Understand, Prepare, React: Preparing Your Program
Bela Koe-Krompecher LISW-S, LICDC

History of housing and the downtown YMCA
- The Columbus Downtown was created to house low-income males, providing a safe, affordable and clean environment that provided housing, food, social activities and employment.
- The YMCA has 400 single-room-occupancy (SRO), we are the largest SRO with PSH housing in the country.
- The rooms are split among a variety of programs, including PSH (roughly 133 rooms), Returning Home Ohio (RHO, 23 rooms), Alvis House (100 rooms) and regular residents who pay market rent.
- The YMCA has traditionally been an abstinence only building until 2016.

Downtown YMCA and Harm Reduction
- 40 West Long Street
- Programming and harm reduction
  - Transitioning from an abstinence only model to harm reduction has been difficult for both staff and residents.
  - We have been mostly hiring social workers through staff attrition
  - We ask about harm reduction philosophy as a part of our interviewing process
  - (Poll question: do you know what harm reduction is?)
Permanent Supportive Housing Program and Harm Reduction

- We have 30-40 new clients a year in our PSH program serving nearly 180 clients annually.
- All PSH clients have a disability with the primary being addiction, the majority are dually diagnosed.
- Our average age is 40 while regular non-resident participants trend a little older.
- Thus, our residents come into the building with an extensive history of addiction and substance abuse.
- We are in the process of collecting data on our residents to better provide services.

Harm Reduction and Housing First, goals for PSH

- "The model is best characterized as a constellation of interventions and approaches offering a full continuum of services, from abstinence to minimal exposure, in which the emphasis is on small achievable steps toward harm reduction and recovery. " (Mancini, 2008, Denning, 2001)
- "Practitioners utilize assertive outreach and engagement and motivational strategies such as education, resource allocation and client support to minimize the primary and secondary harmful effects of alcohol and drug use (overdoses), spread of infectious diseases, victimization, criminal activity, homelessness and violence." (Mancini, 2008)

Poll question: What are the biggest barriers in helping your residents? 1) ongoing substance abuse 2) lack of health care 3) staff training 4) mental health 5) all of the above 6) other (comments)

Harm Reduction and Housing First, goals for PSH

- Small Achievable Steps: This approach fits into the Stages of Change model.
- Assertive outreach is critical.
- Staff contact residents twice a week, utilizing a white board to discuss Tenants of Concern(TOC) that are tracked on an excel sheet.
- We staff our residents twice a week, utilizing a white board to discuss Tenants of Concern(TOC) that are tracked on an excel sheet.
- TOC - are residents that are at risk of losing housing, have health care issues, active drug users, mental health care issues, legal and elderly or cognitively impaired.
- Interventions strategies are discussed and updated.
- If a resident is at risk of losing housing due to behaviors that violate his lease and or failure to pay rent, we utilize a Housing Retention Plan (HRP).
- The operations team member shares concerns and expectations but does not provide clinical input.
Harm Reduction and Housing First, PSH Housing--Interventions

- Every resident is provided educational literature about Harm Reduction.
- Residents must sign a form stating they are moving into a Harm Reduction facility.
- All staff undergo Harm Reduction training.
  - All Clinical staff have more extensive HR training.
- Consistent interaction is the most meaningful method of building rapport.
- Frequency of interactions (intervention) between case manager and client improve outcomes (Hawkins, 2017).
- The VA IDDT model suggests two visits per month for dual-diagnosed clients (Portner, 2015).
- YMCA clinical staff are available six days a week and have late night hours.
- YMCA operations staff are available 24 hours a day and provide shift reports to both operations and clinical staff to help assist clients.
- Linkage to mental health, substance use disorder (SUD) treatment are paramount for staff and clients.
- Clients are also encouraged to take part in residential housing groups such as the Resident Advisory Board which meets to provide feedback and ideas for programs and housing.
- Utilization of community programs to help reduce overdose and risk factors.
- The YMCA conducts several public Naloxone trainings with the partnership of the Columbus Health Department, staff are required to attend and residents are encouraged. Naloxone is distributed after these trainings.
- Residents and staff are made aware of Naloxone at the front desk.
- Residents who overdose are met by staff and encouraged to discuss treatment options.
- Partnership with Maryhaven Crisis Stabilization Unit to do direct referrals for clients who are struggling with opioid.
- Clients are encouraged to utilize Safepoint which is the Franklin County Syringe exchange, offering IVY & Hepatitis C testing, wound care, safe sex materials and support.
Harm Reduction and Housing First, PSH Housing--Interventions

- Educating residents and staff on rising drug overdoses
- The Columbus Health Department and Coroner’s Office will release health emergencies when there is an uptick in overdoses; post these warnings for our residents
- Helping staff and residents know what types of drugs look like
  - Fentanyl has a different color than heroin. Fentanyl and Carfentanyl tend to be snowy/shiny white and when cooked it can appear to have a yellow hue, clear or if combined with other substances it can be cloudy— if it is cloudy it is highly dangerous. Heroin will tend to look like iced tea or have a darker color when cooked.
- Best practice for safety: users should toot (snort) a small amount before use, do a slow shot or use with someone they know to test first. Test strips are the most effective way of identification, if users are still going to use please recommend that they use some of the safety tips. Test strips are available for free in Columbus at all Waterbeds n Stuff. The person just needs to ask for some, I will try to obtain some for the YMCA and shelter.
- While many users utilize the same dealers, the marketplace can change within the hour—it is highly volatile, so the recommendation is to test before use.
- Because of the cross-pollination of drugs, overdoses are getting more severe, some resulting in paralysis, which can mean that naloxone is not effective since the victim can not breathe in the medication. When this happens, the first responder should cover the mouth with one hand and blow hard into the nostrils, this usually pushes the naloxone into the nasal cavity. It is important to quickly step back as revival could be instantaneous.

References:


Contact and other sources

- Beala Koe-Krompecher LISW-S, LICDC. beala.koe-krompecher@ymcacolumbus.org
  cell: 614-260-2366

- Harm Reduction Coalition https://harmreduction.org/
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) https://www.samhsa.gov/