Designing a Trainer Certification Manual for Bridges to Wellness

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Introduction

Bridges to Wellness (B-Well) is a federally funded infrastructure and capacity-building project to deliver and sustain evidence-based substance abuse, HIV, and Viral Hepatitis prevention services to reduce the onset of substance use and sexual risk behaviors among Pima County youth between the ages of 13-17. B-Well is a collaboration between the University of Arizona Southwest Institute for Research on Women (SIROW) and Intermountain Centers for Human Development (ICHD). ICHD staff are trained to implement the SIROW Health Education for Youth (HEY) curriculum, which is a comprehensive sexual health curriculum for youth.

The Trainer Certification Manual was designed to be the primary guide for trainers who oversee the implementation of the SIROW-HEY curriculum at their site. The manual's purpose is to train on-site trainers who will have the skills and knowledge to train new facilitators on their own even after funding for this program ends.

The objectives of the manual is to guide the new trainer-in-training through the following processes for trainer certification:

- Train individuals through facilitation in at least a 12 hour face-to-face training.
- Observe facilitation of SIROW-HEY curriculum sessions and provide comprehensive, individualized qualitative feedback and quantitative scoring to support facilitator certification.
- Provide ongoing support and assistance with resources to newly trained and certified facilitators for successful and sustainable implementation.

The Process

Step 1: Introductory discussions were held with B-Well supervisors who designed the project and experts in the field to determine objectives.

Step 2: A table of contents was created to organize the materials needed in the manual, and some content was written based off of initial conversations.

Step 3: After sending the newest draft to supervisors, a revision meeting was held to revise objectives and clarify questions. Steps 2 and 3 were repeated biweekly until a first draft was finished.

Step 4: The first draft was finished around 2 months later in time for the next training session they had. During the training, I presented the manual to the two trainers-in-training to glance over and give feedback.

Finally, everyone involved in the process provided their feedback on the final draft to create the manual presented today.

The Future of the Manual

The Trainer Certification Manual will continue to be developed by the staff at Bridges to Wellness, revised and changed as needed. The draft will be used at ICHD as they move forward with their two new trainers.

Potential avenues to take to further develop the manual include comparison with other trainer certification manuals, revision of processes used to design and review manuals, and asking other professionals working in a similar field for feedback.

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The Philosophy

Philosophies developed in the process of writing the manual to uphold the integrity of the program in the certification process include the following:

The manual is a working, interactive manual: It should encourage critical thought to develop and implement an effective and sustainable intervention at the trainer’s site. Reflection questions, checklists and key points used throughout the manual are meant to help encourage trainers to ask the important questions to best address issues before or as they come up. These tools were provided in the manual to help trainers better understand and use the content.

The manual is engaging and inclusive: This idea came from the tone set when B-well facilitators lead sessions, with the intention to make all participants feel comfortable and safe to share and learn together. Fostering inclusivity is embedded throughout the manual to encourage facilitators to create an environment where participants can share openly and have honest, meaningful conversations.

The manual serves as a guide to behavior change: Through using this manual, the trainer should have all tools necessary to provide information and tools to inspire sustainable behavior change in facilitators and participants using strategies such as the Transtheoretical Model of Change, Harm Reduction, Developmental Theory, etc.

Figure 1. Maiya and Monica revising the newest draft.

Figure 2. The process of designing the manual.