

Positive Psychology Peer Led Programs

Waterbury Hospital Infectious Disease Clinic

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Positive Psychology Peer Led Programs

Introduction

- ❑ PLWHA usually do not have the opportunity to identify skills and resources to live productive lives.
 - ❑ This may result in substance abuse and mental illness disorders
 - ❑ Now that HIV has become a chronic illness, people are striving to learn how to develop a positive life.
 - ❑ Positive Psychology is an evidence-based program based at the University of Pennsylvania authored by Martin Seligman PhD.
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Positive Psychology Peer Led Programs

Introduction (2)

- ❑ Provides direction for meaningful, productive lives by learning appropriate skills focusing on positive emotions, building environmental mastery, personal growth, life purpose, autonomy, self acceptance, and positive relationships with others.
 - ❑ Positive programs are an antidote to substance abuse and depression, anxiety and other mental illness issues.
 - ❑ Our clinic has developed an innovative program utilizing peers, using this positive psychology program.
 - ❑ Programs include a Self-Awareness Course, Photography Group, and Movies for Life's Lessons.
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Positive Psychology Peer Led Programs

Purpose

- ❑ To teach successful life skills through the clinic's positive programs
 - ❑ To enjoy a pleasant life including satisfaction, contentment, fulfillment, pride, gratitude, hope, and optimism.
 - ❑ To enjoy a life that pursues engagement, involvement, and absorption in activities and relationships.
 - ❑ To create a sense of flow; a person becomes so absorbed in the task that one loses all sense of time.
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Positive Psychology

Peer Led Programs

Purpose (2)

- ❑ Enhance engagement to help person find their highest talents and strengths and the opportunities to use these strengths
 - ❑ Meaningful life by serving something that is bigger than one's self
 - ❑ Giving instead of taking
 - ❑ Volunteering
 - ❑ Transform unfortunate circumstances into fortunate ones
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Positive Psychology Peer Led Programs

Project Rationale

- ❑ Now that HIV /AIDS has become a chronic illness, PLWHA have hope for a long life
 - ❑ Previously there was little concern for the future
 - ❑ Many felt hopeless and helpless with no long term goals and plans
 - ❑ Life skills were needed for people to maximize involvement with life
 - ❑ Life is more than just about focusing on suffering
 - ❑ A focus needs to be on what is enjoyable, pleasurable and healthy
 - ❑ Early influences on Positive Psychology include Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers
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Positive Psychology

Peer Led Programs

Project Rationale (2)

- ❑ Belief that human beings strive toward a level of functioning that transcends mere satisfaction of physical needs.
 - ❑ Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Once basic needs are met, a person can focus on higher level ones (Self Actualization). Focus on one's talents and aspirations.
 - ❑ Rogers focused on allowing a person to grow fully when blocks are removed from suppressing this growth.
 - ❑ One needs to develop positive thoughts and attitudes. Being optimistic creates a positive outlook on life.
 - ❑ Positive thinking produces positive feelings which results in satisfying behaviors
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Positive Psychology Peer Led Programs

Project Description

1. ***Empowerment Through Self Awareness Course***

- Through a design of combining educational material, experiential exercise and discussion, participants learn about their own personality
 - Exercises and discussion relate the material to their own issues.
 - Once self awareness is developed, the opportunity to make changes—setting new goals and plans becomes an option.
 - The Course is 10 weeks long, each week having a different psychosocial topic.
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Program Description (2)

1. Empowerment Through Self Awareness Course

Session Topics

1. Needs, Wants and Drives
 2. Stress Management
 3. Thought & Feelings - How They Affect Behavior
 4. Communication
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Program Description (3)

- 5. Relationships
 - 6. Loss & Change
 - 7. Developing Empowerment: Self-Esteem, Judgment, Competence.
 - 8. Life Coping Strategies
 - 9. Wellness
 - 10. Life Planning
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Psychology

Peer Led Programs

1. Empowerment Through Self Awareness Course

Program Description (3)

- Homework to reinforce sessions
 - Exercises and other experiential tasks.
 - Lunch provided
 - Graduation ceremony with framed certificate.
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Project Referral

1. Empowerment Through Self Awareness Course

- Open to all clinic patients. No restrictions
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Project Description (1)

2. Hospital Photography Group

- Interested people experience a 4-6 week trial to determine if they are serious.
 - Expected to participate in activities.
 - At end of the trial period, person commits to contract and receives a digital camera.
 - Weekly meetings to plan, develop and implement programs.
 - Peer-run program. Group elects officers who consult with staff involved. Joint decision making.
 - Photo editing offered with Photoshop Elements.
 - Selected pictures printed and framed
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Project Description (2)

2. Hospital Photography Project

Projects include:

- Field trips to State parks, Boston, local photo shoots.
 - Hospital Fund Raiser and Golf tournament
 - Clinic Christmas card
 - Exhibits in the hospital, local library, Barnes & Noble
 - National Disabilities Art Show
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Project Description (3)

2. Hospital Photography Project

- ❑ Four members were in the top 40 winners out of 1500 entries in the National HIV /AIDS photo contest sponsored by Bristol Myers Squibb
- ❑ AIDS Walkathon New Haven
- ❑ AIDS Legislative Day Hartford
- ❑ Homeless Shelter Project
- ❑ AIDS Statewide Planning Group (CHPS)

Positive Psychology Peer Led Programs

- Outcomes:
 - **2. *Hospital Photography Project***
 - 1. Psychosocial Outcomes: Life Skills Learned
 - Positive Attitude
 - Desire / Ambition
 - Persistence
 - Specialized Knowledge
 - Creativity
 - Imagination
 - Purpose / Goals
 - Self-Discipline
 - Achieving Excellence
 - Team Work
 - Volunteering
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Project Description (1)

3. Movies for Life's Lessons

- Peer initiated, planned, developed and implemented
 - Motivational, inspirational, and educational movies are selected to view and discuss.
 - Peer leader develops a set of discussion questions
 - Discussion involves relating movie issues to life situations
 - Insight gained by observing how movie characters handle life issues.
 - Modeling of characters behavior teaches coping skills.
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Outcomes

- Retention in care
 - Adherence to HAART
 - SAMISS score
 - Recidivism (staying out of jail)
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Outcomes

Retention in care

- Of 10 participants, all are in Primary HIV medical care.
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Positive Psychology Peer Led Programs

Outcomes

Adherence to HAART

- ❑ Of 10 participants 9 are compliant with HAART.
 - ❑ One is not eligible for HAART (high T-cells)
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Outcomes (10 participants)

Substance Abuse / Mental Illness Screen
(SAMISS) scores

- 8 are substance free
 - 2 referred to a higher level of care
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Outcomes

Recidivism (staying out of jail)

- Six have been in jail or prison previously.
 - None have returned since participating in the programs.
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Lessons Learned

- Positive Mental Health Programs:
 - Assist patients to use time constructively.
 - Increase feeling of self-esteem, confidence, self-acceptance and competence.
 - Develop constructive relationships with others
 - Discover creative talents
 - Realize a joyful life
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Positive Psychology Peer Led Programs

Peer Involvement

- ❑ Integrates the staff with trained Peer Advocate
 - ❑ Selected and trained as peer counselor to help consumers with support, links to staff and resources
 - ❑ Advocates for consumers in community meetings
 - ❑ Relates to consumers by understanding what they are experiencing
 - ❑ Assists in leading the Photography group as one of the officers
 - ❑ Presented initial idea for *Movies for Life's Lessons*
 - ❑ Planned, developed and implemented the program
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Positive Psychology Peer Led Programs

Participant Feedback:

Leonard

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Literature Resources

Handouts
