

Rhode Island Community Planning Group for HIV Prevention Minutes

Date: July 20, 2004

Time: 1:00 - 5:00 PM

Place: Royal Buffet, Cranston

Present: Paul Loberti, Elisa Delbonis, Lorraine Kaul, Anne Silvia, Vinnie Velasquez, Deborah Davis, J. Philip Kane, Donna Williams, Midge Sabatini, Stephanie Howie, Lucille Minuto, Patricia Threats, Jeremy Giller, Deoshore Haig, Geneva Brown, Joe Hyde

The meeting was called to order at 5:20 PM by Elisa D. and the agenda for today's meeting was reviewed. There was discussion about whether or not Deoshore's facilitation should be tabled until a meeting with higher attendance. The decision was made to proceed as scheduled out of respect for the members in attendance and since she was already being financially compensated for today. Elisa charged the Empowerment Committee to look into excused absences.

Facilitated Discussion

Deoshore opened discussion with review about the last meeting and handed out a list of "themes" that the group identified as important for the growth and health of CPG. The members listed ideas on what the focus of teamwork should look like in CPG. Ideas expressed were:

- How to work together
- Ownership in development
- Leadership needs to be in agreement
- Create a balance of power
- Willingness to be self-managed
- Accountability for behaviors

Deoshore charged the group with identifying specific examples of "open/honest" communication to demonstrate that everyone is invested in each other's success and committed to the common cause. This list included:

- Avoid side conversations
- Address issues as they arise
- Be proactive
- Be on time for meetings
- Be able to address unmet expectations
- Communicate clearly
- Be honest by focusing on behavioral issues not personal attacks
- Be direct

Deoshore identified the need to be cognizant of our own needs and the needs of others in the group. She requested that members define what "open-minded" means for ourselves when we request that of others. This requires active listening and participation.

There was discussion about the "Safety Issue" surrounding confidentiality of information shared during the meetings. While CPG can be a closed meeting, the minutes are still public domain. One area of debate was how to handle situations when members are approached with negative information. Suggestions made were 1) to allocate time on the agenda with time limitations to address these issues and 2) put aside side conversations/gossip and let the group focus on the common goal of HIV prevention. Members identified ways to handle contacts from the outside that contain negative information. The suggestions for handling these situations were:

- Refer the person back to the minutes for information discussed at the meeting
- State: "I don't want to have this discussion" and refer them to the co-chair
- Request that the issue be discussed directly with the person at the heart of the issue
- Identify the contact as "gossip" and don't bring it to the table - let it die out

Deoshore obtained consent from the group that these suggestions are acceptable and will be used in future situations. She identified the reality that there will always be negative information but the key is in knowing how to address it positively, consistently and move on.

Deoshore acknowledged that CPG is right where it is supposed to be regarding group development and that teams are most successful when members buy into the rules of the group. To build teamwork barriers can be removed by the team's positive behaviors showing unified commitment to success.

Committee/Task Force Updates

Youth - was reported on by Midge S. There has been no meeting yet but the group will be getting together soon. The issue of too many meetings will be addressed with discussion on how to reduce or combine meetings.

Women - was reported on by Donna W. She opened discussion about the need for accurate survey information so that trends for risk can be identified. Lucille M. will come to the next meeting for HEALTH's support with this issue.

IDU - was reported on by Vinnie V. She identified issues regarding demographics for people receiving services and discrepancies between whites vs. people of color. Data collection is affected by confidentiality guidelines such as HIPPA. There was also discussion about problems receiving treatment regarding wait lists and the new licensing standards to record information about sexual trauma.

MSM - was reported on by Phillip K. He identified the need for new members on the committee, and he and Annie will be addressing this at the next meeting. Training needs and data collection were common trends identified to be addressed.

Empowerment - was reported on by Deb D. Two new members were voted into the group last meeting. New member recruitment continues.

Strategic Planning - was reported on by Paul L. He discussed RFPs, the Plan and Task Force common issues.

Reach - was reported on by Joe H. The coordinator has resigned and they are searching for a new one. A mailing will be going out with the new courses and training. There are scholarships available for agencies focusing on prevention. Contracted vendors can attend for free.

Task Force Workbooks

Paul L. gave an overview of the task force workbooks and their time line. The workbooks are now considered a final draft and are a working document. Any specific suggestions for change should be given to Paul. There will be training on the use of the workbooks, which can be done either at the next meeting or as separate 1 1/2 hour training.

Paul handed out a list of the expectations for the task forces to be aware of as they use the workbooks. Final refinements to the workbooks are scheduled for January 2005.

The workbooks provide an opportunity for the task forces to embrace the populations they are serving. The common goal is to reduce HIV and to show the community what is being done to achieve this goal. Paul gave an overview of the steps in the workbooks. They are a "work in progress" but he stressed that they need to be completed. A request was made to have the workbooks on the website. Paul will look into this.