Family Interventions

IDDT TRAINING: SECTION 4B

Family Involvement

- Involve in treatment planning and treatment
- Provide education
- Offer therapy
  - Single family or multiple family
  - Single for problem solving/support
  - Multiple for support/education
- Offer support groups
  - National Alliance for the Mentally ill (NAMI)
  - Alanon, other
Family & Client Interaction

- Approx. 1/3 of DD clients live with a family (or family like) member. Even more see their families regularly.
- Given the significant level of contact by some family members it would be helpful to have them involved in a supportive, constructive way.

Why involve the family?

- DD clients and their relatives often know little about mental illness, substance use and their interactions
- It is important to work with the family whether they are viewed as a positive or negative influence on the client
- Family treatments are effective in helping clients recover and helping families do well
Benefits of family involvement

Short-term benefits of including families in the tx process:
- Decreased stress leads to fewer relapses
- Decreased hospitalizations
- Increased housing stability

Long-term benefits
- As family members are more skillful with communication and support, they are better able to maintain the relationship with the client and foster recovery

*The Complete Family Guide to Schizophrenia: Helping Your Loved One Get the Most Out of Life* by Kim T. Mueser, Susan Gingerich

Principles of family involvement

- Engage family members on their terms—if helpful, meet with family in their home. Find out what they want and need. Be aware of what stage the family is in around their relative’s SA. Don’t push it.
- Provide ongoing and interactive psychoeducation. Give info, handouts, answer questions, ask questions to assess family’s level of understanding.
- Avoid blaming the family.
Principles of family involvement

- Keep it collaborative—the clinician may have special expertise but it is helpful to keep getting info and the perspective of the family and the client. Strengths oriented!
- Keep the work future-oriented, not on the past and its failures.
- Address the needs of the whole family, not just the client. Work on improving the overall family functioning.

Goals of family involvement

- Establish a collaborative relationship with the family
- Provide education
- Improve communication, problem-solving, and development in all family members
More goals of family involvement

- Increase social support for all the family
- Focus on decreasing substance abuse and its effects on the family
- Decrease burden of care on family members
- Decrease stress on client
- Future oriented and long term

Family attitudes and beliefs

- Sometimes the family does not know how substances impact the client’s mental illness.
- Sometimes they think it’s OK or even helpful to drink or use.
- Sometimes they pay for groceries or utilities, etc. when client has spent all his/her money on substances.
Engaging the family to be involved

- Be respectful, non-judgmental, empathic
- Explain you want to help family members become “members of the treatment team”
- Describe goals of family treatment as education, reducing hospitalizations, and promoting client independence
- Allow relatives to vent and “tell their story”
- Instill hope for positive change

Education

- Education is interactive
- Use multiple teaching aids
- The client is the expert on his/her illness
- Elicit relatives’ experiences and understanding
- Avoid conflict and confrontation
- Evaluate understanding
- Education is a long-term process
- Review material as often as possible
Family education topics

- Psychiatric disorders
- Medications
- Stress-vulnerability
- Role of the family
- Communication skills
- Basic facts about drugs and alcohol
- Motives and consequences of use
- Treatment of dual disorders

Family education: Psychiatric disorders

- Patient as the “expert”
- Dispelling myths
- Symptoms
- Establishing diagnosis
- Course and outcome
Family education: Medications

- Names
- Side effects
- Clinical effects
  - Symptoms
  - Relapse
- Nonaddictive nature
- Biological theories
- Effects of alcohol and drugs

Family education: Stress
Vulnerability model

- Disorder is caused by biological factors and environmental stress
- Coping can mediate effects of stress
- Psychiatric disorders can be improved by:
  - Medications
  - Reducing substance abuse
  - Reducing environmental stress
  - Enhancing client and relative coping
Family education: the role of the family

- Illness in a family member creates stress
- Stress and tension can increase symptoms
- Good communication is important
- Reducing stress decreases the risk of relapse

Family education: basic facts

- Common reasons for use
  - Feel better, social outlet
- Common consequences of substance use
  - Positive and negative
  - Worse course of mental illness
- Substance abuse vs dependence
- Causes substance use disorder
  - Biological (runs in families), vulnerability of persons with mental illness
Family education: Basic facts about substances

- History of psychoactive substance use
- Different types of substances
- Interactions between substances and mental illness
- Common consequences of substance use in mental illness

Family education: Treatment

- Stages of Treatment
- Principles of treatment
  - Medication
  - Decreased stress
  - Integrated stagewise treatment
  - Individualized treatment
  - Collaboration with family
Family education: Treatment

- Treatment strategies
  - Increasing activities/structure
  - Motivational counseling
  - Skills training
  - Substance abuse counseling
  - Groups
    - 12 step
    - Family treatment
  - Optimism

Family education: Communication Skills

- Active listening
- Expressing positive feelings
- Making positive requests
- Expressing negative feelings
- Compromise and negotiation
- Requesting a time-out
Family education: Alcohol and other substances

- Substance types
- Effects of substances: positive and negative
- Motives for using substances
- Consequences of substance use: abuse and dependence
- Reasons for substance use problems
- Treatment options for substance use

Problem Solving Skills training

- Define problem
- Brainstorm
- Evaluate Solutions
- Choose best solutions or combination
- Plan on how to implement solution
- Follow up plan
Topics for Problem Solving

- Alternative socialization outlets
- Responding to offers to use substances
- Dealing with persistent symptoms
- Alternative recreational activities
- Finding work
- Going back to school

Multiple Family Groups

- More economical
- Provide more social support
- Less vulnerable to effects of staff turnover
- Easier to provide multiple sources of input to family members