Overcoming challenging barriers to community engagement associated with severe and persistent mental illness using evidence-based treatment interventions

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Introduction

Historically individuals who experience severe and persistent mental health symptoms are identified as experiencing chronic symptoms requiring long-term treatment. Treatment of these symptoms typically produces modest results and the focus shifts from achievement of meaningful and desired goals to maintenance of the individual’s “baseline” level of functioning. This leads to a cycle of long-term placement in residential or inpatient settings with relapses resulting in higher levels of care. Individuals trapped in this cycle tend to be insulated within a system of care and with little connection to the supports and resources in the community at large and few opportunities to engage in meaningful work. Our aim has been to systematically target those symptoms which create the greatest barriers for personal recovery. This leads to the best way help individuals integrate into their communities and become less reliant on the mental health system.

Objectives

- Obtain skills to manage obstacles
- Reduce disruption to one’s life caused by symptoms
- Reduce hospitalizations
- Educate practitioners on effective interventions
- Increase engagement in meaningful activities

Timeline of Implementation

1. Preparation
   - Obtain agency buy-in
   - Identify goals of using this model with the specific population.
   - Collect baseline outcomes for at least 3 months prior to implementation.

2. Development
   - Identify programs and population
   - Identify project leaders
   - Intensive, experiential training with an expert in the practice

3. Implementation
   - On-going consultation with expert
   - Staff at all levels are trained to provide treatment.
   - Project leaders develop & provide training for new staff
   - Adapt for service needs

4. Continuous Improvement
   - Outcomes specific to model are collected
   - One measure used across models for comparison purposes.
   - On-going fidelity monitoring conducted.

Implementation Process

- On-going consultation with expert
- Staff at all levels are trained to provide treatment.
- Project leaders develop & provide training for new staff
- Adapt for service needs

References

- Grant P., Brinen A. (2016) ABCT mini-workshop in this topic in November 2014 and in the training conducted for the Bridge by Aaron Brinen in May 2016.

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