Gay Men Utilize Services in a Welcoming Environment

Ryan White Grantee Meeting
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FIRST IN THE FIGHT AGAINST AIDS
GMHC
GAY MEN'S HEALTH CRISIS

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Our Mission

Gay Men's Health Crisis offers a range of Services to all HIV impacted populations. An element of our Mission statement states that "we will remain true to our heritage by fighting homophobia and affirming the individual dignity of all gay men and lesbians." As such we have an historic and ongoing commitment to providing services in a manner and environment which affirms gay men.

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Presentation Overview

- **Programmatic and environmental factors which affirm gay men and lead to service utilization.**
- **Specific service programs as examples of programs which are well utilized and appreciated by gay men.**
- **Discussion of overall recommendations of factors to facilitate and encourage service utilization by gay men.**

Mental Health Services

Team 119- Mental Health Services for HIV+ client at GMHC

- The mental health department offers the following services: 1:1 mental health and substance abuse counseling, couples counseling, and group counseling including mental health and substance use groups.
- 20-60 year old gay men
- Presenting issues include: depression, anxiety, compulsive sexual behavior, disclosure, issues around being newly diagnosed, sexual identity issues, self esteem, body image
- Substance use: alcohol, cocaine, crystal meth use
- Current program enrollment: approximately 100 clients

Substance Use Counseling & Education (SUCE)

- SUCE offers free and confidential services, such as one-on-one and group counseling to HIV positive and negative gay and bisexual men who use alcohol and drugs.
- SUCE services offer a supportive environment for individuals to identify goals in order to change their drug use and understand its relationship to their sexual behaviors and HIV risk.
- SUCE also offers 10-week psycho-educational group, which provides a safe place for participants to explore their drug use and how it relates to their sexual behaviors.

Legal Services

- Immigration
  - About 1/3 immigration cases, mostly gay men living with HIV/AIDS seeking green card, sometimes asylum
  - Asylum cases mostly involve persecution of gay HIV+ men
- Family law
- Estate planning
  - (wills, health care proxies, domestic partnerships, powers of attorney)
- Landlord-Tenant
  - A significant number of succession cases, involving right of surviving partner to remain in apartment
- Legal department was the technical advisor for the Gay Games and High Level Meetings on AIDS at the UN

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Legal Services

- Bankruptcy
- Employment discrimination
- Debtor-creditor
- Benefits
- HIV breaches of confidentiality
- HIV-based discrimination
  - E.g.: Dentist refuses to provide services to HIV+ man

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Work Force Development MATCH

Moving Ahead Toward Career Horizons

- **The mission of the MATCH Program is to encourage and assist men and women in their efforts to succeed in the workforce. We offer comprehensive vocational assessment, training, job placement assistance and retention services to insure successful transition to work. With enhanced skill, self esteem and confidence built by the program, participants are motivated to attain employment and achieve greater financial independence and autonomy.**

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Work Force Development MATCH

Moving Ahead Toward Career Horizons

- **Job Readiness Services Offered**
- Basic job readiness services
  - Resume writing
  - Interview techniques
  - Confidence building
  - Financial education
- 20 Week Focused Learning Microsoft Office Training Program
  - Certification in Office Software Technician
  - Certification in Desktop Software Technician
- 24 Station State-of-the-Art Computer Lab complete with self-guided inter-active curriculums

Work Force Development MATCH

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Moving Ahead Toward Career Horizons

- **Additional Service Offered**
- Comprehensive GED Program with over 150 participants
- Power Suited at MATCH: Our program's in-house clothing closet for business attire for men and women
- Employment Retention Services:
  - **EarnMore** which offers clients who are employed more than six months:
    - Vocational training
    - Educational services
    - Job placement services for upgraded employment
  - **EarnBenefits** which offers low wage workers the following benefits:
    - Transitional Medicare and Health/Life Insurance
    - Help with Heating and Telephone Bills
    - Free Income Tax Preparation and Earned Income Tax Credits

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Meals & Nutrition Program

- **The Meals Program**
  - 96,000 Meals Served Annually
  - Lunch Served Monday-Thursday and Dinner on Friday evening
  - Meals are dietetically focused to strengthen client's immune system
- **Nutrition Group Education**
  - Classes are offered six times a month
  - Subjects include:
    - heart, liver and bone health
    - healthy cooking
    - herbal remedies for people living with HIV/AIDS.
  - Group education classes raise awareness about the importance of nutrition and allow clients to share their concerns, challenges and problem solve with other clients.

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Meals & Nutrition Program

- **Individual Nutrition Counseling**
  - All HIV+ clients are eligible to receive free nutrition counseling by Registered Dietitians.
  - Some common counseling topics include:
    - losing, gaining and/or maintaining weight
    - managing medication side effects and co morbidities
    - assessing body composition (muscle stores, fat mass and total body water using Bioelectrical Impedance Analysis (BIA)).

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Meals & Nutrition Program

- **Food Pantry**
- Available for HIV+ clients living < 185% poverty limit and families with legal dependents under the age of 18 years.
- Monthly food packages include
  - fresh produce
  - lean protein
  - whole grains
  - legumes
  - canned fruits and vegetables.
- **Short Term Food Packages**
- Short-term assistance is available with emergency food packages
- Provide approximately three days worth of non-perishable food
- One-time service for all clients

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Wellness Services

Provides clients with recreational and strength building activities that promote both emotional and physical health.

- **Recreational Program**
- Painting class
- Life Drawing class
- Sculpture class
- Hair cuts
- Magic class
- Acting class
- Theater Desk
- Continuing Education Program

Complementary Therapies

- Chiropractic Care
- Yoga/Movement classes
- Ear Point Acupuncture
- Full Body Acupuncture
- Shiatsu/Swedish Massage
- Myofacial Massage
- Meditation and Breathing
- Reiki Group Circle

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Discussion

- **Overall recommendations of factors to facilitate and encourage service utilization by gay men.**

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Thank You

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