Finding Substance Abuse Resources for your Community: An interactive online training & toolkit for Washington State

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Substance abuse is a health and social problem of concern to individuals and communities in Washington State. A recent report on drug abuse trends in the Seattle/King County area found that usage rates of illicit substances have continued to increase in our region, as have deaths from heroin overdose, DUIs related to marijuana use, and reports of multi-drug use at treatment intake (particularly the combination of heroin with other substances, like methamphetamine and cocaine) (Banta-Green et al., 2014). At the same time, the Affordable Care Act and other policy changes are increasing the role of primary care and behavioral health providers in the assessment and treatment of addiction.

As substance use disorders (SUDs) continue to impact people in our communities, treatment providers, parent and community organizations, addiction counseling students, and other stakeholders are seeking valid and reliable information about how best to provide support to those who are suffering. The information needs of these groups range from basic education and prevention resources all the way to the need to monitor statistics and trends, provide referrals, prevent overdoses, and learn about evidence-based interventions.

The Alcohol & Drug Abuse Institute Library and Clearinghouse at the University of Washington has a strong focus on the dissemination of current, valid, and reliable research, treatment, and prevention information to communities in our state. While we have developed numerous websites and materials, providing access to specialized information covering everything from drug abuse statistics to current issues like marijuana and opiate overdose, these resources are not always easy to find and use, especially for those outside of academic settings.

As a way to increase our outreach to and education of the populations in our state most in need of this information, we are developing an online kit of resources and training materials focused on finding and using the variety of information-gathering tools we have identified as particularly useful to that audience.

The eight regions of the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM) all offer a wide range of small grants to support library and information-related projects for their members. To obtain funding for this project, we applied for and were awarded a “Health Information Services” grant for the Pacific Northwest region, intended to “support projects that educate about, advocate for, and promote the value of health information services.” Other available awards focus on assessment and planning, health disparities information outreach, technology improvements, professional development, travel for exhibits at health fairs and conferences, and more. SALIS members interested in improving their organizations or doing more outreach should explore some of these funding opportunities (http://nnlm.gov/funding/).

The Finding Substance Abuse Resources toolkit will include:

1. An online, interactive training module, developed using e-learning software Articulate Storyline, to provide easily disseminated, standardized training on locating and using a variety of web resources about SUD;
2. A online, printable brochure presenting each of the featured resources and suitable for distribution by the ADAI Clearinghouse; and
3. A new portal on the ADAI website to house the training and brochure and provide a single point of access for users to reliable, valid resources users may find useful in their professional or community work.

The training, brochure, and portal will focus on the following resources:

- The ADAI Clearinghouse, a prevention and training resource center for Washington State featuring a range of print and online materials on SUD and related behavioral health topics;
- The ADAI Washington State Substance Use Data & Resources website, featuring statewide and county-specific content, including
statistics, treatment and public health information, state and county policy reports, and links to key agencies;
- The Learn About Marijuana website, developed as part of our ongoing work as the primary provider of public health information about marijuana for our state; and
- The StopOverdose.org website, which offers training and information on how to identify and reverse opioid overdoses using naloxone, as well as education about Washington State's 911 Good Samaritan Law.

The portal housing the toolkit may also include links to additional resources from ADAI and other reputable organizations, including the ADAI Screening & Assessment Instruments Database, useful for providers and students; MedlinePlus, a recommended source of information on substance use and related issues for community organizations and the general public; and ADAI's Substance Abuse Conferences and Trainings Calendar, which provides details on upcoming events statewide.

Use and usefulness of the toolkit will be monitored using Google Analytics, which will track the number of views and average duration of time spent watching the Storyline training module, the number of times the brochure is downloaded, and the number of visits (new and returning) and pages viewed on the web portal. We will also use Google Analytics to track which resources are most frequently accessed through the portal, helping us determine which of the various tools seem to be the most relevant to our population (important information for future outreach).

Substance use is an issue of concern for every community in our state. With the expansion of addiction services into more behavioral health and primary care settings, an increasing number of providers and other community members will be tasked with identifying and helping people who struggle with substance use disorders, leading to an increase in the need for valid information and tools at all levels of community involvement. This project will result in measurably improved dissemination and utilization of that information, which, in turn, will lead to better prevention, education, referral, and treatment for people with substance use disorders.

References