

Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services

**Overcoming Challenges:
Gathering Documentation During Street
Outreach**

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Objectives

- GCBHS/PATH Program Demographics
- Rick Video
- Engagement Techniques for Difficult Population
- Tracking Methods/Collaborations
- HMIS Use/Reports



Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services

- Community Mental Health Agency
- Founded in 1971
- Recent Merger with CRC and Lifepoint Solutions
- More than 500 employees
- Serves approximately 14,000 individuals per year
- Services offered:
 - Psychiatric
 - Case Management
 - Specialized Case Management (Homeless, Court)
 - Counseling
 - Vocational
 - Day Program
 - Residential
 - Substance Abuse Services since the merger



What is PATH?

Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness

- Federal Program - Stewart B McKinney Act 1987
 - First and only major legislative response to homelessness
 - Focus on Homeless Outreach
 - The goal of PATH is to engage homeless individuals who are mentally ill or dually diagnosed and connect them with mental health, substance abuse, housing, benefits, and other needed services



Hamilton County PATH Program

- Eligible individuals are homeless, are believed to have a mental illness and are not in mental health services.
- PATH workers assist clients in scheduling and attending a mental health or substance abuse assessment and then getting to the intake at the assigned agency



Hamilton County PATH Staff

- Mental Health Director
- PATH Team Supervisor
- 3 Outreach Workers
- Veteran Specialist
- Substances Specialist
- Peer Worker



Hamilton County PATH Data

- **HMIS Homeless Documentation**
 - Homeless Certificates/Finding Chronic Population
- 7858 Unduplicated Homeless Individuals in Shelters/ Streets (From PIT Count)—1229 living outside or place not meant for human habitation
- Over 58% of Homeless Individuals on the Street self report having Mental Illness



Hamilton County PATH Data

- 73% Adults
- 27% Children
- 8% Unaccompanied youth
- 8% Adults with children
- Disproportionately African American (67%)
- Adult Males (44%)
- 1% Hispanic Population
- Largest age groups are 25-34 and 45-54 (36%)

Rick's Story



Engagement Techniques

Engagement & Outreach

- Building relationships is critical with the homeless population
- Finding out what they see as their need/engagement tools
- Offering services and support based on their perceived needs



Engagement Techniques

Good Faith Assessments

- Where have you been sleeping?
- How long have you been there?
- How did you get to be homeless?
- Past Diagnosis, treatment, medications
- Consider histories of trauma/perceptions of others
- Visible Mental Health symptoms



Interaction Tips

- Consider likelihood of SA and/or MI
- Consider histories: trauma/perception of authority
- Tell them your name/purpose and why you are out engaging with homeless population
- Leave safe distance/no sudden movements
- Do not contradict delusions/hallucinations



Interaction Tips

- Lead off with no-threatening topics/small talk
- Find out what is important to them
- Build relationship, casual approach...avoid technical language
- Homeless population will do things according to their own timeframes/priorities...BE FLEXIBLE!!



Interaction Tips

- Appointments are challenging...especially if they are made a long time in advance
- Priorities and preferences are often not consistent with helping professionals' priorities
- Roll with and/or redirect delusional material
- Back off if the conversation is not going well, shift to non-threatening topics



Outreach Supplies



- Outreach supplies typically include socks, t-shirts, underwear, food, water, blankets, hygiene items and some clothing items

Outreach and Tracking

- Focus on building trust
- Be consistent/respectful
- Be flexible
- Attention to risk
- Outreach is:
NOT TIME LIMITED



Outreach and Tracking

- In groups for safety (especially going into camps)
- Daily at different times during the day
- In marked Outreach Van or Vehicle
- Wear identifiable clothing: hats, jackets, t-shirts, backpacks, etc
- Use of “Engagement Tools”



Outreach and Tracking

- Track the homeless camps in the county for regular outreach
- Section the county in quadrants for tracking
- Monthly Outreach Calendar
- Quarterly Unofficial Homeless Counts
- Camp Lists
- Call In Logs



Collaborations

- Local Police/Sherriff's Office/Jails
- ODOT
- Local Psychiatric Hospitals
- Shelters/Food Pantries
- Other area Outreach Programs
- CoC Workgroups



Documentation/HMIS

- Collection of data from 1st contact, unidentified (if necessary)
- Uses “un-duplication/record merge” as a person’s record is built.
- Implemented “Street Pop” to allow all street outreach programs to share data
- Use of “Homeless Certificate” to identify literally homeless population



Documentation/HMIS

- Street homeless not auto-exited due to transient population
- Separate programs to identify literally homeless/at risk homeless
- Ability to record Alias, Street Name, or Nickname
- Update client record as relationship evolves




