Recovery Assistants
Specialized Homecare for People with Mental Illness

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Learning Objectives

**How to...**

1. Create a Recovery Assistant service
2. Develop a training for this service
3. Identify the ways this service has benefitted the recipients
Maintenance to Recovery

• Then:
  – People did not believe in recovery
  – Huge hospitals to house clients
  – “Stabilize” and “Maintain”
  – Custodial care

• Now:
  – People can recover
  – Recovery is not linear, it’s a process
  – Principles of psychiatric rehabilitation model work
  – People need support in the community
  – Emphasis on skills and abilities
Definition of Recovery

A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.

Source: http://www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/advisories/1112223420.aspx
Interpretation of Recovery

• We endorse a broad vision of recovery that involves a process of restoring or developing a positive and meaningful sense of identity apart from one’s condition
  – Who am I?

• and a meaningful sense of belonging while rebuilding a life despite or within the limitations imposed by that condition.
  – Where do I fit in the world around me?

Source: CT Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services
So what is a “Recovery Assistant”?

• The Fine Print:
  – A flexible range of supportive assistance provided face-to-face in accordance with a Waiver Recovery Plan that enables a participant to maintain a home/apartment, encourages the use of existing natural supports, and fosters involvement in social and community activities. Service activities include: performing household tasks, providing instructive assistance, or cuing to prompt the participant to carry out tasks (e.g., meal preparation; routine household chores, cleaning, laundry, shopping, and bill-paying; and participation in social and recreational activities), and; providing supportive companionship. The Recovery Assistant may also provide instruction or cuing to prompt the participant to dress appropriately and perform basic hygiene functions; supportive assistance and supervision of the participant, and; short-term relief in the home for a participant who is unable to care for himself/herself when the primary caregiver is absent or in need of relief.

Source: Application for 1915 (c) HCBS Waiver: CT.0653.R01.00

• In Plain English:
  – Staff cues, prompts and assists an individual in his/her recovery from Severe Mental Illness
  – This service teaches skills, instead of “doing for”
  – All actions centered on the person, not the diagnosis!
What does a **Recovery Assistant** do?

- Based on principles of *psychiatric rehabilitation*
- Combination of multiple services
  - 1 staff performing 4 functions
- Helps the client **learn skills** to live independently in the community
  - Cooking, cleaning, budgeting, social integration
- Works with clients who exhibit both **positive** and **negative** symptoms of mental illness
Combination of Services

- Homemaker
- Companion
- Personal Care Attendant
- Respite

Recovery Assistant
RA Job Description

• Assist, cue and prompt clients by (i.e., billable):
  – Increasing life skills (e.g., meal prep, cleaning, budgeting)
  – Decreasing risky behavior & substance abuse
  – Teaching to schedule and attend appointments
  – Acting as a companion and support system

• RAs cannot bill for:
  – Telephone contact
  – No shows, cancellations
  – Anything where the client is not present
  – Transporting clients
How to Build the RA Service
Marketing/ Outreach

• Recruited providers from all areas of the state
  – PNPs, behavioral health agencies and state-operated facilities
  – The provider determines its service area
• Hired an Outreach & Engagement Specialist
• Numerous training and informational sessions
• Mailings to probate courts
• Pens, sticky notes, etc.
Credentialing Requirements

**Provider**
- Accredited by CARF, Joint Commission, CHAP or other approved agency
- Credentialed by ABH
- Enroll as a Medicaid billing provider
- Provide supervision by a licensed clinician
- Re-credentialed every two years

**Staff**
- 18 years old
- HS diploma or GED
- Valid CT driver’s license
- Complete RA Training
- Complete 6 hours a year of post-education training
RA Training (2009-2013)

• Original Process (2009-2013)
  – Initially an in-person training over two full days
  – Participants required score $\geq 80\%$ on 33 question exam
  – In 2012, added online training to provisionally credential a staff for 60 days.

• New Process (2013- present)
  – Mandatory online module
    • Must score $\geq 80\%$ on 20 question exam
  – Mandatory full day in-person training
    • Must score $\geq 80\%$ on 22 question exam
RA Training

• ABH has conducted 45 trainings to date
• 925 individuals trained to date
• The training has received an average satisfaction score of 94.59%
RA Role – A paradigm shift

A Recovery Assistant should:

- Use motivational interviewing techniques to encourage the individual to work towards their personal goals, dreams, hopes and aspirations.

- Assist the individual to do for themselves rather than “do for” the individual. Try and know their limits.

- Work towards self empowerment; use their name, and ask for their input and assume they are listening.

- Be empathetic, not sympathetic to the individual’s situation and remain professional at all times.

- Always consider professional boundaries at all times when working with the individual.

- *Always treat the individual as a person not as a diagnosis.*
One day I asked about his **hopes** and **dreams**.

"Oh, that's easy," [Nathaniel] said. "I need to get these other two strings, but I don't have the money right now."

He had no use for a house, he said, or a car or anything else.

"All I want is to play music, and the crisis I'm having is right here," Nathaniel said, pointing to the missing strings.
• “Mr. Ayers and Mr. Lopez”
  • Originally aired March 22, 2009
    – CBS 60 Minutes

Source: 60 Minutes home video
Photo Source: Amazon.com
Basic RA Training Curriculum

Online (Day One)

– More fact-based content
– General introduction to the MH Waiver
– Pass exam with >80%
– Provisionally credentialed to provide service for 60 days

In-Person (Day Two)

– More interactive
– Sections presented by experts in that field
– Activities generate discussion on gray areas such as boundaries and handling unusual situations
– Pass a second exam with >80%
# In-Person Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 to 9:15</td>
<td>Introduction/Video</td>
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<td></td>
<td>DMHAS Video</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:15- 9:45</td>
<td>Recovery</td>
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<td>David Howe presentation</td>
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<td>9:45 to 10:45</td>
<td>Mental Health-Laurel</td>
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<td>Video-Soloist &amp; CBS</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:45 to 11:00</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 to 12:00</td>
<td>Providing Support-Sharon</td>
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<td>Tasks Activity</td>
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<td>12:00- 1:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>1:00 to 1:30</td>
<td>Wellness-Dan</td>
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<td>1:30 to 1:45</td>
<td>Documentation-narrative/complete encounter note</td>
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<td>1:45 to 2:30</td>
<td>Working as an Recovery Assistant</td>
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<td>Group Activity-Mary video/scenarios</td>
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<td>2:30 to 3:00</td>
<td>Boundaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:00-3:15</td>
<td>Review-Jeopardy</td>
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<td>3:15-4:00</td>
<td>Test</td>
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Documentation of Attendance

State of Connecticut
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

John Smith

Has successfully completed the

Initial Recovery Assistant Training

Completed on November 4, 2011 at
Connecticut Valley Hospital, Middletown, CT

Instructors:
DMHAS Waiver Team and ABHs, Inc

This documentation of attendance does not constitute any arrangement for or guarantee of employment.

Megan Goodfield, LCSW
DMHAS Program Manager

Kristie Scott, MSW
ABH Program Manager
Sample Video

• “Is schizophrenia linked to violent behavior?”
• Originally aired Jan 31, 2013
  – CBS Evening News with Scott Pelley

Source: http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=50140154n
Post Education

• All Recovery Assistants are required to complete **six hours** of post education every year after certification
  – Starting in 2012, all RA’s must attend a boundaries training conducted by ABH once every two years

• ABH has provided training in boundaries, diabetes, wellness, active listening and toolkit building
How have clients benefitted?

Research on the impact of the Recovery Assistant service in the MH Waiver
Research/Data

• CT DMHAS contracted with UCONN Health Center researchers to evaluate the MH Waiver

• CT Dept. of Social Services (DSS) contracted with UCONN Health Center to evaluate Money Follows the Person (MFP)
  – Note: Clients on MFP transition to the MHW after 365 days
UCONN Research

- UCONN validated that MHW clients failed in the past due to lack of life skills
57% increase after SNF discharge

Note: Baseline assessments were conducted while client was still in SNF

Source: MFP Quality of Life (QOL) Dashboard, UCONN Center on Aging
MFP Research (cont.)

23% increase

Source: MFP Quality of Life (QOL) Dashboard, UCONN Center on Aging
Actual client receiving RA services

DMHAS MII Waiver
Working for Integration Support and Empowerment

Date of Status Reviews: 6/18/13 8/19/13

Comments:
MIKE HAS DONE GREAT WITH WAIVER SUPPORT SERVICES! HE IS NOW INDEPENDENT W/ ALL ADL'S & NO LONGER MEETS NURSING HOME LOC.

Date of the event resulting in the discontinuance recommendation:
Death: Admision to LTC: Nursing Facility: Other: 8/21/13

FOR DSS USE ONLY

Coments:

Reason Codes:
1. Died
2. Hospitalized
3. Home hosp.
4. Became fully employed
5. Care plan over time not a home health

Recovery!!
Waiver Data

• 285 Enrolled to date
• 223 (78%) maintained or achieved level of functioning in the community
  – Success is due to the use of Recovery Assistants!
• 196 (94%) currently receiving RA service
• *Clients receive ~20-25 hours per week of RA service*
James

- James is an actual MH Waiver client
- We use this clip to educate RAs on working with a client in the community
- James has been active in his recovery and in MH Waiver Advisory Council meetings
Take Home

• People **can** recover
• Recovery means having a **meaningful life**
• Use psychiatric rehab principles
• Recovery Assistants teach **skills and abilities**

**Use Recovery Assistants!**
Contact Info

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Questions?