

Issues of Substance 2009 Conference

Facilitated *Pathways and Bridges to Change* Discussion Session

Session Report

Session Topic:

Specialized Addiction Treatment

Date:

Wednesday, November 18, 2009

Facilitator:

Greg Purvis

Summary (brief abstract of session):

The “World Café” model was used to facilitate this session, which focused on Addiction Treatment. Fifty-nine conference delegates participated in this session, rotating through seven discussion tables. The following are the top three responses for each group for each question listed below. Answers are listed only once, even if reported on by more than one group. The responses are in no particular order.

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

- Still on the fence of merging Mental Health and Addictions. Is there evidence that this will produce the best outcomes?
- What do we call “addiction” and how do we deal with it?
- Show some of the positive impacts of addiction treatment instead of focusing on the negative
- Federal government is abstinence-based, not interested in harm reduction, but there are two sides to this debate
- Big push for knowledge exchange; we need to share better between districts
- A lot of research but not a lot making it to practise; not a lot of best practise links
- Provincial disparity
- Disparity between rural and urban
- A need for more training around the neurobiology of addiction
- Focus on culture and history of Aboriginal groups



- Need to beef up mental health, as addiction can cover up mental health issues
- Under-developed programs
- Process addictions may not be deemed an addiction
- More collaboration with Mental Health
- Differing implementation of harm reduction, too many meanings
- Long-term stable funding, at least five years based on evidence supporting effectiveness

2. Pathways and Bridges to Change:

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

- There is a big difference between integration and merger; we need to maintain the value of both
- Need to do a good job in dealing with stigma
- Need to make services more accessible to clients
- Funding needs to provide better options for rural areas
- Need standard practices across the country
- Don't forget about clients; we need to serve them first
- Integration of Mental Health and Addiction Services Holistic approach to treatment
- Collaboration between justice and addiction
- Need more family involvement from day one
- Need for central intake for all services; more frontline training in cultural diversity
- Physicians recruited to work with methadone need fewer restrictions
- Integrating services through better case management linkages
- Concrete programs to help clients with self-esteem
- Need to adapt treatment to what is available: telephone, Internet
- Funding for Addictions to match Mental Health funding
- Strategy for developing positive views of addiction programs in the media and change public opinion
- Involve front-line staff in big I.T. changes

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

- Funding guidelines from Health Canada are inflexible and not in line with provincial needs
- Use change management models when doing system change
- Focus less on the quantity data and more on what is working
- Core competencies need to be expanded to other areas—nursing, physicians



- Collaboration mandates
- Cross-training between services
- Be creative with funding sources
- Lobbying and corporate involvement
- Alcohol health education
- CNSAP knowledge exchange tab
- Provincial database of services with national access
- Bigger role for addictions in nursing and medical schools
- More standardization
- Offer education on comprehensive assessment
- Work on attitudes and perspectives of all
- Concrete programs to improve clients' ability to help themselves
- Including and involving people with lived experience as a higher level of policy and planning
- Enforcement-led policy needs shift to more funding for treatment and care

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

- Be open-minded to new ideas
- Better knowledge exchange with: clients, colleagues and co-workers
- Reward excellence locally and across the system
- Participate and initiate in service sessions regularly with guest speakers
- Agency tours and exchanges with other agencies
- Liaison with key service providers
- Create awareness nights in the communities we live in
- Learn what other agencies in our communities do
- Client mentors
- Learn what is available nationally
- More advocacy, word-of-mouth networking
- Be willing participants in research
- Consultation—both face-to-face and online
- Plug away at changing opinion and practise in our day-to-day work

