

HELP & SHELTER

TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING TO ENHANCE SERVICE DELIVERY PROJECT (FUNDED BY THE USAID GOVERNANCE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT BY AGREEMENT WITH PROJECT IMPLEMENTER TETRA TECH ARD)

Activity Report: Upgrading Counselling Skills Workshop – Days 1 & 2 (1 & 2 December 2010)

1. Introduction/Background

The first 2 day session of this 4 day workshop was held on 1 and 2 December 2010. Help & Shelter recognises that in order to continue to deliver quality counselling services to the Guyanese public in the areas of DV, GBV and child abuse prevention, it needs to upgrade the knowledge base and improve the skills of its counsellors so as to meet the growing demands and requirements of our clients.

In meeting this challenge our general strategy and technical approach included implementing a 4 day training and capacity building workshop using participatory and interactive methodologies where counselling theory and practice were incorporated to enhance learning and output at the point of delivery i.e. counselling services to clients.

In planning this workshop it was envisaged that participants would have already benefited from some form of professional training in counselling and exposure to counselling practice. Although this workshop was originally planned exclusively for Help & Shelter counsellors, it was decided to open the first 2 days to partner organizations who offer counseling services.

2. Methodology

The methodologies used was a combination of power point slide presentations, discussions on case studies, small group and plenary discussions, homework exercises and evaluation. The sessions were participatory and interactive.

3. Topics and Participants' Feedback

The main focus areas of days 1 & 2 were:

- (i) Theoretical knowledge and its usefulness in counselling practice for adults and families
- (ii) Why risk assessments are important and how to conduct a risk assessment.

Topic areas included:

- Freud's Theory of Personality & Psychotherapy and Feminist Theory
- The use of theory, procedures and follow-up on closed and open cases
- Assessment steps and the problem solving process

Participants' Feedback

Out of a total of 15 participants 9/60% of participants completed H&S evaluation forms. Feedback from these forms indicated that 100% of participants definitely agreed, that information was presented in a way they understood, the workshop increased their knowledge and understanding of theory and how to apply this in counselling adults and families, increased knowledge of risk assessment and was well facilitated. In assessing adequacy of time for discussion and sharing of information, 44% of participants felt there was definitely enough time for this while 56% felt that there was somewhat enough time.

What participants found most useful

- Procedures and follow up on all cases both closed and open cases
- Information on risk assessment and management
- The interactive discussions & simplified explanations on each aspects of the workshop
- The information that was disseminated was done in a simple and knowledgeable so that each person was able to understand and participate
- Working in groups was very useful as persons were able to work together and share their different ideas

- The different type of theories discussed were useful

What participants learnt

- How to conduct a risk assessment and its usefulness in working with clients
- I learnt about Freud's Theory and the Feminist Theory and the way to move forward
- I learnt that counsellors could overlook vital information sometimes, which could help clients This came out when groups reported on discussions on the case study
- That there is always room for additional information which can help counsellors in working with clients
- That DV in all its forms must be taken seriously, that documentation and follow up of each report is of utmost importance
- The importance of risk assessment and the need to document action taken
- That follow up is a professional obligation to clients and is the professional responsibility of the counsellor to do so
- That it is important to pay attention to the Feminist Theory, which allows for a client's life to be examined with a socio-political framework

How participants will you use information gained

- In my counselling practice daily
- Apply it appropriately in my counselling
- To improve my direct practice
- it will serve to help me to better work in the interest of clients especially those who are vulnerable
- Information gained will be used in applying the principles when working with my clients
- Information will be used by sharing it with groups, family and other colleagues
- This information will help me a great deal in my field of work at my organization

Recommendations & other comments

- There should be more follow up training in Domestic Violence at a high level, which should be run for at least 3 days
- Please sponsor other workshops of a similar nature with consideration of participatory certificates
- Upgrading should be ongoing for the benefit of reinforcement and application
- There should be continuous training sessions so that counsellors will be better equipped to deal with the daily client intake
- It is amazing to see how some serious cases are not being properly investigated and with hardly any follow up. The session was a very good one

4. Workshop continuation

The workshop was continued on 27 and 28 January 2011.

5. Qualitative reporting techniques

Qualitative information was gathered through the use of open ended questions on the Help & Shelter participant evaluation form, which participants answered giving their opinions and views. Forms were anonymous so opinions expressed could not be traced to any one individual.

6. Quantitative reporting techniques/methodologies

Quantitative information was gathered through the use of tools such as:

- ARD-required attendance sheets and registration forms.
- Participant evaluation forms developed by Help & Shelter, which assessed quantitative information on delivery and grasp of information, increased knowledge and understanding of the topics covered, workshop facilitation and adequacy of venue and food.

Participants were given registration forms in their file folders to fill out and return by the end of the workshop. As participants arrived they were directed to fill out required information on the attendance sheet. Participant evaluation forms were given out and participants were asked to fill them out and return to the M&E officer at the end of the workshop.