Evaluation Findings

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Evaluation Findings

The evaluation of the day support program at the Rappahannock area community services board concluded about a week prior to this assessment. Prior to the evaluation, there was hours of resource that needed to be done. Results for the evaluation were gathered by interviews and observations. These technics help a practitioner understand how the program functions and how the findings may impact the program. Once the evaluation is complete, practitioners should be able to come up with recommendations. These recommendations need to be evidence based and helpful to the organization.

**Results**

As noted above, the results were gathered by interviews and on-site observation. The interview conducted helped me understand the bigger picture. During the observation, I was able to interview the manager of the day support program. The interview started off with the manager discussing general information about the program. During this part of the interview, I learned how the organization functions as a whole. I learned that the day support program runs for about 8 hours a day and is not open on weekends. They have a wide variety of clients with different disabilities. A good number of the clients come from group homes but some from families that drop off their loved ones. There is anywhere between 6 and 10 employees working each day. The number of employees depends on the activities that will take place during the day. The employees are well trained and help teach the clients important life skills. The manager told me “we try to get people who have a background with special needs people” (personal communication). The employees take the clients on outings and try to keep them occupied while they are at the day support. The final thing I learned from this interview is that they are funded by Medicaid and private donors. Over the course of the interview, I tried to get more specifics, but the manager would only say basic information because of “privacy reasons”.

During the observation phase of my evaluation, I was able to learn about the day to day activities of this day support program. There seems to be 4-5 people working with about 20-30 clients. While the other employees work in the office and fill out paper work. There seems to be a set schedule for the clients and the employees. The day starts off with the employees and the clients stretching and getting ready for the day. Once the morning routine is completed, a group of 1-2 employees and about 5-6 clients go on an outing. Once they return, another group goes out after lunch. Not everybody gets to go out each day, but they try to get all the clients out in the community at least once a week. As for the clients and employees who stay, they try to stay active by group activities, personal activities and watching tv. Since the staff is limited, they seem to start a activity with a client and then leave them to work with other clients. Around 2 o’clock, everybody has returned and not much is done after this point. Buses and family members begin to pick up the clients between 3 and 4 o’clock.

To conclude, the day support program at the Rappahannock area community services board seems to help the disabled population significantly. They try to help family’s by providing a place to stay during the day and teaching important life skills. Most of the staff seems well trained and is willing to do whatever it takes to help the clients. The stakeholders seem willing to change so they can better help the population being served. This is important in the human services field because the population is always changing. Even though the employees seem well trained, they sometimes seem overwhelmed. From what I gathered, there seems to be 1 employee for every 5-6 clients. This seemed to make it difficult to give each client the proper attention. How this affects the day support program will be addressed later in this assessment.

**Implications**

The results gathered can have a positive and negative impact on the day support at the Rappahannock area community services board. These findings can impact the program and the services provided. The well-trained employees and the organizations willingness to change has a huge impact on the clients and the community. Promoting my findings of well-trained employees and willingness to change could get more clients and build trust within the community. The number of clients can help this day support stay in business for years. Not only will the day support stay in business, they would be a well-respected organization in the DC area. If this day support used my findings, it would benefit them to double down on the positive aspects of the evaluation. This means they should continue to hire well qualified individuals and keep their High standards. The human services field is a tough field and not everybody has the skill and capacity to work with disabled individuals. When an organization does find someone with this talent, they need to keep them by providing a comfortable work environment and treat them fairly. The results from this evaluation, should make it clear that finding the right people pays off down the road.

The results from this evaluation may also have a negative impact on the program and services provided. There is some concern that this day support program will fail to grow into a bigger organization. One of the main reasons behind this implication is the lack of stakeholders and the lack of activities. Lack of stakeholders can cause the agency to fail because they can’t help the cliental in the proper way. This day support may get less clients if families realize that there loved one isn’t getting the proper attention. To be clear, I do think this day support program does a good job giving clients the attention they need. I’m concerned about the future and once they start getting more clients and task to complete. The implication of lack of stakeholders may affect the way this organization runs. The day support program may have to switch from being client focused to gaining financial success.

**Recommendations**

As addressed earlier, one of the biggest concerns is the lack of stakeholders. During my observation, there seemed to be 1 employee for every 5-6 clients. The employees in the office rarely helped and were not properly trained. Due to lack of employees in the care giving area, sometimes the clients were getting little to no attention. Hiring 1-2 additional employees would greatly benefit the agency and the employees. The clients would get more one on one attention and will be able to learn more life skills. The employees would also avoid burnout if they had additional help. When employees are feeling burned out, there wellbeing is affected and their job performance decreases. All of this could be avoided with adding additional well-trained employees.

During my observation, I also noticed the clients were often just sitting around and not doing much activity. This could be due to lack of employees, but I think there is more to it than just not enough employees. Yes, this day support program does a great job getting the clients out into the community. With that being said, the clients who remain indoors seem to do a minimum amount of activities. There are some activities, but not enough to keep the clients occupied for most of the day. The day support program would benefit from having additional activities added to the daily schedule. This will keep the clients active during the day which is one of the main goals of a day support program. The clients will also get the fulfillment that they accomplished something. A sense of fulfillment is important in the special needs community because their disability sometimes keeps them from achieving their life goals. These recommendations would be much easier to understand when broken down into goals and objectives.

**Goals**

Goal 1: Add additional well-trained employees to support the cliental

* Add at least 1-2 employees to help with the client’s needs
* Make sure the newer employees match the organizations high standards
* Make sure the newer employees are aware of the organizations policies
* Observe the new employees to make sure they work well with the clients
* Add additional employees if 1-2 employees are still not enough

Goal 2: Schedule additional activities for the cliental to participate in

* Make sure the activities are fun and help the clients learn life skills
* Make sure the activities are safe for everyone involved.
* Pick activities that do not take that long to complete
* Make sure the clients are happy with the activities.
* Make sure to inform the families of the new activities

**Additional resources**

The research for this evaluation helped me understand the population served and how different communities help the special needs population. These articles helped me understand what special needs individuals and families go through. One article discussed the transition from childhood to adulthood for a special needs individual. According to the report, parents will struggle to care for their special needs adult if they don’t plan early (McManus, Pollack, Cooley, Lonstein, Mann, 2013). There were numerous study’s in my research that covered this important issue. These articles made me realize how important day support programs are for families with special needs individuals. Nonetheless, parents need to take the appropriate steps before their child becomes an adult. One of these steps is getting Medicaid for a child with special needs. One study addressed the importance of getting your child on Medicaid. Medicaid waivers are one of the largest providers for people suffering from mental disabilities (Freidman, 2016, p. 244). This relates to day support programs because most clients in these programs use Medicaid. Medicaid helps family afford programs like the day support program at the Rappahannock area community services board. The final article that influenced my evaluation was an article about a brother that helps raise his special needs siblings. This article hit close to home because I have been helping raise my special needs siblings for many years. Many siblings take the parenting role once their parents get to old are pass away. When this happens, siblings have to continue to work and support their family. This is why day support programs are so important in today’s society.

References

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