

LAPIC Initiates Service Exchange Project in South Los Angeles

By Craig Kelley, Project Coordinator, Special Services for Groups, and Suzanne Spear, M.A., LAPIC Project Director (sspear@ucla.edu)

South Los Angeles may be one of the poorest sections of Los Angeles County, but the area is rich in local resources.

Many providers of social services in South Los Angeles have resources that could be shared with other providers, such as substance abuse counseling, mental health counseling, case management, and vocational services.

The goal of the Service Exchange Project is to facilitate such sharing and thus help substance abuse providers in South Los Angeles (Service Planning Area 6) increase the range of services for their clients without additional staff time or money. The agencies providing free services to other agencies benefit by serving more clients, which helps agencies meet their grant requirements.

Key collaborators on the project are Kathryn Icenhower, Ph.D., Executive Director of SHIELDS for Families, a substance abuse treatment agency for women and children, Cheryl Branch, Project Director at Special Services for Groups, a social service agency that serves ethnic minorities, Craig Kelley, Project Coordinator with Special Services for Groups, and Suzanne Spear, LAPIC Project Director.

"This mechanism of bartering [services] is truly based on relationship building and not formal agreements..." states Dr. Icenhower, who brought the service exchange idea to LAPIC. "Relationships last if they are nourished. That is what is important in this project, not just the actual service exchange that is occurring, but the relationship that is built that will continue to expand."

To get the project started, LAPIC sent a Service Exchange Checklist to all county-funded agencies in South Los Angeles. The checklist contains an array of substance abuse treatment services and supportive services, and asks the agency directors to check off those services that their



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agencies could offer and those that they would like to access.

To move the process forward, Craig Kelley, as the project coordinator, meets with agency directors to explain the project and explore ideas for service exchange. The information collected through the checklists and these face-to-face meetings facilitates the exchanges between agencies.

Informal exchanges between agencies are already taking place. The South Central Health and Rehabilitation Programs (SCHARP), a mental health provider in South Los Angeles, has agreed to provide mental health services to clients of the Mt. Carmel Treatment Center, a residential substance abuse treatment facility. Mt. Carmel Treatment Center helps SCHARP by providing space for SCHARP clients with drug-dependence problems.

The faith-based agency Free 'N' One can now send clients to SHIELDS for Families to receive vocational assessments, basic education classes, computer training, and community college information. In exchange, Free 'N' One helps SHIELDS find housing for drug-dependent men.

For more information, contact Craig Kelley at 213-553-1883 or visit www.lapic.net.

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