Mental Health Ombudsman Training Manual

Advocacy and the Adult Home Resident

Module I

Who’s Who

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Goals

- Increase confidence
- Increase comfort
- Advocate effectively
Objectives

- Describe situations in adult homes
  - How they are similar
  - How they differ

- Identify resources
  - Individual
  - Systems
Underlying assumptions

- Mind/body split is invalid
- Mental health is as important as physical health
- Physical health effects mental health and vice versa
Underlying assumptions

- Just because a person has a mental illness, it doesn’t mean it’s responsible for everything

- People with mental illness
  - Have good days
  - Have bad days
    - Just like you and me………………
Adult home setting

- Stigma
- Demoralized residents
- Demoralized minimum-wage aides
- Angry communities
Why does stigma still exist?

Media

- Newspapers stress history of mental illness in crimes of violence
- Television sensationalizes crimes
- Comedians use disabilities for humor
Who’s Who in Adult Homes

- People
- People with stories
  - Successes
  - Trauma
  - Incarceration
  - Losses

- People with mental illness
- People who are marginalized
- People who are stigmatized
Ombudsman role

- To hear individuals
- To see individuals
- To talk with individuals
- To support recovery
What’s different?  What’s not?

Stigma
- Mental illness
- Age

People
- Individuality overlooked
- All behavior seen as mental illness
- Personal histories lost, forgotten
- Few, if any, family connections remain
What’s different? What’s not?

Life course

- Lifelong limited social network
- Late life change in social network

Limited resources to bolster self-esteem
What’s different? What’s not?

- Advocacy
  - Self
  - +/- Partner

- Involuntary care
  - Commitment
  - Guardianships
Mental illnesses are...

- disorders of *thought, feeling* and/or *behavior* which result in an inability to cope with life’s ordinary demands and routines
Mental illnesses are NOT

- A character weakness
- A punishment
- An individual’s “fault”
- A poor upbringing
Major mental illness

- Serious and persistent mental illness
- Schizophrenia
- Delusional disorders
- Major depression
- Bipolar disorder
- Severe personality disorders
Common interventions

- Treatment
  - Medication
  - Psychotherapy

- Crisis intervention

- Case management

- Rehabilitation

- Enrichment

- Rights protection

- Basic support

- Self-help

- Wellness/prevention
Advocacy

You

- Optimism
- Conviction/Hope
- Energy
- Communication skills
- Knowledge
Advocacy

- Support recovery
  - Know regulations
  - Know entitlements
  - Know treatment plan, players

- Know local resources
  - Community Mental Health Center (CMHC)
  - Designated agency (DA)
  - Self-help community
Let’s solve some problems!