

## **SOAR Dialogue Highlights**

### **3/19/15**

Attendees: Emily Carmody, Jacquetta Bullock, Elizabeth Lewin, Lisa Carter, Tracy Miller, Candice Chilton, Randy Glazier, Elizabeth McDermott, Sioux Free, Cecelia Colson, Joyce Allen, Diamond Jenkins

#### **Introductions and Updates**

- Emily Carmody, NCCEH, Raleigh- See announcements below
- Jacquetta Bullock, New Direction Ministries, Vance County- Working on a SOAR case
- Elizabeth Lewin, PATH, Statesville - Have had approvals and working on more cases
- Lisa Carter, CenterPoint Human Services, Winston-Salem - TJ is back (yay!) and currently working on two cases
- Tracy Miller, Cumberland County PATH Team, Fayetteville - Working on a case that has been sent to a hearing
- Candice Chilton, LATCH, Durham with intern Charlie Harliss- No new updates
- Randy Glazier, Women's Center, Raleigh - Please refer any cases in the area that you know of to me, no current cases
- Elizabeth McDermott, LATCH, Durham - A couple of approvals in the last month
- Sioux Free and Cecelia Colson, Pisgah Legal, Asheville- Working on several cases, two veterans have been approved recently
- Joyce Allen, Disability Advocates, Raleigh- Just met with the Immigrant and Refugee Council to start on a new case yesterday, moving offices this week
- Diamond Jenkins, Southlight, Raleigh- Have had fourth approval this month

#### **Announcements**

- Current SOAR Training is full with a long wait list-
  - Looking to schedule our next training in June
  - If someone is interested in the training, have them email me so I can notify as soon as the next training is scheduled
- Changes at DDS
  - Carrie Henry has left the agency
  - Nick Esposito has been promoted but will still help out on SOAR Recon cases as needed
  - Susan Reid will continue to help Donna Gould with initial cases and take SOAR Recon cases that she did not review

#### **Common Challenges with SOAR Cases**

Every SOAR case presents unique situations but common challenges arise in the field. This phone call provided a discussion for SOAR caseworkers to present current challenges they are facing. Fellow SOAR caseworkers offered discussion, feedback and tips.

- Transition Process After Approval:
  - Once someone has benefits how do you transfer them to housing?

- Connecting applicants to rapid rehousing programs may be a faster route into housing
      - Offers short term rental assistance while doing the application
      - Offers short term case management to look at housing supports and money management
      - If someone is approved for a permanent supportive housing voucher, they may be able to transfer from the rapid rehousing program
    - Turnover in permanent supportive housing programs is low which may mean your community sees a long wait list for these programs
    - I work with a team and the other team members do targeted outreach to recruit landlords
    - Utilize programs that target particular populations
      - Frequent users of jails
      - Veterans
      - People with disabilities
    - Tap into the community provider network
      - Go to monthly Continuum of Care (CoC) or Regional Committee meetings so you know who the providers are in the community
      - Meetings keep caseworkers updated on available resources and what resources may become available in the future
    - Current challenge is that we are running out of landlords who will take vouchers in our community- dedicating more staff to landlord outreach
  - When do you know to transition an applicant and let a client go?
    - Challenging to let some clients go because they don't feel like they can manage on their own even when they can
    - Caseworkers establish a deep connection with applicants during the SOAR process
      - You may be the first person who listened to the applicant
      - You are trusted as an advocate and provider
    - Hard to move someone to a provider they don't know
    - Tips for transition:
      - As we connect them to treatment for the application, we incorporate their new case manager into the application process
        - Can fill out 3<sup>rd</sup> party functioning report
        - Having them assist with getting medical records
        - Brainstorming who to refer for housing
        - A way of creating a team for those SOAR caseworkers that don't currently work on a team
      - As you are getting to the end of working with the applicant, discuss what it is going to be like when they transition

- Allow them time to address anxieties and visualize what it will be like
      - Who else they can call for support?
      - Other resources they can utilize (formal and informal)
    - Being honest with them that this process can be challenging
  - Have client create action plan
    - As you are working on the disability benefits, take time to discuss the housing process
    - Break down the housing search into manageable action steps
    - After they get the apartment, discuss household management tasks
  - Contact with clients after the application process is over
    - Offer that they can call you and you can call the applicant periodically to check in
    - Boundaries around contacting you in the future?
      - Rare to get phone calls but some former applicants will reach out for resources
      - If someone continues to call, you continue to refer them back to the person who can assist them
      - Having patience and knowing the nature of our clients
  - Common challenge for a lot of homeless service providers once people move into housing
- Applicant who is approved for Presumptive Disability benefits and gets the check directly spends the benefits every month before case managers can help get into housing.
  - Our team calls to check in at the first of the month and by the end of the week it is all spent
  - Presumptive Disability benefits usually come out of the SSA office quickly and often people do not get connected to a payee for these benefits
  - Tips:
    - Avenues to require a payee
      - 787 SSA form- signed by the treating physician to require a payee
        - Not a guarantee- some SSA offices don't mandate even with a form
        - Discuss with applicant before you do that
    - Knowing our boundaries of what we can and cannot control
      - A person may make choices that we don't agree with
      - Self-care to recognize where our boundaries are
      - Recognizing that all of us have patterns of behaviors that may not help us
      - As a caseworker, it is difficult to watch folks make tough choices over and over

- Motivational Interview Training
  - Great skill to have as a caseworker
  - Getting to the heart of what the applicant values
  - Offer support in accomplishing goals that match their values
- Cecelia found a statewide payee service (Eastern Carolina Payee Services)
  - Not a long application for payee services
  - Actually has applicants set up their budgets and work with them to send weekly check and will deposit money into bank accounts if they have one
  - 252-753-1111, Cecelia will send application to Emily to share

**Next SOAR Dialogue Call is on Wednesday April 15th at 10 AM.**

**Register for the call by following this link: <http://www.ncceh.org/events/872/>**