

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

NASW HIV/AIDS Spectrum: Mental Health Training & Education of Social Workers Project



NASW HIV/AIDS
SPECTRUM PROJECT

2009–2014 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Currently a profession of 600,000 strong, social workers are recognized as the largest provider of mental health services in the United States. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world. NASW works to enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain standards for the profession, and to advance sound social policies. NASW also contributes to the well-being of individuals, families and communities through its work and advocacy. NASW is the lead organization in establishing professional practice standards for social workers and setting national credentials used by public and private agencies and entities. NASW's 130,000 members are affiliated with 55 state/local level chapters in the United States and U.S. territories. NASW is nationally recognized for professional development and continuing education through on-line distance learning, skill-building competency based workshops and capacity building.

Beginning in 1995, NASW has implemented the NASW HIV/AIDS Spectrum: Mental Health Training and Education of Social Workers Project (NASW *HIV/AIDS Spectrum Project*). The NASW HIV/AIDS Spectrum Project is funded by the Center for Mental Health Services, of the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA HHS) to the NASW Foundation. The NASW Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization affiliated with NASW created to enhance the well-being of individuals, families and communities through the enhancement of social work practice.

The goal of the *NASW HIV/AIDS Spectrum: Mental Health Training and Education of Social Workers Project* is to provide the necessary HIV and mental health practice skills for providers working in social work, mental health, and substance abuse fields to enhance and promote culturally competent practice with individuals, families, and communities affected by HIV/AIDS.

Working in collaboration with NASW chapters, federal and state agencies, national and state associations, public health and welfare services, universities, and community-based organizations, the *HIV/AIDS Spectrum: Mental Health Training and Education of Social Workers Project* offers education and training to social workers and allied providers on the mental health aspects of living with HIV/AIDS.

This executive summary highlights program implementation of tasks defined in CMHS Contract # 280-09-0292, and covers contract years 2009-2014.

DESIGNING CURRICULUM SPECIFICALLY FOR THE SOCIAL WORK PRACTITIONER

The NASW HIV/AIDS Spectrum Project provides continuing professional development programs utilizing **four curricula products**: 1) Providing services in complex times: working with clients living with HIV/AIDS and co-occurring mental health disorders, 2) Addressing ethical dilemmas in an era of complex practice issues: HIV/AIDS as a case study, 3) The role of the mental health provider in treatment adherence: HIV/AIDS as a case study, 4) Untangling the issues: mental health and substance use in HIV care. Each curriculum includes a Trainer Manual, Participant Manual, Power Point Presentation, and resource materials. Content include critical 'Key Concepts': culturally competent practice, the bio-psycho-social-spiritual perspective and holistic approach, use of evidence-based interventions, and the role of social workers in providing HIV/AIDS preventive care, and treatment.

During the 2009-2014 contract, all four curricula were updated to include current evidence based bio-medical and psycho-social interventions. The curriculum was expanded to include information on the National HIV/AIDS Strategy, and the role of social workers in policy development and practical implementation at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. As requested, content

During the 2009-2014 CMHS Contract year, the NASW HIV Spectrum Project reached 6,500 participants; with 5,300 OMB/CMHS evaluation forms successfully collected. When evaluating one or more of the workshops, participants responded that the trainings provided by the NASW HIV/AIDS Spectrum Project found 84% indicating that they are both satisfied with the training and will be recommending it to a colleague; with nearly all (94%) reporting that the training helped to create a stronger understanding of the challenges HIV-positive clients face daily. Of note is that most (88%) felt “their knowledge of psychosocial interventions and mental health approaches was increased.”

was modified to address cultural and treatment related issues for older adults, youth and young adults, active military and veterans and their families, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons.

The NASW HIV/AIDS Spectrum Project has developed curricula content focused specifically on the National HIV/AIDS Strategy (NHAS). Launched in 2011, the “National HIV/AIDS Strategy: Building the Professional Social Work Response through Treatment and Advocacy” workshop created the premier opportunity for social workers and allied health and mental health providers to learn about the NHAS, dialog about barriers to care and treatment, and identify interventions at the individual, community, and systems levels.

Three PowerPoint presentations were translated into Spanish: 1) El Rol del Trabajador Social en la Estimulación de Adhesión al Tratamiento: VIH/SIDA como un Estudio de Caso, 2) Abordando Dilemas Éticos en una Era de Cuestiones Complejas dentro de la Práctica: VIH/SIDA como un Caso de Estudio, y 3) La Estrategia Nacional de VIH/SIDA: Construyendo La Respuesta Profesional del Trabajo Social.

SUPPORTING THE FEDERAL NATIONAL HIV/AIDS STRATEGY THROUGH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

In the fall of 2011, NASW received funding from SAMHSA to further the goals of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy: 1) reduce the number of people who become infected with HIV, 2) increase access to care and optimizing health outcomes, and 3) reduce HIV-related health disparities.

In spring 2012, NASW launched the NHAS – NASW Chapter HIV/AIDS Partnership Initiative (*Partnership Initiative*). The *Partnership Initiative* provided targeted funding to NASW chapters serving cities and emerging communities identified by the Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC) as having the highest incidence of HIV and AIDS. Through formal collaborations with state and local health and mental health agencies, schools of social work, and community based programs and AIDS Services Organizations, these targeted workshops brought together diverse communities of providers committed to both increasing skill and competencies across diverse fields of social work practice.

Over the course of two years, the *Partnership Initiative* reached 3,200 participants through stand-alone workshops and regional/national conferences.

STRENGTHENING THE WORKFORCE THROUGH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

Workshops are presented in collaboration with NASW Chapters, schools of social work, public and private health and mental health agencies, federally funded AIDS Education and Training Centers (AETCs) and regional offices of the U.S. Health and Humans Services (HHS), and AIDS Services Organizations and other community based programs. Through national, regional, and local meetings and conferences, the Faculty/Trainers and staff presented skill-building workshops in forty-three (43) states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

The workshop content has increased the skills and capacities of the social work workforce. Participant feedback form, completed by over 5,300 participants of NASW HIV/AIDS Spectrum Project workshops found 84% indicating that they are both satisfied with the training and will be recommending it to a colleague; with nearly all (94%) reporting that the training helped to create a stronger understanding of the challenges HIV-positive clients face daily. Most of the respondents (88%) agreed that their knowledge of psychosocial interventions and mental health approaches was increased as a result of the workshop.

The NASW HIV/AIDS Spectrum Project reached over 6,500 social workers and allied mental health care providers through the in-person skill-building workshops during program years September 2009 through September 2014.

BUILDING LOCAL AND REGIONAL CAPACITY THROUGH TRAINING OF TRAINERS

The success of the NASW HIV/AIDS Spectrum Project is rooted in a Training of Trainers (TOT) Model. During the 2009-2014 CMHS Contract years, thirty-six (36) professional social workers were recruited and trained as Faculty/Trainers with the NASW HIV/AIDS Spectrum Project. All have expertise in HIV mental health, and bring additional practice expertise in child welfare, school social work, older adults and aging, LGBT youth and families, women and gender equity, violence prevention, substance use and behavioral health, medical social work, corrections, and military families and veterans.

The TOT model includes on-going peer mentoring to build provider networks and share expertise and resources. Trainers have successfully built collaborations with state agencies (Departments of Health, Departments of Mental Health and Hygiene); with federal agencies and services (Veteran's Administration, AETCs, Health and Human Services); with Schools of Social Work (including Historically Black Colleges and Universities); with local community based organizations and non-profit and for-profit businesses. Trainees have built networks and collaborations committed to forwarding the goals of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy and the NASW HIV/AIDS Spectrum Project.

Trainer capacity is built and sustained through access to the NASW HIV/AIDS Spectrum Project Trainer Extranet. Launched in 2010, the portal provides a direct connection between Trainers, Senior Faculty, and staff. The Extranet houses current curricula products, resources and links, monitoring and evaluation documents, as well as a 'chat space' for on-line information sharing and mentoring.

REACHING SOCIAL WORKERS ACROSS THE NATION THROUGH WEB-BASED INFORMATION

The Project's webpage provides a central location for social workers seeking information about HIV/AIDS related practice and policy issues. Social workers and allied providers will find information about the National HIV/AIDS Strategy, workshop specific abstracts, resource links for mental health care providers, and information about the Mental Health Care Providers in Education (MHCPE) collaborative Partners (the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association). The webpage includes practice and policy factsheets and updates focused on critical practice issues such as hepatitis and HIV co-infection, HIV stigma and discrimination, HIV/AIDS and older adults, HIV/AIDS and Homelessness, and Youth and HIV/AIDS Prevention.

The *NASW News*, the award winning trade publication of NASW, expands the reach of HIV/AIDS practice information through on-line news articles. In November 2012 and September 2013, the *NASW News* posted articles focused on the National HIV/AIDS Strategy- NASW Chapter Partnership Initiative. In

2014, the *NASW News* highlighted the work of the Advisory Committee and a program discussion with Douglas Brooks, Director, U.S. Office on National AIDS Policy.

The Project also provides professional continuing education through the NASW website. During the 2009-2014 program years, the NASW HIV/AIDS Spectrum Project hosted two webinars presented in collaboration with the NASW Specialty Practice Sections (SPS) Lunchtime Series: 1) "HIV/AIDS Update: Infusing HIV/AIDS awareness into our everyday practice," and 2) The National HIV/AIDS Strategy: Building the Professional Social Work Response at the Micro, Mezzo, and Macro Levels of Practice." Both programs provided continuing education credits for social workers and allied providers.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE PROVIDES EXPERTISE AND LEADERSHIP

The role of the NASW HIV/AIDS Spectrum Project Advisory Committee is to provide expertise on HIV/AIDS, mental health, and relevant practice and policy issues to the HIV/AIDS Spectrum Project programming and staff. Over the course of the 2009-2014 contract, the Advisory Committee provided professionally driven volunteer leadership through curricula development and pilot testing, assisting in recruiting and identifying participants for the Training of Trainers (TOT), and served as Senior Faculty. The following persons served on the Advisory Committee: Lisa Cox, PhD, LCSW, MSW, Nathan Linsk, PhD, ACSW, Dimas Moncada, Jr., LCSW, Jill Sabatine, MSW, MPH, LICSW, Dianne Green-Smith, PhD, LMSW, ACSW, Melissa Sellevaag, LICSW, Terry Tauger, MSW, and Jeremy Goldbach, PhD, LMSW (evaluator).

In program years 2011-2014, the NASW HIV/AIDS Spectrum Project implemented a 'follow-up' web-based survey to gauge 'classroom to practice' utilization of the skill-building workshop content. This successful program reached over 300 participants. Participants responses noted that 76% implemented skills learned in one (of five) NASW HIV/AIDS Spectrum workshops, with 45% sharing information with clients.

Advisory Committee members provide ongoing expertise to Project staff and Trainers, assist in identifying key marketing areas for workshops and related projects, and represent NASW HIV/AIDS Spectrum Project - within the public social work arena – as requested by staff. Honoring the critical role of consumer involvement in HIV/AIDS clinical and advocacy efforts, the Advisory Committee is comprised of social workers across fields of practice, including persons living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

LESSONS LEARNED – MONITORING AND EVALUATION

All workshops and distance learning programming of the NASW HIV/AIDS Spectrum Project include a monitoring and evaluation component. Utilizing Participant Feedback Forms (OMB # 0930-0195), each workshop participant provides feedback on training content, qualitative assessment of knowledge and attitude change, and how content will be utilized in their practice setting(s). The Participant Feedback Forms include provider demographics such as race/ethnicity, gender, work setting, geographical location, and level of education. The data is analyzed quarterly, and participant feedback provides guidance for modifications in curriculum and/or skill-building training design.

In program years 2011-2014, as part of the NHAS NASW Chapter HIV/AIDS Partnership Initiative, a post-test web-based survey was implemented. Reaching over 300 participants, the post-test survey was designed to gauge 'classroom to practice' utilization of the skill-building workshop content. In gauging how participants utilize workshop content in their practice settings, respondents noted that seventy-six percent (76%) had implemented skills learned in one (of five) NASW HIV/AIDS Spectrum workshops; while forty-five percent (45%) had discussed or shared information with clients in their work setting.

COMMITMENT TO HIV MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING AND EDUCATION OF PROVIDERS

The *NASW HIV/AIDS Spectrum Project* continues to lead the effort in preparing social workers and allied professionals to provide care and treatment that promotes ethical practice utilizing research-driven content addressing mental health, substance use and medication adherence.

In support of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy goal of providing “specialized training [to] alleviate HIV workforce shortages,” the Project continues to grow the abilities of social workers and allied professionals to meet the emerging needs of HIV in the 21st century.

For products and program information, please visit:
www.socialworkers.org/practice/hiv_aids/default.asp

NASW HIV/AIDS SPECTRUM PROJECT STAFF

Janice Harrison, Administrative Assistant
Dina Kastner, MSS, MSLP, Chapter Coordinator
Evelyn Tomaszewski, MSW, ACSW, Project Director

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