



From Patient to Professional:

THE CHALLENGES AND ADVANTAGES OF HIRING FROM WITHIN TO END THE
EPIDEMIC

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Goals of this Workshop



- ▶ Understand the benefits and challenges of hiring from within your client population
- ▶ Understand the benefits and challenges for staff of working with clients who have a similar experience
- ▶ Learn skills for identifying and addressing these issues from an administrative perspective
- ▶ Hear about how GMHC has responded to these needs
- ▶ Learn how we can continue to support our clients after they have taken on roles on our staff

GMHC and Hiring from Within

- ▶ The Denver Principles
 - ▶ Drafted at a 1982 conference of AIDS activists in Denver
 - ▶ Advocated for supporting individuals with AIDS and not treating them as victims or patients
 - ▶ “Be involved at every level of decision-making and specifically serve on the boards of directors of provider organizations.”
- ▶ How does GMHC support the Denver Principles?
 - ▶ Consumer Advisory Board
 - ▶ Representation on the Board of Directors
 - ▶ Active efforts to employ current or former clients
 - ▶ Workforce Development- linkage to HR and hiring managers

Having clients as staff members- Benefits

- ▶ The staff member has a firm understanding of the population they serve and the needs of that population
- ▶ Often serving your own population can engender increased passion and dedication to the work
- ▶ Current clients can look to these employees as inspirations; facilitation of the installation of hope
- ▶ Current clients will feel confidence in your organization's support of the population

Having clients as staff members- Challenges

- ▶ Employees often lack professional experience while having a lot of lived experience
 - ▶ This can lead to a learning curve about professionalism/boundaries
- ▶ Overidentification with the clients they are serving
- ▶ High potential for burnout
 - ▶ These employees may often “take their work home with them”, blurring the lines between professional and personal
 - ▶ Clients may experience vicarious trauma more readily if they share similar histories. Many will not have the training and/or supervision to properly cope

What GMHC has done

- ▶ HR-driven Dual Role Training
 - ▶ Clients interested in a position within the agency are informed of how taking on a paid position could potentially impact their benefits
 - ▶ All clients who choose to transition to staff roles take a mandatory set of trainings pertaining to the changes in their responsibilities upon taking a professional position
 - ▶ Clients review how their standing in the agency will change now that they are an employee
 - ▶ Professional boundaries around interactions with their peers
 - ▶ Expectations about receipt of services from the agency (90 day transition window)
 - ▶ Recognition of agency expectation around behaviors
 - ▶ Becoming employed can be considered a treatment issue
 - ▶ Individuals aren't hired because they are clients, they are hired for their skills!

Assisting client-staff after training



- ▶ All agency staff should have an awareness of the challenges that clients who transition to employees may face to ensure empathy and ongoing support
- ▶ Whenever possible, clinical supervision should be provided regularly to assist the individual with the transition
 - ▶ If supervision is not available, administrators should make efforts to provide staff with ongoing training around the aforementioned challenging areas
- ▶ Expect that maintaining consistency in this area may present ongoing challenges, be prepared to offer support long after training concludes

Questions??

