

INTERVIEWING PROBATIONERS WITH A SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

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USING THE AMERICAN SOCIETY
OF ADDICTION MEDICINE
(ASAM)
CRITERIA TO GUIDE YOUR
QUESTIONS

(while being aware that
you don't know what
you're doing)

ASAM PLACEMENT, CONTINUED STAY AND DISCHARGE CRITERIA

- Intoxication or Withdrawal Potential
- Biomedical Conditions or Complications
- Emotional/Behavioral Conditions and Complications
- Treatment Acceptance/Resistance
- Relapse/Continued use Potential
- Recovery Environment

INTOXICATION OR WITHDRAWAL POTENTIAL

- Is there any notable evidence of current impairment?
- How long ago was the use?
- Is the substance use disorder being managed with Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT)?

BIOMEDICAL CONDITIONS OR COMPLICATIONS

- Is there a medical injury or illness that would cause acute or chronic pain?
- Are there medical issues that would compromise recovery or compliance?

EMOTIONAL/BEHAVIORAL CONDITIONS AND COMPLICATIONS

- Are there co-occurring disorders present?
- If so, are they being managed?
- Is there a history of stability excluding the substance use disorder?
- Is there a history of thinking errors not necessarily related to the substance use disorder?

TREATMENT ACCEPTANCE/RESISTANCE

- How motivated is the individual to participate in his or her probation requirements?
- How necessary does the individual perceive the requirements?
- How much responsibility is the individual willing to take for his or her behavior?

RELAPSE/CONTINUED USE POTENTIAL

- What is the length of abstinence?
- How many treatment episodes or relapses did it take to achieve abstinence?
- How does the individual define or make sense of his/her addictive behavior?
- What is the plan to maintain abstinence?
- What is the individual's perception of the risk for relapse?

RELAPSE/CONTINUED USE POTENTIAL

- How is the individual managing and coping with life stressors?
- What type of treatment is the individual engaging in, and is it helpful?

RECOVERY ENVIRONMENT

- Who is aware of the history of the substance use disorder?
- Is there stable employment?
- Is there burdensome financial debt?
- Is there an adequate support network in place?
- How stressful/supportive is the home life and employment setting?

RECOVERY ENVIRONMENT

- Does the individual reside with someone who has an addiction or who is prescribed controlled substances.
- If there has been legal action, what is the status?

THE DEVIL'S IN THE DETAILS

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

- Establish a rapport - beginning with introductions and description of process
- Be nonjudgmental in tone
- Be aware that you are training them on the process of meeting with the Board
- Ask a lot of open-ended questions
 - Tell us how you came to be on probation.

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

- Assume you don't know the answers
- If your question isn't answered, or doesn't make sense to you, ask it again or acknowledge that the answer doesn't make sense. Do not be afraid to be redundant.
- Your job is not be an evaluator or therapist

EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS RELATED TO DIMENSIONS

- ASAM Dimension 1 (if necessary):
 - How are you managing withdrawal?
- ASAM Dimension 2 (if necessary):
 - How are you taking care of yourself physically?

EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS RELATED TO DIMENSIONS

- ASAM Dimension 3:
 - So why do you think this happened?
 - What do you think made you vulnerable to this event?
 - If depression or anxiety is obvious, comment on it with a simple observation. If the individual confirms your observation, ask them how they intend to address the issue.

EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS RELATED TO DIMENSIONS

- ASAM Dimension 4:
 - Often this is obvious in the individual's level of defensiveness and responsiveness.
 - What do you think you need to do so this doesn't happen again?
 - What would help make this process meaningful to you?

EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS RELATED TO DIMENSIONS

- ASAM Dimension 5:
 - Can you tell us about your history of addiction?
 - What are you doing to address this?
 - Where do you think you're vulnerable?
 - How is treatment going?
 - How are the groups going?

EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS RELATED TO DIMENSIONS

- ASAM Dimension 6:
 - Tell me about your support system.
 - How is work (or school) going?
 - Can you tell us about your history of arrests?
 - Where are you with the court requirements?

WHILE ASKING THESE QUESTIONS, LOOK FOR:

- Symptoms
- Functioning
- Insight

POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS

- If you need more information prior to making a decision, you may want to obtain:
 - A description of the event(s)
 - Police reports
 - Probation reports
 - A Mental Health/Substance Use Assessment

POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS

- If you are deciding how to handle a relapse, consider the following:
 - How significant was the lapse/relapse?
 - How did DOPL find out about the lapse?
 - What changes has the person made as a result?
 - How are the ASAM Dimensions affected?
- Keep in mind that the appropriate level of treatment is predictive of success

THERE IS AN INHERENT TENSION
BETWEEN BEING SUPPORTIVE AND
PROVIDING GUIDANCE, AND HOLDING
INDIVIDUALS ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR
BEHAVIOR AND PROTECTING THE PUBLIC.
IT IS OUR DUTY AS BOARD MEMBERS TO
CONSTANTLY STRUGGLE TO ACHIEVE THE
APPROPRIATE BALANCE BETWEEN THE
TWO.