

Implementation of Social Skills Training in the VA

Implementation of SST in VA

1. Walk through choosing a curriculum
2. Identify and problem solve common implementation challenges
3. Address other practical considerations

Selecting a Curriculum: Benefits

- Meet needs of own veterans
- Used to facilitate individual treatment goals for veterans
- Used to decide when veterans “move on”
- Intimate understanding of skills taught from beginning

Selecting a Curriculum: Process

- Selecting a Curriculum (Handbook)
- Several questions to ask first
 - What are some site goals for veterans?
 - What are some strengths of veterans I work with?
 - What are some of the common goals and/or concerns of veterans that I work with?

Using common goals to select curriculum

<u>Sample Veteran Goals</u>	<u>Potential Curriculum Domains</u>
Get a girlfriend Make non-using friends Have good work relationships	Basic Conversation Skills Friendship/Dating Skills
Get along with group home members Get along with family	Communal living Skills Anger Management Skills Conflict Management
Get a job Increase work hours Ask for a raise	Prevocational Skills Vocational Management

Selecting a Curriculum: Examples

- Conversational skills
- Assertiveness (assertion) training
- Dating skills
- Prevocational skills
- Workplace skills
- HIV prevention skills
- Medication management skills
- Substance abuse skills
- Skills for living with others
- Skills for improving family interactions

Sample Curriculum: Anger Management

- Session 1: Early warning signs of anger and situations that induce anger
- Session 2: Coping strategies for anger
- Session 3 - 5: Leaving Stressful Situations
- Sessions 6 - 8: Expressing Angry Feelings
- Sessions 9 - 11: Responding to Criticism from a Supervisor
- Sessions 12 - 14: Responding to Untrue Accusations
- ...

Implementation Considerations: Open vs. Closed Groups

- Open enrollment
 - May be necessary depending on site
 - Allows new group members to enter as needed
 - Keep group fresh and dynamic
 - May help keep numbers up
- Closed enrollment
 - Establish more cohesive group
 - May help with “safety” issues
 - Collaboratively establish group expectations
 - Reduce time spent on introductions
 - And more
- Combination

Implementation Considerations: Early Recruitment

- Veterans that have participated in groups before
- Consider issues around previous behavioral problems
- Consider issues with case management
- Other things to consider??

Implementation Considerations: Logistics

- Meeting Space
- Meeting Time (1x a week, 2x a week?)
- Dry Erase Board/Flip Chart for visuals

Other Practical Concerns

- Co-therapists or single therapist
- Group notes
- Location-specific concerns

Next Steps

1. Read materials
2. Attend first consultation session
3. Start Implementation Process
 - Complete Implementation handout
 - Complete Curriculum handout
 - Complete Information sheet
4. Participate in first monthly call