

Special points of interest:

- CARF News
- Safety Chat
- CSB Awards

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News from the Chief Executive Officer

Change

"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."
- Reinhold Niebuhr



Niebuhr, the American theologian, wrote this somewhere around 1937, some 18 years before I was born. It's interesting to me that here I am in 2014, three quarters of a century later, with this writing on my office wall.

Seems my whole life has been nothing but change. It's certainly been true in healthcare, and especially in the behavioral health / DD arena.

I've been thinking a lot about this lately; sometimes I wonder if we're moving too fast, if we're changing too rapidly. Having said that, the World really doesn't care what I think - it often moves on whether I want to or not.

Soon, you will be hearing from me about more change. The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities has begun a sweeping initiative to change the way public mental health and DD services will be delivered and funded. The CSB leadership and our State Association have had two meetings with the Department to start the formation of the new system of care.

One change planned is that the functions now performed by ACS, Delmarva, BHL (GCAL) and the DBHDD Regional Staff will be combined in one Administrative Services Organization. Another change is the enactment of SB 349, the CSB Bill. This new legislation draws us much "closer" to the State, thus reinforcing the intent to keep the CSBs as Safety Net Providers.

Other changes will involve how we are funded and organized, both on the MH/SA side **AND** the DD side. On top of all that are the MTM project and a host of other initiatives.

What I'd like to emphasize to you is that I believe there are some things that will not change:

- We will always hold the client at the pinnacle of everything we do and help them grow.
- We will always be transparent and honest with each other.
- We will always give our best effort and do excellent work.
- We will always be as inclusive as possible and encourage partnerships.
- We will guard and protect our reputation and goodwill.

Your willingness and ability to live by these values is something I am certain about, and is why I can sleep at night. Yes, sometime we slip, we goof up. I understand that - we are human. Let's just fix our mistakes, learn from them, and go forward. With gratitude,



DD Department Initiates Training with Autism Speaks Grant

In an effort to better support our clients living with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), ABHS sought and received grant funding to train key staff to develop a threshold level of enduring understanding of research-supported treatments and strategies. So, seven individuals have been identified to receive this training, resulting in at least one trained staff at each of ABHS seven DD service sites. Our consultant will

deliver training seminars covering the basics of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA), so that staff will have the necessary tools to gather data, interpret behavior, identify and implement environmental changes in order to increase the likelihood of clients engaging in socially validated behaviors which enrich their life experiences, increase the joy in their lives, and reduce the anxiety of those who care for them.

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Check out the newly designed ADVANTAGEBHS.ORG!

CARF is coming!

Elizabeth Stewart, Quality Improvement

What's happening with our CARF preparation? As soon as I get one last bit of information, I will send in what is called an Intent to Survey. With it, I send in our annual budget, information about all of our services, a map of where everything is located and an analysis about our performance over the last fiscal year. CARF is interested in the information and data we collect about services, access, satisfaction, efficiency, and effectiveness and how we use it to improve different things such as getting clients seen quickly and giving them the best possible treatment.

What would you answer if a surveyor asked you, "How do you know that you provide high quality services?" You could tell them that we survey our clients with client satisfaction forms that ask questions around the quality of services they receive, access to services, and improvement in functioning. We also use brief surveys to ask clients what one thing we could improve on during their visit if they did not find the service satisfactory. You could also talk about the evidence based therapy we provide including motivational interviewing and DBT among others. Finally you could discuss our audit process (both internal and external) and how the high APS scores we receive on those indicates quality in assessment, treatment planning and documentation.

Satisfaction for external customers is also very important to us. Ways in which we determine that in-

cludes surveying our various stakeholders such as community partners: judges, attorneys, parole/probation, hospitals, police, DFCS, Department of Labor, Department of Juvenile Justice, UGA, and interested citizens among many others. We often do this around the time we do our strategic planning so that we get input on what we need to focus on.

We want to provide good customer service to each other within ABHS. Over the last several years we have asked staff how they rate the service they have received from the Business Office, HR, MIS, and UM/UR. This information helps us make improvements if scores are not as high as we would like. Satisfaction of staff is monitored through our Organizational Climate Survey. From that we learned that it is important to hear and value staff opinions. One way we have done that is to solicit feedback about decisions we are making. Right now, the management team is looking at our mission statement and have sent out a survey so that we can get as many ideas as possible on what those should look like.

What would you say if a surveyor asked you a question and you had NO IDEA what the answer was?

Email Betsy Stewart at estewart@advantagebhs.org two (2) different things you could say and prizes will be awarded to the first fifteen people with **good** answers!



Supported Employment ROCK STAR!

Kudos to ABHS Supported Employment client, Mr. Lee Green, who now owns his own company, thanks to his perseverance and help from others. Mr. Green is a cabinet and furniture maker and displays his work at the Habitat for Humanity Restore. Life hasn't always been easy for Mr. Green. In 2006 he suffered a stroke, he had very limited natural supports and he was homeless. He worked hard at his medical rehabilitation, he engaged in services with Advantage and, to make a long story short, he struts proudly in his "wellness walk" with housing independence and self-employment. Mr. Green was honored in 2009 as Athens Banner-Herald Man of the Year! We are so pleased to have Mr. Green involved with our agency. He is a true inspiration for others!

Congratulations to the following winners from the Advantage CARES prize drawings April 2014

**Jonathan Henry-Gift Card/Outback Steakhouse
Lenita Peters-Gift Card/Outback Steakhouse
Brenda Smith-Gift Cards/Raising Canes**

We invite you to wear your Advantage T-Shirts on the last working day of the month to promote exceptional customer service. If you wish to be entered into the monthly Advantage CARES prize drawing, simply wear your shirt and email tdalton@advantagebhs.org.

COMMUNITY SERVICE BOARD AWARDS—April 2014



Gone the Extra Mile Award - Richard Cereneche, Crisis Stabilization Unit
Richard's selection for this award was the result of his leadership during the full implementation of the CareLogic electronic medical record system at the Crisis Stabilization Unit. He was cited for superior diligence, attention to detail, and perseverance to see this complex project through to the end. His ability to work across departmental boundaries is exceptional, and his positive attitude inspires everyone around him.

Going Above and Beyond Award - Jocelyn Lang, Homeless Day Service Center
Jocelyn was cited for her excellent customer service, dedication and caring attitude.



Made It Happen Award - Melodie Ford, Walton County Clinic
Melodie received this award for her cheerful volunteering to take on the duties of an Authorization Specialist while performing her normal duties at the front desk. Even though Melodie was only with ABHS for three months when asked to juggle these duties, she overcame the "newness" and performed like a pro.

These recognitions are awarded on a quarterly basis. All awards include a small monetary reward, a framed certificate and special recognition by the Advantage Behavioral Health Systems Community Service Board.



Redirect, Redirect, Redirect!

In our experience, staff often struggle with what to do when a behavior is not dangerous or extreme, but is disruptive and annoying. They are faced with the age old conundrum, "Do I ignore this behavior and hope

that it doesn't escalate or do I let myself get sucked into a *behavioral trap*, knowing that the behavior problem will stop (at least for the moment)?" There are actually several things to keep in mind when faced with this situation:

What is the motivation for this behavior? If the person is trying to communicate something, perhaps it is best to help them to find the most effective way to communicate what it is that they need. For example, if you have an individual who is breathing heavy and growling because he or she wants a break from an ongoing activity, it might be appropriate to remind the group as a whole that the best way to get a break is to say, "I need a break," thus providing the individual with a reminder of how to get his or her needs met without directly attending to the behavior.

How often does this happen? Is it a pattern? Sometimes when staff are dealing with a situation that is abnormal or unusual for a particular individual, they make more of the issue than is necessary. When asked about this, many individuals indicate that the overreaction occurs in an attempt to "nip it in the bud." If this annoying or disruptive behavior is a one time occurrence and has not become part of a pattern, it might be appropriate to simply prompt

some alternative behavior and reinforce when the individual gets back on track with the alternative behavior.

Will this pass if I just keep on keepin' on? Sometimes all that is needed to deal with a behavioral outburst is that you become what I call "unflappable" and continue to work as if nothing is happening, continuing with the lesson or task as if nothing is wrong (always waiting for an opportunity to reinforce any improvements in behavior - catching them being good, if you will). One mistake that is common among all people who are called upon to deal with behavioral difficulties is the feeling that, in order to **withhold attention** from the problem behavior, *they must stand there in complete silence and do nothing else. This is a mistake!* When withholding attention from a behavior, it should be as if the behavior never happened and ongoing instruction and prompting should continue. At the very least, continue working with those who are being cooperative and behaving appropriately.

If you always stop what you are doing in order to **ignore** the person, you may in fact be reinforcing the challenging behavior. If the student's motivation is to get you to leave them alone or stop providing prompts and instruction, they have just attained their goal at that point. Even if getting you to leave them alone is not the motivation of the behavior, if you simply shut down and stop doing anything, then you may be entering into a power struggle with the individual. By cutting off all forward movement, you are stubbornly not providing the individual with any information about what they could do in order to contact reinforcement and gain attention until they acquiesce and do as you wish.

The moral of the story: **REDIRECT, REDIRECT, REDIRECT** without providing too much attention!

CELEBRATE ADVANTAGE - MAY 2014

BIRTHDAYS

3rd	Steve Barber	14th	Ivy Howard
4th	Tara Branyon Amy Hill	17th	Pamela Brightwell
5th	Kimberly Brewer	19th	Natasha Hall Rise Sims Mildred Williams
6th	Melanie Hopp	21st	Donna Kane
7th	Celina Vereen	22nd	Theresa Davis
12th	Tonya Gray Rose McNeal	24th	Leslie Coleman
13th	Michael Paktinat Jimmy Usher	25th	Tracy Jarrell
		31st	Kimberly Massey

ANNIVERSARIES

May 1st

James Parker - 20 yrs.
William 'Art' Davis - 15 yrs.
Stella Young - 12 yrs.
Sherry Ferguson - 6 yrs.
Celina Vereen - 2 yrs.
Cathy Beddow - 1 yr.
Pat Hatcher - 1 yr.
Andrew Nelson - 1 yr.
Alicia Bryson - 1 yr.
Lenita Peters - 1 yr.

May 2nd

Carla Puchstein - 3 yrs.

May 3rd

Aspen Bunyak - 2 yrs.

May 15th

Kara Holcomb - 1 yr.
Ken Packer - 1 yr.

May 16th

Kathy Nowell - 6 yrs.
Eva Haley - 3 yrs.
Alicia Carter - 2 yrs.
Vanessa Franks - 1 yr.
Perry Malcolm - 1 yr.
Rise Sims - 1 yr.
Denise Soriano - 1 yr.

May 17th

Gary Mize - 15 yrs.
Robert Lomax - 4 yrs.
Ronald Woytsek - 4 yrs.
Minnie Chamlee - 2 yrs.
Jordan Hoffman - 2 yrs.
Tara Jones - 1 yr.
Matko Mosunjac - 1 yr.

May 18th

Nicholas Anderson - 5 yrs.

May 20th

Felicia Lang - 1 yr.

Welcome to the following employees who joined our ABHS Team in April 2014!

- Shadona Bennett
Jackson County Clinic, Clinician
- Tarsha Deadwyler
Homeless Day Center, Harm Reduction Specialist
- Golden Dorsey
Unlimited Services, Client Support Worker
- Connie Floyd
Unlimited Services, Client Support Worker
- Jonathan Henry
Athens-Clarke Residential, Client Support Worker



ABHS I'd Like to Thank ...

Submitted by an Advantage client

Jackson County Clinic Staff -

During these last several months, I have been through nothing but recurrent down-

falls. Thanks to caring staff and the help I have received. I am thankfully employed and in a great place. Each staff member I have come into contact with has bent over backwards to accommodate me. I want everyone to know, "**Its appreciated**". Thank you so much!!!

SPECIAL DATES - MAY 2014

Monday, May 19

9 am - Executive Management Team Meeting
1:30 pm - Management Team Meeting
Athens-Clarke County Clinic

Monday, May 26

Memorial Day

Tuesday, May 27

4:00 pm - Community Service Board Meeting

Building a Stronger Community One Person at a Time