

# Orienting Veterans to SST Groups

VA Psychosocial Rehabilitation  
Training Program  
June 16, 2014

# Two Key Components of SST

1. Initial individualized goal setting session
2. Group Social Skills sessions

# Individual Goal Setting Session

- Benefits
  - Helps with engagement, building rapport
  - Prepares Veterans for what to expect in a skills training group
  - Links SST to recovery
  - Uses Veteran's goals to select curriculum, set up meaningful role plays, develop home assignments
  - Helps Veterans track their progress towards goals

# Guideline for Individual Sessions

- Obtain informed consent for audio taping
- Overview
  - Introduction of group leaders
  - Discuss purpose of group; how different from other groups
- Discuss the format of the group (homework review, skill introduction, role plays, feedback, homework)
- Discuss group expectations

# Guideline for Individual Sessions (cont'd)

- Review components of recovery
- Review 4 quality of life domains and select most important
- Together, identify a long-term goal and a SST goal
- If group leader is in VA-PRT program have Veteran complete the outcomes questionnaire

# Audio Consents

- MUST use if audio recordings will be done with Veterans as part of VA-PRT Program
- Must complete BEFORE recording the individual session

# Overview and Group Format

- Purpose of the group
  - SST will help Veterans achieve recovery goals
  - What SST *is*; what SST *is not*
- Format of the group
  - Emphasis on role plays
  - Discuss the role of positive feedback
  - Importance of at home practice

# Group Expectations

- Please stay on the group topic
- Only one person may speak at a time
- No name-calling or cursing
- No criticizing or making fun of each other
- No eating or drinking in group
- No cell phones on during the class
- Others?

# Components of Recovery

- Review recovery components using the Recovery Wheel
  - Hope
  - Self-Respect
  - Empowerment
  - Holistic
  - Non-Linear
  - Strengths
- SST can help Veterans reach recovery goals

# Individual Goal Setting

- Sources: Veteran, providers, treatment plans, others
- Help the Veteran to set SMART goals
  - **S**pecific
  - **M**easurable
  - **A**chievable
  - **R**elevant
  - **T**ime-Bound
- See the Initial Individual Session Guide for more details

# Individual Goal Setting

- *Points to remember*
  - *Collaborative*
  - *Use questions*
    - *Open-ended vs. yes/no*
    - *Previous experience*
    - *Use curriculum*
  - *Goals related to social skills*
  - *No goals -- try again later*

# Example of a Social Goal

Long-term (Meaningful) Goal: I will obtain a full-time paying job.

Goal for end of the SST group: I will find a part-time volunteer job.

# Example of a Social Goal

## Steps for achieving goal:

- Attend SST group biweekly and practice skills taught in group, including interviewing for a job.
- Research and prepare a list of possible volunteer locations. Decide which volunteer locations seem most promising.
- Prepare a list of questions for a volunteer coordinator.
- Contact volunteer coordinator and ask questions from list about opportunities.
- Prepare for volunteer interviews (if required) by practicing mock interviews with case manager and then attend the interviews.

*See the Initial Individual Session Guide for more examples*

# Monitoring Goals

- Measures progress
- Veteran choice in altering/removing goals
- Helps clarify when Veterans complete group
- Veteran will complete a SST Goal Tracking Sheet during their post-treatment follow-up meeting with you

# Selecting a Curriculum

## Goal—Getting a Part-Time Volunteer Job

- Skills emphasized
  - Listening to Others (Basic skills)
  - Expressing Positive Feelings (Basic skills)
  - Making Requests (Basic skills)
  - Expressing Unpleasant Feelings (Basic skills)
  - Asking for Information (Assertiveness)
  - Asking for Help (Assertiveness)
  - Interviewing for a Job (Job skills)

# Resources

- SST Initial Individual Session Guide
- Social Skills Orientation for Clients Handout
  - Page 279 in SST Manual, Bellack et al, 2004.
- SST website:  
[http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn5/training/social\\_skills.asp](http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn5/training/social_skills.asp)