A Peer Advocate Program (PAP):
Linking those on Parole and Probation
A Grant Proposal

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Introduction

Social Problem

• In the U.S. over 71,000 of those inmates in jail and 250,485 of those in prison, had been diagnosed with a mental illness (Chaimowitz, 2012).

• It costs each state more than $280,000 every year to support those who are incarcerated, while it only costs one-eighth of that amount to support those offenders out in the community (Chaimowitz, 2012).

• Annually, 600,000 inmates in the U.S. are released out to the community (Draine & Wilson, 2006).

• Upon release they face challenges in accessing community re-integration programs for mental health services (Barnes, Eliason, Freudenberg, & Van Olphen, 2009).

Project Aim:

• To increase awareness for offenders of the mental health services available in a community re-entry program.

• To provide an easy transition process for mentally ill offenders on parole and probation to access mental health services.
Social Work Relevance

• Social workers are bound by an ethical pledge to advocate, educate, support, and meet the client where they are currently in their lives.

• There is an urgent need for the social work profession to become involved in the treatment of adults with a mental illness released from jails and prisons.

• Social workers have the community outreach and education skills to help former inmates connect to supportive services in their communities.

• Social workers can run supportive programs that can reduce recidivism, homelessness, substance abuse, and hospitalizations among offenders (DeMatteo, Heilbrum, LaDuke, & Locklair, 2013).
African Americans and Hispanics account for the majority of the population in jails and in prisons (Chafetz et al., 2006).

When released to the community, some of those on parole/probation develop a substance use and mental health disorder (DeMatteo et al., 2013).

Culturally competent social workers can advocate for and improve the quality of community mental health services for minority groups being released to the community.

Cross-Cultural Relevance

- Individuals with a mental illness are more prone to go to jail or prison (Chafetz, Collins-Bride, & White, 2006).
Methods

Target Population:

- Released individuals from jails/prisons on parole or probation in Los Angeles County, in the state of California.
- Clients have a history of misdemeanors and felonies.
- 25 years old to 65 years old
- Consumers are both males and females.
- Been diagnosed with a mental illness
- Members diagnosed with Major Depressive disorder and/or Schizophrenia (Telecarecorp, 2013).
Methods

Needs Assessment:

- Challenges that these targeted population have experienced in accessing mental health services have been identified by:
  - Administrator (Cheryl Malinowski), and case managers, who directly work with parole and probation clients.
  - The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and the Los Angeles County Probation Department have agreed in the need for an easy transition and a relationship with community programs.

Funding Source:

- Internet research was used to gather the necessary information
- Visited the Los Angeles Nonprofit Library, Center for Nonprofit Management
- Strategies in selecting the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) as funder:
  - Based on past financial support to other programs
  - Partnerships with other agencies
  - Interest in serving the targeted population

Budget:

- Estimated budget to support project is $124,670
- Covers: rent, utilities, employee’s salaries, equipment, supplies, resources, in-kind support, and miscellaneous.
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• **Summary & Description:**
  - A peer advocate program will be developed at Telecare Corporation.
  - This 12-month peer advocate program will outreach 100 clients.
  - Peer advocates composed of former graduates of CORE L.A./AB 109 programs will outreach participants out in the community.
  - Program will link participants to access mental health services through the CORE L.A. & AB 109 programs in the Telecare Corporation.

• **Population Served:**
  - Males and females
  - Between the ages of 25 years old to 65 years old.
  - Diagnosed with a mental disorder
  - Have been in jail/prison
  - On parole or probation

• **Sustainability:**
  - MSW team lead, the CORE L.A., AB 109 administrator, and the four peer advocate coordinators will monitor the program’s funds, inputs, outcomes, and findings.
Grant Proposal

• **Program Objectives:**
  - Peer advocate coordinators will provide information of where to seek mental health services in community reentry programs.
  - Individuals on parole/probation will increase their awareness of where they can access/receive services.
  - Peer advocate coordinators will develop a relationship with community resources that serve individuals on parole/probation.
  - Mentally ill offenders will enroll and participate in the Telecare programs.

• **Program Evaluation:**
  - Pretest questionnaire will be administered at the beginning of the outreach process to those individuals on parole and on probation.
    - Gather information regarding consumer’s knowledge/barriers of accessing of mental health services.
  - Posttest questionnaire is going to be conducted at the end of the year.
    - Collect information about the client’s awareness of where to seek mental health services & information about their needs being met at the Telecare programs.
Lessons Learned

- Gained awareness that the primary need of those individuals on parole/probation is largely centered on the accessibility of mental health services.
- Learned more about the need for support for formerly incarcerated individuals in the form of a peer advocate program.
- Understanding of the grant process was successful through the exploration of potential funders.
- Compiling and analyzing the most significant information for this project was difficult, as there was so much literature on the subject that was interesting and educational.

Implications for Social Work

- In creating programs through grant writing, social workers can advocate for the needs, services, and resources of a specific population.
- Innovative and successful grant projects can in turn lead to better community-based resources, social policy, and practice changes that can help resolve a need or address a social problem.
References


