

Dimension: Substance Use

Waiting Room Milieu Manager

This Intervention is Linked to the Following Secondary Drivers:

- Ongoing engagement in HIV care ensures clients are comfortable discussing use of substances
- Judgement-free clinic environment using harm-reduction principles
- Strategies to address additional barriers, such as food security, legal support, etc.

Level of Evidence: Good idea worthy of testing

Summary:

Using a Milieu Manager to manage the waiting area, welcome people, help manage the atmosphere of the waiting room, act as liaison between patient and clinic staff, and help people feel comfortable.

Core Components

While there are numerous clinics that use a Milieu Manager or similar position in their waiting rooms, this is not yet a well-defined intervention with well-defined components. In theory, an effective Waiting Room Milieu Manager strategy would include:

- Trained peers are used as Milieu Managers when feasible
- A job description clearly outlining the specific role, duties and tasks of the Milieu Manager
- Milieu Manager role's position as part of the overall clinic team is clearly articulated and understood by all staff
- Specific duties and tasks might include:
 - Welcoming each patient as they enter the clinic, ensuring they understand how to sign-in and answering any immediate questions
 - Helping all first-time patients understand what the first visit will entail and preparing them to see their primary care provider and other members of the care team
 - Assisting patients with answering questions on any requested paperwork/forms
 - Helping administer questionnaires/surveys to better understand patient experiences and improve services (before and/or after visit with primary care provider)
 - Providing educational material, including decision aids in the patient's preferred language
 - Monitoring the environment of the waiting room to help ensure that all patients feel safe and welcome
 - Encouraging patients to write down any questions or items they want to cover with the provider in advance of the visit
 - Acting as a peer health coach
 - Relating the needs of patients to clinic staff
 - Providing patient triage services for other members of the clinic team

- Providing status updates to patients (especially if there has been a long wait)
- Otherwise helping to ensure that the patient feels comfortable and prepared for their visit
- A simple and effective way to track the extent to which the Milieu Manager is:
 - Making clients feel welcomed (patient survey)
 - Preparing clients for their visits (patient survey)
 - Making the visit with the provider(s) more productive (provider survey)

Tips and Tricks:

- There are other potential names for this position, including Waiting Room Concierge and Waiting Room Manager
- Making effective use of a Milieu Manager takes time, testing and refining before going to scale, using continuous improvement methods.
- Ongoing, brief surveys of patients can help you determine if you are on the right track and can provide specific ideas for improvement
- The Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program has successfully used Milieu Managers to make the waiting room (and sometimes some fairly substantial waits to see a provider) more welcoming and comfortable.

Additional Resources (Existing Guides, Case Studies, etc.):

- [Center for Care Innovations: Create a Waiting Room Concierge](#)
- [The Waiting Room “Wait”: From Annoyance to Opportunity](#)
- Boston Health Care for the Homeless - [Sample Job Description for the Milieu Manager](#)

Suggested Measures:

Process Measures

- % of patients who answer with a “yes” to the following question “Did you interact with/talk with a Milieu Manager during your most recent visit to the clinic?”
- % of patients that complete brief survey related to the effectiveness of the Milieu Manager (can be integrated into a large survey)

Outcome Measures

- % of patients that agree or strongly agree that the “[name of clinic] Milieu Manager (or similar) makes me feel comfortable”
 - Overall patient population
 - Segmented by race, gender identity, housing status, substance use status and other relevant sub-populations
- % of patients that agree or strongly agree that the “[name of clinic] Milieu Manager (or similar) makes me feel better prepared for my visit”
 - Overall patient population

- Segmented by race, gender identity, housing status, substance use status and other relevant sub-populations
- % of providers/clinic staff that agree or strongly agree that the “[name of clinic] Milieu Manager (or similar) makes the visit more productive”
- % of patients, regardless of age, with a diagnosis of HIV who had at least two (2) encounters within the 12-month measurement year

Citations and Acknowledgements:

To come as this intervention develops an evidence base.