

## **Meaningful Daily Activity Workshop**

### **7 Cities Conference 2014, Edmonton**

#### **1) What are meaningful daily activities? What are the characteristics of activities that make life meaningful? Provide ideas, words, or examples.**

- Enjoyable.
- Healthy.
- Positive.
- Fulfilling.
- Internally satisfying.
- Accessible.
- Calming.
- Necessary.
- Future goal-oriented.
- Client-centered – what is positive or enjoyable for the client, without service provider's values imposed.
- Activities that reflect the best parts of ourselves.
- There may be a divide between service providers' definition of meaningful and client's definition.
- Meaningful daily activities ought to provide a sense of community and acceptance.
- More than just "busy-time".

#### **2) What has worked for your organization or clients in the past? Examples?**

- Outcome Star – A valuable case management tool that identifies MDA and is goal-oriented; provides an opportunity to track client progress in this area.
- Success is connected to intent/intentional conversations, support, efforts.
- Success has been seen where clients have a role in housing administration, programs/events, services, etc.
- MDA goals must be flexible.
- Clients may be more successful where clients are able to choose from a range of choices (menu of options) and increased supports for clients in early stages of MDA exploration (attend activity with client).

- Tenant association meetings in housing programs; tenants plan and decide on activities, events, etc.

**3) What are some of the challenges that clients might face in pursuing MDA, or that service providers might face in supporting MDA?**

- Skills/techniques on how to draw out what is meaningful for clients (options, counselling skills, listening intentionally) .
- How do we support sustainable MDA for clients beyond a supportive environment that they can continue on their own in the future?
- Financial capacity to make activities accessible (membership or ridership fees, etc.).
- Mental Health issues – depression, psychosis, medications that aren't conducive to MDA
- Addictions – harm reduction approach is necessary, as clients may value or may not be ready to cease using substances; but can substance use itself be MDA? Service providers can promote healthful goals and activities without requiring change in substance use.
- How to maintain client commitment to MDA?
- How to ensure follow-through after identification of possible MDA options?
- Some clients may not be interested in group or community activities – how can service providers appropriately support solo activities that are healthful?
- Changing client habits, culture, and lifestyle isn't easy – it takes time and patience
- Are habits outcomes of client identity? Clients may have carried their current identity for a long time – how do we effectively support clients in developing a healthier or more positive identity?

**4) What are some key strategies that you as a service provider or your organization can take forward in supporting MDA in your clients' lives?**

- Get the broader community and different stakeholders on board! Get creative.
- Go with clients in the beginning of their exploration of MDA. It can be intimidating in the beginning for anyone, particularly marginalized groups. They may need initial support.
- Identify possible sponsors – what businesses or community groups might be interested in sponsoring MDA activities (membership coupon, coffee house gift card or discount, etc.).
- Setting intentional goals that work for clients.

- Lead by example – consider taking on an appropriate challenge with client(s) to push your own comfort level and seek a new activity in your own life, to role model for clients in a possibly less-formal, fun way.
- Vision board – work with clients to develop a collage of interests that they can have up in their residence to provide inspiration in moving toward and maintaining MDA that they truly value (use magazines, pictures, whatever!).
- Supporting hands-on participation/planning of tenant events, programs or services.
- Skills teaching – clients likely have skills or talents that they can teach peers or even staff – work to support them in leadership roles.
- Creating a safe environment for clients to push their boundaries and meet new people, and integrate into the broader community.
- Collaborate with other community services that may have resources to contribute (social enterprise opportunities, discounts, connections, etc.)
- Look into possibility of identifying clients on caseloads (with their consent) who may have common interests in MDA or may be good peer supports to one another, but who may not presently be known to each other.

Link to the video we didn't get a chance to view: "What Makes Life Meaningful: Michael Steger" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RLFVoEF2RI0>