

Clarification 4: Group Protocols

Clarification regarding acceptable practices for delivery of group services in a Personalized Recovery Oriented Services (PROS) program.

Guidelines

- Services provided in a group must address the barriers that impede the individual's achievement of their life role goal/s.
- Groups should be offered throughout the PROS day.
- Group services are planned and should follow a curriculum-based structure. Practitioners should map out objectives for the group within the lesson plans. These plans provide group leaders and participants with an understanding of the expected outcomes of that specific group service.
- The number of sessions may vary in duration depending upon the focus and anticipated outcome of the group. For example, Basic Living Skills/Cooking may require 3 weeks for an individual to attain his or her objectives, while Wellness Self Management/Coping Skills may take 12 weeks or longer.
- There is no regulation that requires a group note to be completed for each group. However, the facilitator is responsible for documenting attendance in the group and ensuring that individuals participate in the group sessions for the required amount of time (minimum of 30 minutes). In addition, the program should ensure that there is a mechanism for communicating an individual's progress and participation status in the service.
- On occasion, a total of 3 individuals at a time may audit a group for the purpose of:
 - Making an informed decision as part of the pre-admission process; and
 - To determine if a particular service would be useful in overcoming the individual's mental health barrier (s).
- The program should follow these guidelines for individuals who are auditing a group:
 - An individual who is auditing a group is not a part of the group on a routine basis and therefore is present for the purpose of observing only.
 - A group that the individual audits would not be identified on the individual's IRP.
 - The group audited is not considered a billable service for the individual, but the time spent in group would be included in calculating program participation time for that person.
- Successful group services are the result of effective group facilitation. An effective group facilitator should:
 - Understand the material of the service being provided and the expected outcome of the service;
 - Be aware of each individual's goals and barriers to be addressed through participation in the group;
 - Ensure that each participant understands what is expected from them in the group;

- Understand how the curriculum will assist the individual to meet objectives and achieve life role goals;
- Regularly review with each participant how the services will address barriers to the achievement of his/her goals;
- Ensure that each participant is engaged in the group;
- Teach materials, facilitate discussion, and implement practice.

To promote active participation and attendance in scheduled groups, the PROS program should consider the following:

- Schedule high demand services more than once a day
- Use a person centered planning process to assure that services have value to each individual.
 - Person centered planning is a process, directed by the individual, to identify the strengths, capacities, preferences, needs and desired outcomes of the individual.
 - The individual directs the process, facilitated with a practitioner of the individual's choosing and resulting in an individual's plan of service.
 - Discuss with the participant, individually or in a group setting, how a particular group will assist him/her in achieving his/her goals.
- Use a part of each group to review how the material covered during the day relates to the goals and objectives of the individual group participants. For example, at the end of each group, the group facilitator might ask each individual how the group related to his/her needs. This approach helps the practitioner to evaluate the material covered and helps the individual participants to better understand the focus of the group material.

Regulatory Requirements that govern the provision of group services

- *When CRS services are provided in a group format, such group size shall not, on a regular and routine basis, exceed 12 members. However, on an occasional basis, group sizes of between 13 and 24 members are permissible if the group is co-facilitated by at least two staff members, and there is documentation that the expanded group size is clinically appropriate for the service being provided. Pursuant to section 512.11(b)(13) of this Part, a PROS program may, within the specified limits, still use the service to satisfy the service frequency requirement of paragraph 512.11(b)(11) for some group participants. [14. New York Codes, Rules and Regulations (NYCRR).§512.7.b.3]*
- *When IR services are provided in a group format, such group size shall not exceed, on a regular and routine basis, eight members. However, Family Psychoeducation services provided in a group format may include up to 16 group members, if the group is co-facilitated by at least two staff members. Pursuant to section 512.11(c)(2)(ii) and (iii) of this Part, a PROS program may, within the specified limits, allow group sizes to exceed eight members, or 16 members for Family Psychoeducation groups, on an occasional basis, and still use the service to satisfy the service frequency requirement of section 512.11(b)(11) of this Part or the IR service requirement of section 512.11(c)(2)(i) of this Part for some group participants. [14.NYCRR.§512.7.b.7]*
- *.... services provided in a group format shall be at least 30 minutes in duration. [14.NYCRR.§512.11.b.12.i]*