Training Drug Treatment Program Staff to Communicate with Their Clients about Hepatitis C

A Motivational Approach

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Background

Drug users are at an especially high risk for contracting and transmitting HCV!

Background

- Drug users are often uninformed or misinformed about HCV
- Drug users have difficulty accessing HCV services in the community

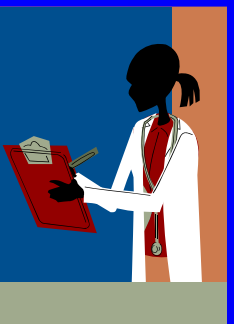
- They are often stigmatized and are reluctant to seek HCV services in the community

HCV and Drug Treatment Programs

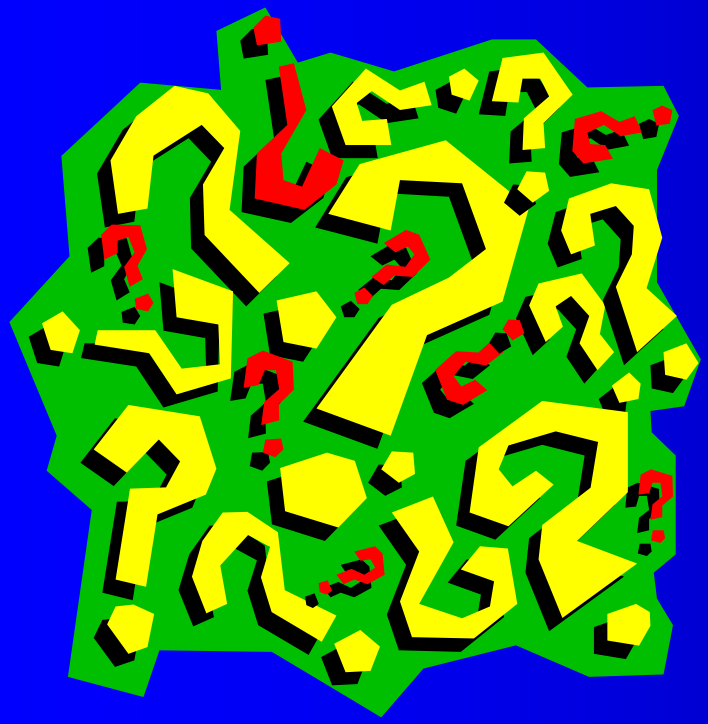
- 60%-90% of clients in methadone maintenance treatment programs (MMTPs) are infected with HCV
- Residential drug-free programs also have many HCV infected clients
- Drug treatment programs are uniquely situated to provide critical HCV services

The Good News

- 84% of drug treatment programs in the US are providing some HCV education services
- Over 70% of residential programs and MMTPs are providing HCV testing
- 84% of programs are providing some medical care and support services



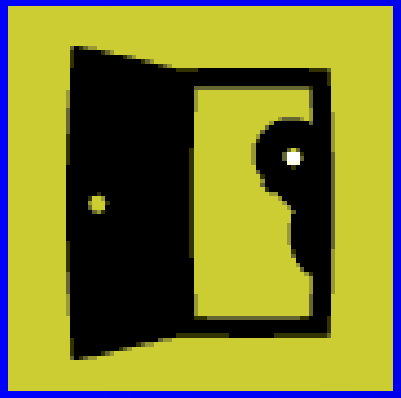
The Bad News



- Drug treatment program staff often have limited knowledge about HCV
- Staff are often unaware of all of the HCV services the program provides
- Clients said that staff rarely brought up the issue of HCV with them

Client quote:

- I’m gunna be straight up and honest with you. Not that, they’re very good people and very nice people. But they don’t give two shits, unless you ask or you want to do something for yourself… I want to know. I want to know what it affects. If it affects my liver or kidneys, or what it’s gunna do in the long run. I’d love to be told this, but they don’t have the time, or they don’t do shit like this… I don’t think they have the time. That’s what they say. I don’t know if it’s just that they don’t have time or that they’re not interested.



Staff Perspective

- Staff said that clients did not bring up the issue of HCV with them
- Clients are in denial, are afraid of disclosure, fear stigma, exhibited resistance.
- Even when HCV services are available at drug treatment programs, there is a tendency for clients to underutilize these services

Our Current Project:

Increasing HCV Knowledge and Service Use in Drug Treatment Programs

Funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (Grant # 2 R01 DA013409)

Aims of the Project

- Provide current information about HCV to staff
- Increase staff awareness of the program's HCV services
- Provide skills-based training on initiating a conversation about HCV with clients
- Help staff to approach this issue in a motivational context that encourages clients to use services

Basic Study Design

- 16 drug treatment program-8 MMTPs and 8 drug free residential programs
- Intervention condition and a delayed intervention condition
- 4 data collection points- baseline, immediate post training, 30 days post-training, 90 days post-training
- Assess impact of the training (intervention) on staff, clients and the organization

HCV Knowledge

Part 1:

Overview of Hepatitis

- Impact of HCV in the U.S.
- Transmission
- Liver
- Types of Hepatitis
- Disease Progression

Part 2:

Testing & Treatment

- Testing Issues
- Patient Work-up
- Treatment Issues
- HIV/HCV Co-infection

Communication

Part 3:

HCV Services & Increasing Utilization of Services

- HCV Services at the Program
- Barriers to HCV Services
- Effective Communication Strategies
- Health Literacy

Part 4:

Motivational Interviewing

- Exploring Ambivalence
- Motivational Interviewing Principles

Bridging Conversations

Provide ideas to bring up HCV with clients

- Use previous information in the conversation to bridge to HCV
- Use visuals to encourage clients to talk about HCV
- Practice, Practice, Practice.....

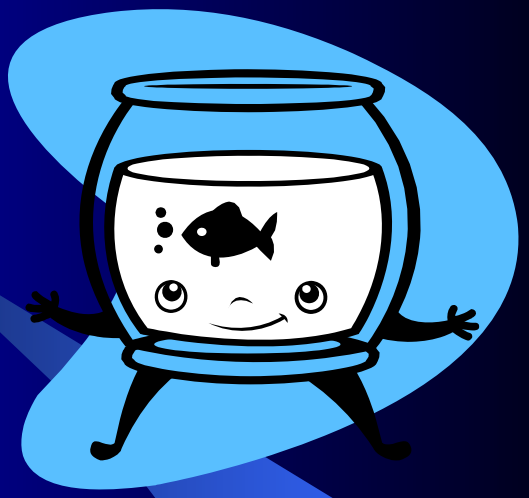
Skills for Sharing Information

- Use a client focused approach
- Understand the role of ambivalence
- Do not use threats, expert advice, judgment
- Keep information simple
- Use brief explanations
- Repeat information
- Use different ways to convey the same information
- Keep health literacy in mind
- Ultimately, it is the client’s decision

Principles of Motivational Interviewing (MI)

- **Expressing Empathy**
  - "*It sounds as if you feel....*"
- **Developing Discrepancy**
  - "*On the one hand you say want to_____, but on the other hand you are doing_____.*"
- **Rolling with Resistance**
  - "*You don't have to do_____, if you don't want to.*"

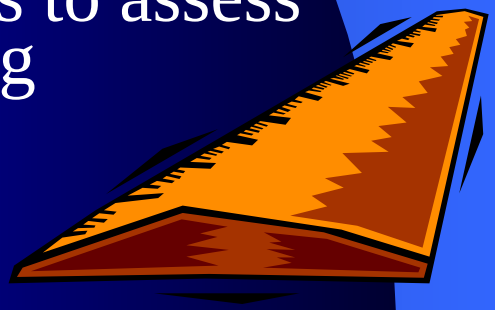
Role Plays



- Staff practice answering common questions about HCV
- Role plays involve using scripted situations to assist a client who is in the pre-contemplation stage and also to assist a client who is in contemplation stage
- Practice using the key phrases for the 3 MI principles.

Assessment

- Measure HCV knowledge
- Measure staff self efficacy in helping clients to deal with issues related to HCV
- Measure the extent to which staff encouraged clients to use HCV services in the last 30 days
- Measure the extent to which staff initiated conversations about HCV with clients in the last 30 days
- Use quantitative and qualitative methods to assess change 30 days and 90 days post training
- Assess clients' perceptions



Preliminary Findings

- HCV knowledge increases immediately post training and 30 days post training
- Self efficacy increases immediately post training and 30 days post training
- Staff are more likely to encourage HCV service utilization after the training than before the training

Conclusions

- Staff in drug treatment programs can strongly influence and assist their clients with HCV issues and service use
- Staff require both HCV knowledge and skills in sharing the knowledge
- Future analysis will assess longer term impact of this knowledge and skills-based approach.

- Acquiring knowledge is ONLY the first step in health prevention and treatment – sharing that knowledge with those who need that information in an understandable and motivational manner completes the mission.

Thank you for your participation today!

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The only irreplaceable capital an organization possesses is the knowledge and ability of its people. The productivity of that capital depends on how effectively people share their competence with those who can use it.

Andrew Carnegie