**Mental Health Support for Healthcare During COVID-19**

**Tuesday, May 5, 2020 | Noon-1:00 pm**

*Recording also available.*

Discussion opened after welcome and an antitrust reminder. This effort’s focus is organizing to provide mental health services and support to frontline healthcare providers and staff during the COVID-19 crisis.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

**Sessions will now be the first and third Wednesday of the month starting Wednesday May 20, 12-1pm**

**Meeting Summary**

The main topic of the meeting was a continuation of the presentations on how health care organizations and community-based organizations are supporting their staff during COVID. The presentations included Essentials 2 Go program to assist staff basic needs by HealthPartners; community-based organization perspective by Vail Place; and Grief Support Services by Essentia Health. Full notes below.

HealthPartners – Addressing Basic Needs – Essentials 2 Go

* Providing staff with easy, convenient access to grocery food services to alleviate stress from having to do shopping themselves and to free up time to spend with families
* Essentials2Go provides access to various grocery for staff to pick up at work; fresh, healthy options and ability for obtain items that staff may not find at the grocery store
* Order can be made online in advance at: Cafe640.catertrax.com; ready to pick at cafeteria; staff can choose pick up time and pay there, as well; cafeteria is not open overnight, opens at 7am
* No added expense to the department – using the existing labor and ordering platforms already in place
* Initially trying to keep offerings simple and grow them based on need and feedback; have been successful in keeping the pricing low; start small and grow
* BIX vendor boxes – the most popular item – already predone, can be ordered in advance and then picked up at cafeteria; can last a couple of days
* Program In initial stages; can run sales report to see what’s selling well and modify offerings based on need and feedback
* Challenges with the services-trust in quality of produce; generating awareness (issues with social distancing; no huddles to promote the service); trying to keep the cost low (no added labor and expense)
* On generating awareness: in the beginning- digital menu boards in cafeteria, signage, business cards with grocery 2 go website; myPartner page; hospital-wide digital screens; huddles when possible

*\*CentraCare reported also implementing a similar program with pop up market providing essential food items 24/7 (using kiosks for overnight pick up).*

Vail Place – Community-Based Organization Perspective

* Background: providing mental health services for adults with focus on recovery, social needs, connection, reducing isolation, helping people understand their benefits; access to employment, etc.
* Multiple programs-case management, community support, housing, behavioral health home, housing residential program (22 beds); serving over 2700 people with 80 employees
* 75% of services provided 1:1 such as transporting people to appointments and other places they need to be at, meeting people at home, anything else they need to meet their needs
* 25% on site-based services such as housing and group meetings
* Seeing an increased total number of people served and referrals across all their programs during COVID
* Formerly on site in person services converted to virtual services and meetings via Zoom, Facebook and other platforms; intentional reach outs to ensure clients are remaining connected
* The 24/7 housing residential service has a quarantine room dedicated to COVID, but no cases at this time
* Supporting staff during COVID includes building and maintaining connections/relationships through all staff chats (have seen increase in utilization), virtual meetings, theme days, daily check ins, continuous communication and consistent messaging, weekly updates from the executive director (which staff appreciate and have found reassuring)
* Other tactics include focus on minimizing COVID exposure to staff especially if a staff needs to see a client 1:1; understanding staff specific needs and how that might affect their work (e.g. parents with minor children); encouraging use of EAP (have seen uptick in use since COVID started); developing other wellness strategies
* Always seeking feedback from staff on what’s working or not
* Future planning-continue to expand and promote wellness resources; cultivate a set of resources for employees to use; EAP; reminding people of all resources; firming up process for time off for those who might find it useful; planning for virtual work going forward as way of the future – changing practices around this; reopening plans – concerns over safety

Essentia Health – Grief Support Services

* Located at St. Mary’s-Duluth, one of the first support centers in the country. 3.6 FTEs staff or East Region, 2 LICSW and dept. coordinator, 40 peer volunteers, 8 support group facilitators (11 grief groups)
* Peer support program for staff established to provide emotional first aid to help manage stress during crisis; peer support staff includes physicians, nurses, chaplains, social workers, registration, pharmacy; also helping triage on who needs a higher level of health care
* The main function is caring, validating listener at the core; support is done individually with group debriefing within 24-48 hours after an event.
* Educating department managers on how to reach out for peer support; seeing greater amount of utilization in some departments and some never heard of it.
* Also providing help to managers on how they can support their team when a crisis happens
* Virtual visits for outpatient therapy and peer support; onsite support still provided through chaplains who are embedded within units; chaplains also have their own support groups
* The team is checking in with one another daily; daily COVID communications; using team meetings for people to ask questions and give suggestions
* Expanding other wellness services in addition to EAP
* Working on creating employee support line and virtual support groups on grief utilizing EFA model
* EFA tool focused on 5 skills of effective response to grief: self-awareness, understanding common grief responses, non-judgmental listening, acknowledge resilience.

**Next Steps:**

* T**hese meetings are moving to the first and third Wednesday, 12-1pm starting on May 20th**
* **ICSI staff presented on this work at the national NRHI group; interest in extending these conversations nationally and having national speakers**
* **Have something to share with the group? Please contact Tani Hemmila, themmila@icsi.org or Jodie Dvorkin**, jdvorkin@icsi.org
* Resources Web Page: The resources page has been updated with new information. Please continue to provide feedback and resources and stories/vignettes that you think are particularly valuable to post. Link: [Mental Health Support for the Healthcare Workforce website](https://www.icsi.org/mental-health-covid19/mental-health-support-for-covid-19/)