APA Recovery to Practice Curriculum

4. Partnership and Engagement
Engaging People as Partners

The Need to Engage People with Serious Mental Illnesses in the Service Delivery System

- Improve access to services
- Potential to minimize the effect of crises
- Potential to benefit from the expertise people have about the illness and need for services
- Potential therapeutic benefits
- Advantages of having people with lived experience involved with prioritizing and conducting research
- Benefits of involvement in staff selection and training
Engaging People as Partners

Reasons People are Reluctant to Engage the Mental Health System

From the System Itself:
- Prior negative experiences and possible trauma

From the Individual:
- Severity of illness
- Multiple social barriers:
  - Poverty, homelessness, criminal history, ill physical health, social stigma, poor social skills, and social isolation. Need wide range of services
Engaging People as Partners

Historical and Cultural Barriers

Immigrant Populations
- Language barriers
- Social stigma of Behavioral Health problems / Religious beliefs on the origin of mental illness
- Cultural beliefs and practices related to decision making
- Distrust of authority / Previous abuse from those in authority

African Americans
- Distrust of authority and systems
- History of slavery and discrimination
- Poverty
- Poor education systems
- High incarceration rates for young males
Engaging People as Partners

Overcoming Barriers Through Assertive Outreach

Components of Assertive Outreach

- Meeting the person on his or her own terms, including times and locations
- Offering a range of services, including crisis intervention
- Identified person available 24 hours per day
- Risk management approach that offers safety
- Pay attention to social factors
- Supported access to mainstream services
- Peer support and encouragement
- Offering daytime activities
- Treating persons as equals with dignity and respect
- Help with finance and benefits
- Finding suitable accommodations
Engaging People as Partners

Benefits of Partnering with People with Serious Mental Illnesses

- Minimizing the effects of crises
- Determining which services are best
- Potential therapeutic benefits
- Research participation
Challenges

- Cultural factors
- Lack of services and resources for individuals
- Lack of system commitment
- Lack of training for psychologists and other professionals
- Threatening the expertise of psychologists
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[www.apa.org/pi/rtp](http://www.apa.org/pi/rtp)

Citation for the full Curriculum:


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