinforce healthy behaviors and developing skills, as well as needed supports – use **Change Model & Motivational Interviewing Principles**– Stages of Change include Pre-contemplation, Contemplation, Preparation, Action, Maintenance, and Relapse

**Prochaska, Norcross and Diclemente 2006; Miller & Rollnick, 1991**



# Case Narratives: Achieving Productive Dialogue to Facilitate Positive Change

- ▶ **Ronald's Narrative- B,M,30's: Vietnam Veteran, formerly homeless, Significant trauma hx and Anxiety, Heroin/Cocaine addiction. Read Excerpt: Common Language Construction and pointing out Discrepancy**
- ▶ **Butch's Story- W,M,50's: Sleeping Rough, Alcohol Dependence, Brain injury, Excellent survival skills, Trauma, Loss and new possibilities; Working with Meaning; Not against it!**
- ▶ **Lacy's Outreach & Engagement-W,F,30's: Significant Trauma hx- Sleeping rough-While feeding the birds she said: *The birds are innocent and peaceful creatures that can rise above the mischief.***

# Stable Safe Housing: Social Determinant for Better Health – Support Transitions and Stability

- ▶ Mantra: 4 Universal Challenges to a Successful Tenancy: Paying Rent, Getting along w/neighbors, Taking care of apartment, Personal Safety
- ▶ Move-In Celebration, Orientation, review of mantra, and Safety Planning; Short-term transition and Intermediate goals to promote Housing Stability
- ▶ Crisis Intervention and Modifying Safety Plan via Solution Focus work– Past/Present–What works? Future–What can work? Reinforce and Develop Coping Strategies
- ▶ Developing Pathways to Recovery – Highlighting Discrepancy between goals, values and current behaviors: From Housing Challenges to Treatment Concerns

# Conclusion: Reflective Practice

1. Creating Time and Space for Reflective Practice
2. Combine Solution Focused Reflection (What works and what doesn't work currently and in the Past and what else can be tried?) with Pretreatment Principles of care for case review
3. Housing Support Staff and Outreach Counselors may benefit from further training and education on how to develop Pretreatment Pathways to recovery, acute treatment, and housing stabilization (e.g. New Workbook/Training).

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