



NATIONAL COALITION *for* HOMELESS VETERANS

“Use of group treatment among case managers in Department of Veterans Affairs supported housing program”

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Quick Takeaways:

- Meeting with veterans in group treatment has the potential to improve program efficiency during a time when HUD-VASH is expanding to serve more veterans.
- Group treatment is associated with more client interaction, with 18.15% more group contacts and .83 more contacts per client.
- Group treatment presents more opportunities for veteran interaction and peer support and is associated with better social integration.

Study:

Researchers studied VISN 1, which covers New England. VISN 1 was the first location to use group treatment as the primary component of their supported housing program. Individual case managers were assigned, with individual meetings conducted on an as-needed basis.

Researchers analyzed data from October 2010 to December 2011 concerned with number of clients and client contact (group and individual). They also administered a ten question anonymous survey to case managers asking them to rate (via a Likert scale) their current usage of group treatment as well as their attitude towards group treatment in supportive housing.

Findings:

Researchers focused on VA Connecticut Healthcare System (VACHS), the first site in VISN 1 to use group treatment, arguing that this site had most fully integrated group treatment. They found that the site had 29.38% more group contacts with veterans, and 2.17 more contacts per clients than other sites in VISN 1. When comparing all of VISN 1 to national averages, they found that VISN 1 had 18.15% more group contacts and .83 more contacts per client.

Case Managers in VACHS had more fully implemented group treatment than other VISN 1 sites, but attitudes towards group treatment were similarly positive across all sites. All case managers agreed that group treatment would not be appropriate for all veterans, depending on personal preference and client needs.

Conclusion:

While this is a small-scale preliminary study, early results suggest that incorporating group treatment into HUD-VASH would increase the amount of contact that case managers had with veterans, and promote a more efficient use of program resources. As HUD-VASH continues to expand and to serve more veterans, program managers need to consider new options, including group treatment. Study results suggest that group treatment was well-received by HUD-VASH case managers. Additionally, group treatment provides the opportunity for greater peer support among veterans, and is associated with greater social integration. It should be noted that while some pilot programs suggested that group treatment was associated with better program outcomes, little data exists and more study is needed.

Tsai, J., & Rosenheck, R. A. (2013). Use of group treatment among case managers in Department of Veterans Affairs supported housing program. *Journal of rehabilitation research and development*, 50(4), 471-476.