

Quality Matters

Differences in Practice Between Great Agencies and Less Than Great Agencies

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We are the creative force of our life, and through our own decisions rather than our conditions, if we carefully learn to do certain things, we can accomplish those goals.

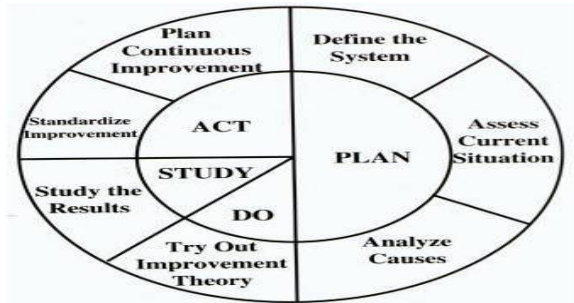
—Stephen Covey

Research has amply demonstrated that organizational health directly impacts the outcomes of the consumer. If the agency does not have good operational practices or structures, then the probability of achieving quality services and positive outcomes is Infinitesimally small.

There was a webinar that talked about the practice differences between GREAT agencies and the less than great agencies, particularly as it relates to engaging and retaining consumers. Great organizations have taken responsibility for their part of the service delivery process by recognizing that the environment, staff, and agency operations do have impact on the outcomes consumers experience. It is not just about whether the consumer is “ready” or “motivated”.

The study identified the best agencies (top 25%) by objective criteria and then chose the bottom performers in the same manner. Then the study asked both groups about best practices and whether they were used within that particular agency. Here are the findings.

- Great agencies were 8x more likely to have their clinicians call the consumer before the first appointment and introduce



PDSA Wheel

themselves. This was an especially effective practice for alcohol and other drug consumers.

- Another approach was to introduce the consumer to a member of the treatment team prior to initiation of services. Again, this was especially effective for the alcohol and other drug consumer.
- Consumers were 3x more likely to engage if the intake process was an hour or less.
- Consumers were more likely to engage after the intake/assessment process if potential barriers to care were discussed with the consumer.
- Engagement rates increased when clinicians called consumers that were a no-show or cancelled 2x in a row—and did not leave a voicemail but actually talked to the consumer.

Force Field Analysis

Force Field analysis is a good tool to use to visualize the forces that would hinder a change initiative (improvement) as well as the forces that support the change. In order for the change to occur, the supporting forces must exceed the restraining forces. Through visual means, it becomes clear and understandable to everyone on the team what will be necessary in order for the change initiative to be successful *or* that it is not viable option at this time. This tool was developed in 1947 by Kurt Lewin and is often used in counseling sessions. Kurt Lewin stated; "An issue is held in balance by the interaction of two opposing sets of



forces - those seeking to promote change (driving forces) and those attempting to maintain the status quo (restraining forces)."

Steps: 1. Define the desired change or action (agree on a simple statement).

2. Brainstorm the driving forces & restraining forces
3. Prioritize the driving forces & restraining forces (identify the critical few- rank order the top 3)
4. List actions to be taken (focusing on the critical few driving & restraining forces)
5. You can also rank by strength; assign each force a number between 1 (weak) to 5 (strong).

Effective Teams and Committees

How do you know your team and/or committee is effective? QI staff should assess the effectiveness of every team every one to two years with a survey to ensure everyone agrees the team is still useful. Here are some questions for team members to answer using a Likert scale (Not at all to Usually):

1. Team members understand the decisions that are made and agree with them.
2. Team members are encouraged to work for the good of the organization.
3. Meetings are inefficient and there is a lot of role overlap.
4. Conflict and hostility is a pervasive issue and never seems to get better.
5. Agendas and meeting minutes are sent to members in a timely fashion.
6. Working relationships across departments is poor and there is a lack of coordination.
7. Team members are encouraged to commit to the team vision, and leaders help them understand how their role fits into the big picture.
8. There are many complaints on my team and morale is low.
9. Meetings start and end on time.
10. The team understands what it needs to accomplish and has the resources needed to be successful.

Quality begins on the inside...and then works its way out.
—-Bob Moawad

(www.mindtools.com)

Differences between great and not so great

- Consumers stayed in treatment longer if the discharge planning process was consistently followed as evidenced by policy and procedures and training.
- Great agencies were 7x more likely to successfully retain clients if they had a standard, scripted approach that was used when consumers requested that their services be reduced or ended.
- Interestingly, the study found there was no difference in outcomes by the type of clinician that provided the services nor by the type of treatment model used, ie CBT, MET etc. except for one: Motivational Interviewing. This practice was especially effective for alcohol and other drug consumers.
- At the Psychotherapy and Science conference, presenters debated the use of evidence-based practices. The presenters defined EBPs according to various definitions and perspectives, but one presenter stated firmly that no evidence-based practice or model made any difference. The number one driver that determined for consumer outcomes was



Where do you fit in?

the rapport established with the clinician.

Much of the behavioral research literature affirms that establishing a relationship with the consumer whereby the consumer can trust is paramount to positive outcomes. And as I look over the practices that Great agencies do versus the not so great agencies, I can clearly see that many are directly connected to relationship building of some sort.

So why do we persist in blaming the consumer for failing to engage? Especially when we have failed to establish on a minimal level a bond that allows the consumer to take tentative steps to trust enough to come into an agency and lay bare all their problems in the hope of a better life. This does not make sense to me. Maybe it is us that are not motivated—not motivated to change and continue to remain wedded to outdated ways of doing things. Maybe it is because we expect the consumer to meet *our need* to have it done a specific way instead of meeting the consumer needs. Are we relying on evidence-based practice to do what we are unwilling to do? Extend a hand that says I care and I can help? Be a Great agency and use EBPS by all means, but EBPs won't replace compassion and the human connection.

Symptoms of Groupthink

Have you ever thought about speaking up in a meeting and decided against it because you did not want to appear unsupportive or different? If so, then you have been the victim of Groupthink. Groupthink happens when: 1. there is a strong, persuasive group leader 2. group cohesion 3. intense pressure to make a good decision. Symptoms: Opposing opinions or questions meet pressure to conform, the group feels like any decision they make is the right one because of previous successes, every member views himself/herself as moral, and the group begins to think of outsiders as possessing a different set of morals or characteristics and the negative traits will then be used to discredit them (Mind Tools, p18).

By the work you will know the workmen.

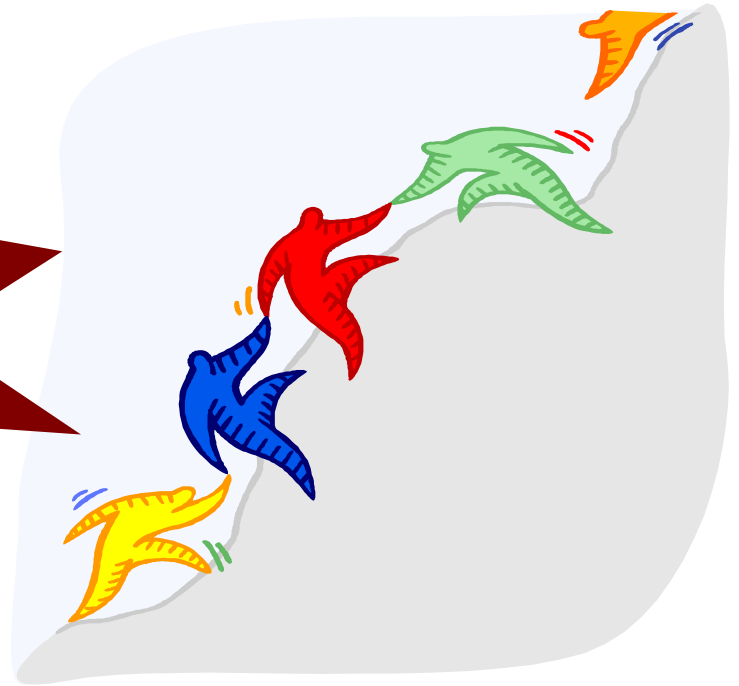
—Jean de la Fontaine



Mission Statement

Southeastern Center shall ensure an accessible, flexible, and responsive system of care resulting in an improved quality of life for consumers of mental health, developmental disability, and/or substance abuse services.

Check out the tools and instructions on the website under QM section of www.secmh.org



Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.

—John F. Kennedy (in the speech he was to deliver on the day of his assassination)

Leaders

- Strive for Change
- Sets Direction
- Breaks Rules
- Uses Conflict
- Concerned with Doing Right
- Persuades
- Facilitates Decisions
- Seeks Vision
- Transformational Leadership Style
- Focus is Leading People

Managers

- Strive for Stability
- Plans Details
- Makes Rules
- Avoids Conflict
- Concerned with Being Right
- Tells
- Makes Decisions
- Makes Objectives
- Transactional Leadership Style
- Focus is Managing Work