The Innovative Workforce: Understand, Develop, and Sustain Clinical Teams

Dan Bizjak, MSW, LCSW, ICS, CSAC
Kimberly Emery, LMFT, LAC, MAC, CCTS

Disclaimers

• NAADAC Student Committee
• Dan – State Government Disclaimer
The Innovative Workforce: Understand, Develop, and Sustain Clinical Teams

Objectives

• Understand the trends of the current workforce and future projections for the addiction field.

• Understand the positive impacts of community and professional stakeholder engagement.

• Gain knowledge in best practices of hiring, retaining, and ongoing methods to improve the development of counselors.

Workforce Implications

• Under the Affordable Care Act, in 2016 an estimated 20 - 24 million more Americans had health insurance coverage, which included treatment services for substance use disorders.

• Demand will continue to rise for qualified and well-trained addiction and mental health (behavioral health) professionals.
Trends in the Workforce

In 2021, there were 351,000 Substance Abuse/Behavioral Disorders/Mental Health Counselors working in the field.

Typical entry level education was a Bachelor’s degree.

It is projected that the growth rate in the field between 2021-2031 will be 22%.

• Over 43,000 jobs are projected to open each year over the next 8 years, mostly to replace professionals who are retiring or changing careers.

Bureau of Labor Statistics
Benefits of Community and Professional Stakeholder Engagement

**WHO ARE THE STAKEHOLDERS?**

**WHY ARE THE IMPORTANT TO KNOW?**

**WHAT IMPACTS DO THEY HAVE?**

---

**Engaging in Your Community**

- **Reenergizing both leadership and employees.**
- **Giving employees an opportunity to see community contribution and feel competent.**
Collaboration

- Benefits of continued consultation.
- Building relationships and accepting influence from peers.
- Leadership receiving mentorship.

Best Practices: Hiring

- Be respectful of a candidate’s time
- Make yourself available
- Implement an employee referral program
- Include peers in the process
Workforce stability might be achieved by promoting perceptions of advantages to working in a particular treatment program, having organizational commitment, showing appreciation for counselors' work, and valuing employees from diverse backgrounds (Rothrauff et al., 2011).

Retaining Counselors: Advantages to Working in a Particular Program

• What are the advantages to staying with your program?
  • Paid training and CEUs
  • Paid time off
  • Supervision and Consultation
  • Competitive pay
  • Culture

Presented by Dan Bizjak, MSW, LCSW, ICS, CSAC and Kimberly Emery, LMFT, LAC, MAC, CCTS
Retaining Counselors: Organizational Commitment

- Strong organizational commitment, or the connection employees feel to their agencies, leads to:
  - Increased productivity and performance
  - Employee advocacy
  - Lower rate of absence
  - Decreased turnover

Increasing Organizational Commitment

- Transparency and clear communication
- Utilizing “job design” strategies, such as creating variety within employee roles, simplifying complex tasks, opening opportunities for development and progression, allowing individuals to make small changes to their roles
- Promote inclusivity
- Demonstrate commitment to employee wellbeing
Retaining Counselors: Appreciation

How do your staff know they are appreciated?

A lack of work-life balance is costly to organizations and damaging to the employees and their families (Laschober et al., 2013).

Presented by Dan Bizjak, MSW, LCSW, ICS, CSAC and Kimberly Emery, LMFT, LAC, MAC, CCTS
Retaining Counselors: Ongoing Mentorship

Supervisor social support and mentoring is linked to an improved sense of work-life balance.

- Encourage students to become a representative on the state affiliate board of directors and/or officer of an addiction-related student organization.
- Encourage students to volunteer at a local treatment program.
- Continue to mentor the new professionals once they come into the profession.

(Laschober et al., 2013)
“Burnout is a state of emotional, mental, and often physical exhaustion brought on by prolonged or repeated stress. Though it’s most often caused by problems at work, it can also appear in other areas of life, such as parenting, caretaking, or romantic relationship.”

The connection between high levels of reported burnout and low levels of reported social support suggests professional isolation may be largely to blame for the high rate of burnout in rural areas.

Themes that contribute to burn out among clinicians in a variety of settings include clients who are difficult to treat, high caseloads, massive amounts of paperwork, office politics, and the low level of prestige associated with the counseling occupation.
Clinical Impacts

- Minimal to no motivation
- Mood dysregulation
- Lack of compassion (compassion fatigue)
- Calling in sick or tardy
- Cancelling appointments
- Keeping office door shut
- Isolation from team
The Innovative Workforce: Understand, Develop, and Sustain Clinical Teams

Prevention Measures

Presented by Dan Bizjak, MSW, LCSW, ICS, CSAC and Kimberly Emery, LMFT, LAC, MAC, CCTS
Development Plans for Counselors

• Identifying strengths and areas of growth

• Supporting the development of a professional identity

• Encouraging the exploration of specialties and interests
Role of a Clinical Supervisor (TIP 52)

- **Teacher** – Assist in development of skills and knowledge.
- **Mentor** - role modeling, train, and support the professional identity.
- **Coach** – provide morale building, assess strengths, needs areas, and cheerleader.
- **Consultant** – monitoring performance, assessing counselor, oversight.

Workplace Safety Disproportionally Impacts SUD Professionals in Residential Settings

- More than half (52.8%) of substance abuse professionals personally experienced violence, 43.9% witnessed violence, and 61.2% had knowledge of violence directed at a colleague.
- Substance abuse professionals reported that exposure to violence led to an increased concern for personal safety (29.1%), impacted their treatment of patients (15.2%), and impaired job performance (11.8%).
- 70% of organizations increased training on de-escalation of violent situations, and 57.8% increased security measures to protect professionals.

(Bride et al., 2015)
### Key Strategies to Energize Staff

"Gostick & Elton"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adopt</td>
<td>Adopt simple rituals of recognition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute</td>
<td>Institute transparency of team challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster</td>
<td>Foster direct relevant learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate</td>
<td>Clear communication to the team of the meaning of their work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Collaborating**

- **What is being done in your area?**
- **What do you need?**
References