

# Mobile Community Mental Health Teams

At Community Services of Stark  
County

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# Background of Research

- Community mental health care
  - Priority since deinstitutionalization
- Many clients lost in the transition
  - More intensive approach needed
- New model known by many names:
  - Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)
  - Program of Assertive Community Treatment (PACT)
  - Mobile Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs)
  - Mobile Crisis Teams

# Literature Review

- Focuses on:
  - Severe and persistent mental illness
  - Reducing hospitalization
  - Crisis intervention
  - Characteristics of effective CMHTs

# Brief Background of the Model

- Long tradition of community care in social work
- Varying periods of emphasis
- Time of renewed emphasis currently
  - Seeing limitations of deinstitutionalization transfer
  - Work to empower clients to lead productive, integrated lives in the community

# ACT/PACT

- Interdisciplinary Team of Professionals
- Providing services *in vivo*
- Intensive care with no time restrictions
- Often used for crisis intervention

# Personal Characteristics

- Background in social/human services helpful, but not necessary
- Genuine concern for clients
- Innovativeness
- Flexibility
- Open, non-judgmental attitude

# Coordination of Care

- Team assumes joint responsibility for client
- Team provides services rather than brokering for other agencies
- Team works together to create, implement, and evaluate treatment plans

# Strengths & Challenges

- Barriers to effectiveness:
  - Burnout
    - Lack of resources
    - Workload
    - Bureaucracy
    - Blame-culture in suicide & homicide
  - Differing opinions
  - Communication issues

# Barriers (cont'd)

- Leadership styles
- Poor screening
- Maintenance of chronic cases

# Overcoming Barriers

- Promote open communication
- Work to secure adequate resources by conducting needs-assessments
- Allow for collaboration, but have a team leader who can make ultimate decisions
- Provide inter-disciplinary training so members can speak the others' languages

# Teams vs. Clinical Model

- Overall, teams work better:
  - Intensive
  - Supportive
  - Engaging
  - Well-functioning
  - Avoid expensive hospitalizations

# Improved Outcomes

- Use of inpatient services
- Quality of life
- Independent living
- Substance abuse (when included)
- Competitive or supported employment (when included)
- Consumer & Family member satisfaction
- Hospitalizations

# Methodology

- Population
  - All professional staff of Community Services of Stark County (CSSC)
- Sample
  - Those who completed and returned survey
- Measurement
  - Qualitative analysis of survey

# Methodology (Cont'd)

- Survey
  - 55 sent to site supervisors for distribution
  - General demographics
  - Coordination of care
  - Comparative efficacy
  - Personal characteristics
  - Influence of educational background
  - Strengths, challenges, suggestions
  - Willingness to participate

# Methodology (Cont'd)

- Explanation of Research
  - Brief background of model
  - Example of team
  - Informed consent
  - No penalty for non-participation
- Data Collection
  - Tally of objective responses
  - Qualitative analysis & grouping of subjective responses

# Results

- 11 out of 55 surveys returned
- 9 Female, 2 Male
- 7 of 11 had 11+ years of experience
- 5 Case Managers, 6 Counselors, 0 MedSom
- Mostly human services & social sciences
  - 1 Art Education & 1 Associates in Business

# Coordination of Care

- 9 Yes
- 1 No
- 1 No Response
- Emerging themes:
  - Team approach allows members to discuss cases more consistently
  - Observation of home environment critical to diagnosis & treatment

# Comparative Efficacy

- 8 Higher
- 1 Similar
- 2 No Response
- Emerging themes:
  - Helpful to observe environment
  - More responsive treatment given through better coordination of care
- Cautions:
  - Duplication of services
  - Not appropriate for every client

# Personal Characteristics

- Flexibility
- Crisis intervention skills
- Knowledge of resources
- Team player attitude
- Cultural competence
- High energy levels
- Being calm, patient
- Maintain dignity & worth of client even in view of differing values

# Educational Background

- 5 saw an influence
- Dichotomy between social workers & counselors
- Referenced:
  - Systems theory
  - Team teaching
  - Person-in-environment

# Strengths

- Seeing reality of client environment
- Sharing information & ideas
- Shorter, intensive treatment
- Decrease time on caseload
- Increase coordination of care

# Challenges

- Billing issues
  - 6 mentions
  - Medicaid Reimbursable service in some cases
  - Remove barriers, prove cost effective due to increased outcomes in decreased time
- Distractions of unpredictable environment
- Confidentiality
- Losing focus on individual and emotional needs

# Suggestions for Overcoming Challenges

- Meet to coordinate schedules
- Provide in-depth training
- Find examples in other communities
- Selective process

# Willingness to Participate

- 9 Yes
- 1 No
- 1 Maybe
  - Depending on goals of program
  - Should be in addition to current services
- Why?
  - Increase quality of care
  - Benefit overall treatment

# Coordinating the Agency & the Research

- CSSC provides services to persons with severe & persistent mental illness
- Structure of CSSC would translate well into the mobile model
- New services should be an addition, not replacement
- Voluntary professional participation
- Case by case basis

# Limitations

- Survey:
  - Did not ask about past work experience
  - No neutral response option
  - Small sample size
- Explanation of Research:
  - Only one example
  - Did not include MedSom in example

# Areas for Further Research

- Pilot program with one team and a few clients
- Find more information regarding Medicaid Reimbursable mobile services
- Explore partnering with state mental health board
- Include MedSom staff in the model by surveying them again

# Conclusion

- High efficacy:
  - Appropriate clients
  - Effective teams
- Answers responsibility to evidence-based practice
- Given current structure of CSSC & views of staff members, this approach should be considered more fully by the agency

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