

How to Engage All Staff

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Several months ago a number of minor incidents occurred between dietary staff and patients on the pavilions which raised concerns. On our thirteen building campus, meals are prepared in a central kitchen and transported to the pavilions where patients are provided therapeutic services. Dietary support service workers who deliver meals directly to patients expressed frustration in not knowing how to relate/respond in a potential conflict and feared “setting patients off.” Housekeeping staff voiced similar concerns. Dietary support service workers requested information and guidance on communication and common interactions with patients. Only the most elementary training is provided to support service workers regarding mental health challenges, symptoms and how those symptoms might be displayed and most importantly verbal interventions that would be helpful in avoiding crisis and should they occur, recommended responses.

On discussion clerical workers, crafts/tradesmen, business office staff etc. voiced interest in learning what to say and how to say it when a patient’s behavior escalates. In response a series of four hour long customer services training modules were develop with a focus on the consumer. The training reviewed deescalation techniques addressing verbal interventions and in order to enhance understanding of the goals of treatment, recovery. To administration’s surprise the training was well received responding to support staff’s interest and concern regarding patients we serve.