

Where Do We Go From
Here??

Or Try Not to Bump
Your Head as You
Take Your Next Steps!



Treading Lightly

We hope that today's presentations help you to consider taking concrete steps to explore collaboration with key partners in your communities including, but not limited to:

- HIV/AIDS Service Organizations (ASOs)
- Workforce development/employment services
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Benefits Advisement/Counseling Services
- State 1915b Medicaid Waiver Programs that may be approving integration of pre-vocational services

However, unlike Jamyson, we suggest you tread lightly taking careful steps to explore potential collaborations.

New York State's Experience

Currently, a collaborative HIV/AIDS vocational rehabilitation (VR) & employment project is occurring in 3 communities. NWPC study data strengthened the discussion on the need for collaboration. The following is a summary of some challenges the project faced.

- Initial discussions in 2008-09 with our State Workforce and VR representatives and AIDS service organizations (ASOs) were characterized by uncertainty for a variety of reasons.**
- The economy was resulting in 4-6 times as many customers seeking assistance from One-Stop Centers.**
- Shrinking resources in our State VR, workforce and HIV/AIDS systems all felt the impact of the economic downturn making it the idea of collaboration even more challenging, everyone serving more people with fewer resources.**
- Despite these challenges, which still remain, plus new ones, collaborating partners recognized the opportunity to improve client/customer outcomes by increasing the efficiency and effectiveness, thereby maximizing their respective resources.**

Based on these experiences the following steps/ideas are offered

Step 1: Find Common Ground

- Acknowledge that existing VR and workforce programs currently serve PLWHA.
- Explore concepts such as cost neutral programs and mutually shared priorities such as improving efficiency and effectiveness among partners.
- Be prepared for the question “if we are already serving PLWHA, why a pilot project?” ...a very good question.
- Use NWPC Data to help partners understand the significance and potential impact.

The answer to that question relates to one main goal of a pilot project: to establish cross system policies and procedures that become a standard practice, regardless of any staff changes, funding cuts or other shifts in service systems.

Step 2: Address Concerns

How Can You Respond?

In New York State's experience, many concerns related to shrinking resources and the economic downturn, and we were proposing a new project. Today, and in the future, there will be other challenges. So it is important to address prospective partner concerns in several ways:

- Be clear that a cross-system pilot project would be developmental and needs to consider ALL realities/challenges of each service system. Commit to engaging people on their terms.**
- Focus on the reality that most of the people would be seeking services anyway and the intent of a pilot and partnering would potentially help all three systems be more efficient and effective thereby maximizing resources through shared goals for the people to be served.**
- Acknowledge that goals for a pilot need to be modest so as not to further overwhelm any one system in the process.**

Step 3: Identify a Process

- **Reach consensus to proceed/get stakeholder buy-in**
- **Engage leadership in targeted communities**
- **Conduct initial face to face meeting sharing information about experiences with the target population and brief functional descriptions of the types of programs and services provided**
- **Identify Cross-Training Needs**

Meet Face to Face whenever possible and try to not rely on Telecommunications

Step 4: Cross-Training/Staff Development

- **For ASOs:** Benefits Advisement, VR Intake and Assessment, VR and Workforce Policies & Procedures-Eligibility Requirements.
- **For VR:** Clinical Update on HIV as a Chronic Disease and Disability Determination
- **For Workforce Staff:** Confidentiality Requirements
- **For VR and Workforce Staff :** HIV/AIDS 101 e.g. the difference between the two, what it is and what it isn't, prevention information
- **For All:**
 - Joint HIV service and individual employment planning (developing shared goals, objectives and associated tasks) plan implementation and follow up case conferencing
 - Protocols Process/Eligibility Criteria
 - Designate point persons

Collaborative Recipe

- **For a three to four System Collaboration:**
 - **Three to four Parts Leadership**
 - Leadership can be initiated, and ideally evolve from all the three systems
 - **Three to four Parts Commitment**
 - Commitment is needed from all levels
 - **Three to four Parts Patience**
 - Patience is needed from all partners, recognize that collaborations are incremental and are challenging.
 - **Three to four Parts Perseverance**
 - Like Jamyson, expects to bump your head on occasion...Perseverance is critical...don't give up on one another.

Fully cooked in NYS this recipe resulted in a \$1.34 Million HUD/HOPWA collaborative three year grant Special Project of National Significance.

