

Issues of Substance 2009 Conference

Facilitated *Pathways and Bridges to Change* Discussion Session

Session Report

Session Topic:

Prevention and Health Promotion

Date:

Wednesday, November 18, 2009

Facilitator:

Darren O'Handley

Summary (brief abstract of session):

The facilitated "Pathways and Bridges to Change" discussion session on Prevention and Health Promotion focused on issues faced in the delivery of Prevention and Health Promotion work and areas to improve the future delivery of services. A key theme discussed throughout the session was the need for adequate resources in providing services as well as the need for organizations to place greater emphasis on the contribution of the work within a continuum of care. Consistent themes emerged regarding the need for evidence-based approaches, the need for ongoing evaluation, and the need for regional, provincial and national strategies. The discussion focused on two main questions. A summary of the key themes from each question is as follows.

1. Coming out of this conference, what are the key issues and concerns that have emerged for you?

Key themes that came out of the discussion focused on increasing the profile of Prevention and Health Promotion and the need to adequately resource this work. The need to establish policy in addressing an approach to the nature of the work as well as targeted interventions to address alcohol and marijuana use were also expressed. Additional themes included the need to continue to examine ways to engage people and address service delivery barriers.

- Need to balance focus and resources between prevention and health promotion and treatment
- Lack of funding for prevention work, especially in rural areas
- Lack of policy for prevention and health promotion



- Need for policy around alcohol, marijuana
- Need to change attitudes about alcohol and drug use
- Need to look at ways to engage youth, community, stakeholders
- Addressing barriers in doing targeted prevention work, i.e., resources
- Need to look at parenting and gender issues
- Need to evaluate what we are doing and building evaluation into our culture
- How do we raise prevention promotion issues with acute care model profiles?

2. Pathways and Bridges to Change:

a. What big changes need to be made in the next 10 years?

The need for coordinated Prevention Strategies at the regional, provincial, and national levels and transfer of knowledge of prevention and health promotion work were key areas of focus in the discussion. Additional themes included the need to adequately resource prevention and health promotion and the need for innovative delivery in reaching diverse groups.

- Collaboration with other levels/tiers to integrate health promotion with the integration of Mental Health and Addictions
- Need to use technologies and other innovative ways to reach different audiences
- A national communication strategy
- More evaluation, tracking and accountability
- More work focused on family
- The need to coordinate prevention strategies regionally, provincially and nationally
- Ensuring grassroots organizations have research-based information
- To increase the importance placed on health promotion and adequate resources
- National prevention strategy
- Demonstrate how health promotions more cost effective long term

b. What big steps need to be taken to produce the desired changes?

Discussion focused on establishing a collective process for determining the values, beliefs and philosophies of Prevention and Health Promotion that takes into account feedback from consumers, front-line providers and research. Additional themes centred on the need for resources, evaluation and education for the public and service providers as well as a national approach.



- Designate leadership to drive a national communication strategy re: Prevention and Health Promotion
- Need a process for consumer, front-line provider, policy research voices to be brought forward
- National prevention strategy
- Ensuring best practices and national standards are communicated
- Knowledge is transferred to grassroots organizations
- Determine the values, beliefs and philosophies behind Prevention and Health Promotion work collectively
- Resources to provide appropriate prevention services
- Resources and expertise to evaluate prevention and health promotion
- Better media engagement
- Education of allied fields to increase collaboration

c. What changes can you make to move us further along the way to change?

Participant discussion centred on increasing the understanding of Prevention and Health Promotion work in the community and engaging the community in taking ownership of the issue while capturing what is important to clients and sharing client successes.

- Engage the community to make addictions a community issue involving health promotion activities
- Involvement from communities at all levels
- Reinforcing positive behaviour, not only focusing on negative
- Normalize good, healthy, positive behaviour
- Marketing Prevention and Health Promotion work to make people understand what we do
- Development of a best practice document—continue to make it an organization priority
- Back up Prevention and Health Promotion work with evidence
- Ask clients what makes a difference in their lives
- Sharing stories of success
- Advocate for ongoing capacity building in Prevention and Health Promotion strategies and theories/philosophies

