Creating a Community Mental Health Collaborative

SERVING OLDER ADULTS IN LOW INCOME HOUSING
Linkage Project

- Housing and Urban Development ROSS Grant awarded to Atlanta Area Agency on Aging in partnership with Atlanta Housing Authority in 2007

- Vision – AHA communities become senior and disabled friendly environments allowing residents to remain independent in their community

- Coordinated through meetings of resident services coordinators working in collaboration with Visiting Nurse Health System Case Management and aging/health services providers
Atlanta Area Agency on Aging
Lifelong Communities Principles

- Social interaction and engagement in meaningful activities
- Connections to transit and vital services
- Walk-able communities and connections to surrounding area
- Integration of active living to promote social and physical health
Linkage to Mental Health Services: A Primary Need

- Request for Assistance with Disruptive Behaviors
  - Inappropriate outbursts
  - Paranoia/delusions
  - Changes in personal hygiene
  - Isolating behavior
  - Forgetfulness, repetitive requests
  - Unable to maintain apartment in accordance with lease agreement

- Behaviors often resulting in lease violations and risk of eviction
High Risk Population

- Epidemiological Catchment Area study showed higher rates of mental illness among group-quarters residents compared to community residing older adults
- Epidemiological survey of six Baltimore public housing sites showed 57.6% prevalence over life and 27.9 percent prevalence in a month
- Public housing vs. community: mood disorder (4 to 1 ratio), schizophrenia (11 to 1 ratio), Substance abuse (3 to 1 ratio)
Need to Create an Environment Where Services Are Easily Accessible

Because……

- Older adults who have been served by public MH services are losing and being lost to services
- Negative prior experience with psychiatric treatment
- Late onset of illness and no experience in seeking psychiatric services
- Fear of losing housing
- Independent living
Collaborative Care Model Initiated

- Workshop with AHA, management company representatives, resident services coordinators and providers
  - Signs and Symptoms of illness
  - Introduction and Access to local services
  - Clarification of housing and referral policies and procedures
  - Subsequent MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID training
Collaborative Care Team

- Fuqua Center for Late-Life Depression/ Emory University – on site psychiatric evaluation and treatment
- Atlanta Housing Authority Resident Services Coordinator
- Visiting Nurse Health System – LINKAGES Social Worker, Case Management, Nurse (Transitions in Care), Psychiatric Home Health Nurse
- Primary Care Providers
- To Come: Fulton County Mental Health, Peer Support Specialists, Emory School of Nursing
Mental Health Collaboration

- Referrals come from resident services coordinators
- Monthly LINKAGES meetings
  - Mental health related case conferences
- Administrative Mental Health Workgroup on Policies and Procedures
  - AHA ADA Specialist, AHA Resident Services, AHA General Counsel, Fuqua Center, VNHS
Successes

- Avoiding evictions
- Restarting/initiating psychiatric treatment
- Linking to primary care
- Residents moved to appropriate level of care
Challenges

- Interpretation of Fair Housing legislation
- Continued professional case management

Ethical Issues (Blass et al, JAGS, 2006):
- Establishing the treatment contract vs. right to refusal
- Protecting confidentiality vs. patient protection
- Protecting autonomy vs. asserting beneficence
- Treatment termination vs. open-ended treatment
- Cost vs. benefit of care
Georgia’s Challenges

- Do we know what the need is for supportive services for older adults with mental illness living independently?
- What are our workforce capacity needs?
CARE MANAGEMENT UNIT
VISITING NURSE HEALTH SYSTEMS

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