Culture Clash

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Presentation overview

- NADA, CRC and scope of service provision
- Problems for Criminal justice clients in accessing drug and alcohol services
- A solution – **No Bars: Supporting AOD Services to Work with Criminal Justice Clients**
- Defining the culture clash
- Prison culture
- Rehabilitation culture
- Result of the culture clash
- Project Pilot and Further Developments
- Contact details
Network of Alcohol & Other Drug Agencies (NADA)

- NADA is the peak body for non-government drug and alcohol agencies in NSW
- NADA’s member agencies had reported for sometime challenges working with criminal justice clients
- NADA and the Community Restorative Centre (CRC) explored ways to assist with these challenges
CRC (Community Restorative Centre)

CRC is the largest community organisation in NSW supporting prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families and friends.

Reduce crime and change lives through:

- Range of targeted programs
- Partnerships with other organisations
- Creating opportunities for clients
The problems

- CRC staff and clients have difficulty making successful referrals to residential rehabilitation drug treatment programs
- Some people exiting the prison system are unable to be released until accepted into a program
- Some people are unable to get bail from courts unless accepted into a program
The process

- NADA and CRC staff begin calling and asking rehabs about their referral and screening processes

- CRC staff ask clients about their experiences in accessing drug treatment agencies

- CRC staff making referrals keep a record of reasons for acceptances and refusals
Issues identified by rehab staff

- Rehab staff raised concerns including
  - violence and challenging behaviours that people from jail may exhibit
  - that people entering rehab straight from prison or court may lack motivation to change their level of drug use / be looking for a ‘get out of jail free card’
  - Difficulty accessing staff and information within the criminal justice system (particularly in gaols)

- Drug treatment and community service workers felt they needed more knowledge of the workings of the criminal justice system particularly bail, sentencing, release and risk assessment processes
A solution

- NSW Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies (NADA) and CRC develop a training package designed to
  - Provide information to rehabilitation staff about criminal justice clients and the system
  - Explore agency processes that might be a barrier to criminal justice clients
  - Develop strategies for change to enable workers and agencies to feel more confident and accept more referrals of criminal justice clients
Culture Clash

- A key factor identified in the training package development was the difference in prison culture and rehabilitation culture. This is evident once people enter a treatment program.

- Culture in this case is defined as;
  - The things individuals have to do to survive
  - Values and beliefs
  - Balance of power
Power and control

Prison
- Custodial power is ultimate
- Information is held by staff that can be used for or against the person at any time
- Information is power and is traded among inmates and officers for control over others
- Survival requires outward compliance, internal withdrawal, emotional shutdown

Rehabilitation
- Staff have the ultimate power to determine if people stay in the program.
- Information is collected and informs decision making - processes are not transparent to client
- Residents are expected to share information about themselves and their feelings
- Survival requires outward compliance, openness and participation
Values and Behaviours

Prison
- See, hear and speak no evil – Do not pass on information to staff about another person under any circumstances. This is dogging and the penalty can be death.
- Do not trust prison staff, they do not care about you
- Keep your head down & do whatever you are told whether you agree or not

Rehabilitation
- Peer support is a vital part of treatment - help other residents by telling staff if they are going to use, or break agency rules in some way
- Trust staff and participate in the program that is designed to help you.
- Openness and communication is vital but do what you are told whether you agree or not
Result of culture clash for clients

- Difficulty in adjusting to routines, structure and rules
- Clients are mistrustful and defensive with workers
- Difficulty or inability to participate in group activities
- Lack of understanding of the rules or expectations of workers
- Fearful that information will be used against them
Result of the culture clash for Rehabilitation workers

- Perceived lack of commitment to the program, lack of motivation
- Workers are mistrustful and defensive with criminal justice clients
- Clients may be asked to leave at an early stage of treatment because they cannot break their habits
- Other clients can ostracise criminal justice clients, exclude and judge them
The No Bars Project Pilot

- The CRC training package “No Bars: Supporting AOD Services to Work With Criminal Justice Clients” is specifically designed to address barriers to accessing treatment programs.

- The package has been piloted with three residential rehabilitation services. Participants received extensive resources.

- Package able to be tailored to meet needs of each service – ie: training v’s change management.
Other Developments

- Development of web-based resources and information kit (to be launched in June 2009). Will be accessible from NADA and CRC websites.
- Project & training package being tailored to ensure Aboriginal issues are adequately reflected. Consultation underway, delivery of specialised package to begin later in 2009.
More information

- No Bars project is being rolled out across the state throughout 2009.
- If you want to know more about the free training on offer, contact Mandy Marsters – amarsters@crcnsw.org.au
- CRC’s services or research contact –
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