Great Lakes (HHS Region 5) MHTTC
Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Northwest (HHS Region 10) MHTTC
Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Webinar: The Pivotal Role of Team Leaders: What we know!

December 3, 2020

Presented by the Great Lakes MHTTC and Northwest MHTTC

Presenter: Lynette Studer, PhD, Clinical Assistant Professor University of Wisconsin-Madison Sandra Rosenbaum School of Social Work

ACT Team Training Questions & Answers

1) Is there value in the team leader understanding how to calculate all the math for adherence to fidelity (on those measures that require math*)?*

I would say that there is value for a team leader to understand how to calculate the items of the TMACT (where math is required). I say this for two reasons. 1- I think it is important for the team leader to be able to explain all things related to ACT to others, including team members, stakeholders, and administrators/leadership that make decisions that influence ACT. There is actually logic behind the calculations that is important to the fidelity of ACT that can be helpful for team leaders to understand. Further, if the team leader is asked about those items and answers, "I don't know," I believe that can hurt their overall credibility/leadership. 2- People make mistakes, and I would want to double-check every item of the TMACT to assure the score is accurate. I have had team leaders (and others) find calculation mistakes (no matter how meticulously we go through the report) that end up mattering to the bottom-line score. I think being knowledgeable about all factors that impact your team is crucial to high-quality ACT team leadership.

2) What things are discussed with the ACTT meetup?

I am not sure if this is referring to the ACT team daily meetings essential to the model, or the Northwest MHTTC meetings with ACT team leaders. I will answer it assuming it is the latter (and if this is not correct, the person asking the question can email me directly). Here is the link for the ACT meetups arranged via the Northwest MHTTC and University of North Carolina ACT TA Center. https://mhttcnetwork.org/centers/northwest-mhttc/national-act-virtual-meetings-discussion-forum-address-impact-covid-19

3) **How can agencies better support hiring/training team leads that fulfill the qualities of the high fidelity team leads and not just fill the requirements "on paper"? It's a big job, and sometimes those team leads are rare finds** 😊

This is a great question and one that I think agencies should really contemplate. While I don't have an official answer, these are some of my initial thoughts.

1) I feel like the more comprehensive the job description and information about the role can be, the better. People who are looking for career advancement will be drawn to any job with "leader" in the title, but it may be a little more than they bargained for! Make a clear and thorough description of what is needed. Some people will weed themselves out on the description.

2) I would send them some information via links and have the prospective candidates read them in preparation for the interview. That might help with some basic information on ACT, and it can also help the employer see if they are serious about the job (did they read what you asked?). One of my favorite sayings is that it is easier to 'not get people on the bus in the first place' rather than 'trying to get them off the bus once on'. I fully believe that!

3) In the interview, I feel that asking even basic information about the type of values the leader holds can be telling. One of my favorite questions is for the candidate to share with me a time when team members were disagreeing over a treatment decision and explain to me what happened and if they stepped in and why. That gives some information on their style, how they handle team dynamics, and if putting the client comes first. I realize the assumption in my strategies assumes that there are candidates and you have your pick of many. I want to acknowledge that here in the U.S., we have a behavioral workforce shortage, and especially in many rural spots, there will not be multiple options. In that case, it will be more about training the team leader once in the role.

4) Make sure you sell all the wonderful aspects of the job. Yes, it is a hard job, but it is also an amazing opportunity that doesn't exist much in the mental health world. If someone really wants to run a multi-disciplinary team, and make real positive change by partnering with families & consumers for recovery, then this is a great fit! I would think this topic may be a great one to talk about more on the ACT virtual discussion forum found here. https://forum-19.freeforums.net/

4) **Are most team leaders for ACT social workers or nurses?**

In my experience, most have been social workers. I have seen a few nurses or licensed professional counselors. One potential reason for this is that social workers are trained to look at the person-in-environment and are knowledgeable about the generalist model;

they are a great fit for the complexities of working with individuals served by an ACT team.