



COMMUNITY ALLIANCE WORKSOURCE

OVERVIEW

Community Alliance is VR's oldest partner in supported employment for individuals with behavioral health diagnosis. WorkSource serves all of Omaha. Referrals for the program come from all three (3) VR teams. Other referral sources including community support and day services refer to VR. All employment seekers are VR clients. Community Alliance has eight (8) full time Employment Training Specialists and a Peer Support Specialist assigned to the program half time. There is no standardized referral system. A referral form is used by the three (3) VR teams but after that the teams do not send the same information. A form for stabilization has been developed and is used to mark the move to VR employment follow-up. Successful closures are discussed at CA WorkSource team meetings.

Omaha VR has two (2) offices and three (3) teams. Each team has now designated a liaison to the program. The specialist from Omaha Downtown team is housed at CA one day a week where coordinates services for the Downtown Team. She attends the CA team meetings two (2) times per month where she collects information on new placements, stabilizations, discharges and successful outcomes. This information is given to the other two- (2) team liaisons for processing. The Omaha West liaison & the Omaha South liaison collect and input reports, authorizes for services and maintains monthly contact with the CA clients. The CA employment specialists email monthly updates on clients. The Downtown Team's office director is assigned to oversee the agreement. She meets quarterly with the CA WorkSource Division Manager, the Downtown VR liaison to review the quarterly report for closure information and to discuss any systemic issues. The Program Director for Community Services attends the quarterly meeting.

PROGRAM REVIEW

Community Alliance is moving from paper to electronic files. All case notes starting April 2013 are electronic. Most of the files that were reviewed were paper. The WorkSource notes are separate section in the paper files. VR uses a referral form to refer CA but after that each team and/or staff person sends what he/she wants. Only fourteen (14%) of the files had a copy of the VR IPE. All cases reviewed had a CA plan

of service and a goal. There was documentation of regular client contact and services. Types of services included all aspects of the job search process including advocacy where allowed, coping skills, health management, problem solving and conflict resolution. The stabilization form was found in most of the files. Some files reflected team meetings and contact with VR liaison. At successful closure, there was documentation in the majority of the files on job performance, employer contact where allowed and documentation of client contact. There is a prevention plan when transferred to retention. Two cases alluded to benefits analysis. One case was active for over three (3) years without the client ever really committing. The staff person met with the client weekly, helped with job leads but there was always a problem with the job.

VR CASE REVIEWS

The VR office director reviewed 25% of successful outcomes and 10% of unsuccessful closures. Three (3) of the cases reviewed were not a Priority One but all did have a supported employment plan. The majority of the files had documentation of the services provided by CA but only half of the cases documented client progress and most did not reference any contact between VR and CA. None of the stabilization documentation listed information on client progress and employer contact. Half of the cases documented contact with the client at closure. Two cases had had a benefits orientation.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SURVEY

Nine (9) CA specialists participated in the survey. Questions one (1) and two (2) focused on the VR application process and eligibility and the length of time it takes. Four (4) responded that the information is not available to them and the answer(s) really are not valid. 33.3% thought it takes 5-9 days to complete the application process and 44.4% thought the eligibility process took 1-4 days.

Questions three (3)- six (6) looks at the accuracy and completeness of referral information, the percentage of the time the sharing and VR requirements are understood and implemented, involvement in the VR planning process and the frequency that the client and CA had input on major decisions throughout the process. 44.4% believed that the referral information is accurate and complete 69-50% of the time. Comments included "While there has been improvement over the last year, there are times when medical records are not sent with the referral.... Also there are times when information is left blank or is inaccurate (i.e. benefits)...It would be helpful if this information is verified prior to the referral due to this possibly influencing a person's ability or willingness to work." " Some referrals are very accurate with an abundance of information but there are some that lack basic information or have incorrect information... would be nice if information could be more accurate. Would there be away

to get this information on all clients to help job developing run smoother...There are a group of counselors who share great information and give copies of the VR workbook or go over it with ETS and client. It would be nice if we could get this information more often".

33.3% believed that the information sharing was clearly understood and implemented 100-85% of the time and another 33.3% believed this occurred 69%-50% of the time. "This only became an issue as we are transitioning to work with liaisons from each of the VR offices. I foresee that it will get better as we work out the kinks...This, at times, causes confusion with the staff as we aren't sure who to coordinate with about what." 33.3% believes VR includes the client and CA in the planning process 69-50% of the time. "The only time ETS has been involved with career planning is when baton meeting is held and it is discussed. But most have the career goal done and the IPE signed at the baton meeting..... we work together to help assist with goal or assess client for a new career goal." "I believe the client is involved most of the time. ...Sometimes I am present when the plan is signed."

44.4% believe that the client and CA have input with VR on major decisions 84-70% of the time. "...When the client experiences an issue or needs assistance there is input from VR. I have to applaud the counselors who give regular feedback and input with offering assistance when needed..." 55.6% of the CA staff believes that clients permit job advocacy and follow up with employers 49-26% of the time. The others saw it higher. "With the stigma of mental illness, the majority of the people that we work with would prefer that the employers aren't aware of their disability..." It is better to his through the employment process but a large number of our clients wait to notify, involve ETS or avoid ETS when they are in crisis or struggling on the job..." "With each situation the client and I discuss what might be the most effective way to approach a particular employer and almost always end up agreeing on how to proceed."

The response to question eight (8) on development of a retention plan 50.6% believes it occurs 100-85% of the time. "With most of my caseload, I help with job retention long term...." "All clients develop a job retention plan with us and we ensure natural supports are in place before discharge from our program..."

Questions nine (9) - fourteen (14) focuses on collaboration and communication, the quality of information, timeliness of information and services, VR use of respect, VR's ability to answer questions and their knowledge of the system and process. 88.9% of CA staff rated their satisfaction with VR's collaboration and communication as good. "There are a few that have we have excellent collaboration and communication together which I greatly appreciate!!" "It varies.... I find that I communicate more often when VR staff members and I are actively collaborating to solve a problem and not just updating. Amelis, Marie, Faye, Nancy, Kathleen, Melani and Susie have always been great to work with. Recently Linda Kloos and I worked together on a Social Security and Medicaid problem and she was responsive, knowledgeable, and helpful. These kinds of collaborations are very reinforcing because both parties are bringing something to the table that has real value such as taking care of a particular task quickly.....and

suggesting an ingenious solution and saying "yes" more frequently than "no". When we are working together in this way I think we both feel "Zapped" with energy and enthusiasm rather than feeling "Sapped" by the limitation and mismatches of our respective systems."

Satisfaction with the quality of information is rated good by 66.7% of CA staff. The timeliness of information and services is seen as good by 55.6% of CA staff. "Some staff are excellent and quickly to make things happen. Others are very slow and seem to focus more on conserving resources and avoiding criticism (i.e. being second guessed). Very often we (the job seeker, CA and VR) are presented with a "window of Opportunity" which we can take advantage of only by acting quickly....."

44.4% of CA staff believes that the extent to which VR staff treats everyone with respect is excellent. The other ratings were very good and good. "Client's reports about this have improved greatly over the years. About the only complaint I've heard lately is that it is hard to get a hold of their counselor. VR staff have always been respectful with me and I feel welcomed anytime I visit VR offices or utilize the computer labs."

55.6% of the staff rates the degree to which VR staff is able to answer questions as good. "There seems at time to be miscommunication which happens in every job. The only setback is at times there seems to be different rules and guidelines between the different teams ...especially when it comes to vouchers. "Marie is especially great at this!" Again, 55.6% of CA staff rate the VR staff's knowledge of the system and process as very good. "There are VR staff that have excellent knowledge and exceed at their job!!"

Two (2) VR staff participated in the survey. On question one on application, 50% thought it took 5-9 days and 50% thought it took 21-30 days. Again on the second question on eligibility, 1 believes it takes 1-4 days and the other 5-20 days. Questions three (3) - six (6) focus on referral information, the information sharing and the understanding of reporting requirements clearly understood and implemented, the frequency of the client and VR being involved in the planning process and the input by VR and the client on major decisions. On the first three (3) topics, 50% believes this occurs 100-85% of the time and 50% believes it happens 84-70% of the time. 100% of VR staff thinks that the client and VR staff have input on major decisions 100-85% of the time. The two split on the percentage of clients that allow employer contact. 50% thinks 100-85% of clients allow it while the other 50% believes 84-70% permit it. The same view was held on question eight (8) which refers to the development of a retention plan.

Questions nine (9) through fourteen (14) focus on collaboration and communication, the quality of information provided by CA, the timeliness of the information and services, CA's use of respect, the ability to answer questions and knowledge of the system and process. The questions on collaboration and on the quality of information were split. 50% rate the satisfaction as good and 50% rate their satisfaction as good. 50% rate the timeliness of information and services as very good and 50% rate it as fair. 50% rates CA's use of respect with everyone as excellent and the other 50% sees it as very good.

50% rate CA staff's ability to answer questions as excellent and the other 50% rates it fair. CA staff's knowledge of the system and process is rated very good and good. There were no comments on this survey.

PROGRESS TOWARDS GOAL (2012-2013)

1 st Quarter	Program	Goal	Success	Un-Successful	Averages Hours	Average Wages	Rehab Rate
	WORKSOURCE	62	22	8	28.6	\$9.08	73.33%

2 nd Quarter	Program	Goal	Success	Un-Successful	Averages Hours	Average Wages	Rehab Rate
	WORKSOURCE	62	17	9	24.5	\$9.81	65.38%

3 rd Quarter	Program	Goal	Success	Un-Successful	Averages Hours	Average Wages	Rehab Rate
	WORKSOURCE	62					

Program	Progress	Goal	Success	Un-Successful	Averages Hours	Average Wages	Rehab Rate
	WORKSOURCE	62					

RECOMMENDATIONS

Community Alliance is on target to meet their goals this year. Changes have been made to improve communication between VR and CA. There are regular staff meetings to discuss progress of clients. It is recommended that if a case is not making progress after six months that it be reviewed with the VR specialist and the client to develop an action plan. It is also recommended that CA and VR develop a referral process that

includes the necessary documentation that will help the CA Employment Training Specialist focus on employment immediately. VR should submit any assessment, any work history information, notebook if used and benefits orientation information. VR should refer every Social Security recipient to the benefits orientation specialist and this information is part of the referral process. It is recommended that all three (3) VR teams utilize the same referral system.

The development of the referral form and the stabilization form is a step forward. It is suggested that statewide standardization on the necessary documentation be developed and utilized by WorkSource as VR and DBH move to a different funding model.