

Community Management of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Who Have Sexual Behavior Problems

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Identifying roles of collaborating team members is important in order to avoid confusion and conflict. Planning the process of cross-agency information management and role implementation strategies are defined in the form of an official written protocol, with a mission statement and confidentiality policy statement established before starting services. In most situations, the regional case management agencies for those with developmental disabilities will need to take the lead in forming such a team. While others, such as probation departments or parole offices, could provide the needed leadership, it is best done by an agency commissioned to work with/for those with developmental disabilities in order to have the focus of the team be specialized care for those with developmental disabilities. Also, not all persons with developmental disabilities who have sexual behavior problems will be on probation or parole. Regional case management agencies for the developmentally disabled are also able to bring together several community players whom others may have more difficulty accessing including client rights advocates and attorneys specializing in issues related to the developmentally disabled.

Cross training between community partner agencies is one way to increase effectiveness of the collaborative effort. As an example, social workers or service coordinators and care home staff will need additional training to understand the nature of relapse prevention and sexual offender specific treatment. On the other hand, therapists will need additional training regarding the role of the service coordinator, client rights advocate, and residential care program staff. Care home staff will need additional training to understand the technicalities of a client's probation terms and personal Danger Zones. Probation officers need additional specific training to increase their understanding of people with developmental disabilities.

One of the benefits of the collaborative partnership is that the responsibility of community safety and supervision becomes a shared responsibility. Another benefit is that there can be increased integration of the relapse prevention concepts across settings and the milieu environment. This is consistent with the literature supporting positive programming for persons with developmental disabilities (LaVigna et al, 1989). In these environments, the collaborative efforts enhance the social learning process.

Most of the roles of the various community partners will be easy to define. Service coordinators who represent the regional referring agency will function as a case manager and fill a key role as the ultimate conduit for information flow. Residential care program administrators and staff are responsible for the day-to-day care and activities of each client. Day program and job coaches are responsible for the structuring of daily activities, practical skills development and enhancing social skills in various opportune situations. Treatment providers are responsible for assessing, diagnosing and treating the mental health as well as sexual offense issues of each client, and often serve as consultants to the various residential and day programs. Probation officers and parole agents play a key role by supporting the clients who are enrolled in such programs, and holding the clients responsible and accountable for compliance with court orders or other legal obligations.

Excerpt from Blasingame, G. (2001). Developmentally Disabled Persons with Sexual Behavior Problems. Wood N Barnes Books, OK City, OK. 1-800-678-0621.

References available by request to gblasingame@ndth.org