

OTA Workforce Development Curriculum For Direct Care Human Services Workers: Core Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes

(Adult Settings)

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Human service professionals in the mental health field bring a broad variety of discipline-specific and personal/educational experiences. Each member of a mental health discipline or specific job title comes to the field with their own knowledge, skills and attitudes about customers and specific responsibilities. Performance competencies starts with a shared understanding of certain core knowledge and attitudes about serious mental illness and serious emotional disturbance that spans the differences seen in any one discipline or job title. Currently the public mental health field has not defined or standardized this “shared understanding” into expected knowledge, skills, and attitudes that, together, can work to assure observable and measurable competencies and outcomes. Driven by the call to transform the mental health system, this work is of high priority for providers, policymakers, customers, and family members. Because the mental health field is in a state of change it may be necessary to train and educate the workforce not only on the vision, values, and practices of the “new” mental health professional, but also to provide information and comparisons to the current system so that workers will be able to self-correct their own practices.

Trans-Disciplinary Competencies:

Trans-disciplinary competencies are those that provide the foundation for all mental health professionals and serve as pre-requisites to the development of specialized competencies specific to certain disciplines or job categories. Each one of the following competency categories are broken down into smaller, more precise subcategories and also include specific, observable behavioral outcomes. For the adult mental health direct care workforce these transdisciplinary competencies will be classified under:

- A. Understanding Mental Health Conditions
- B. Introduction to the Recovery Process
- C. Recovery Concepts in Practice
- D. Ethics and Professional Practice Dimensions

Workforce Development Curriculum (continued)

The curriculum will focus on primary practices important for all staff. Modules include:

- A. Screening, Assessment & Orientation to Services
- B. Person-Driven Treatment Planning
- C. Levels of Care and Service Coordination
- D. Role of Peers, Families, & Advocates
- E. Counseling and Communication Strategies
- F. Evidence-Based Practices
- G. Medication Uses & Practices
- H. Understanding Trauma Informed Care
- I. Documentation Specifics and Guidelines
- J. Shared Decision Making
- K. Medical/Physical Health Issues and Risk Factors
- L. Discrimination, Stigma, and Language
- M. Special Populations
 - Deaf and HOH
 - Older Persons
 - Substance Users
 - Intellectual Disabilities
 - Others not yet noted

This curriculum is based on work by the public addictions service system in developing and implementing their standardized certification programs since the early 1990's, and also on core-competencies found in the mental health literature, including the Institute of Medicine's reports, documents on the Annapolis Coalition website, NASMHPD and OTA documents, and a review of the mental health workforce literature. Combined these documents provide a training structure for the adult mental health workforce.

The training will be provided in a 2-3 day curricula that may also be divided into separate modules that can be presented alone. Each module will be between 30 minutes to one hour and include objectives, references, handouts, a post-test, and exercises, if applicable. A train-the-trainer model is recommended to better spread this information to the largest possible number of staff in a state. Complete copies of each module PowerPoint and instructor notes will also be provided at the end of each training.

A NASMHPD/OTA Expert's Meeting will review the curriculum draft in 2008.

**** *The curriculum will be available, in draft, in the early fall of 2008*****

Please contact kevin.huckshorn@nasmhpd.org with any questions.

