

The Client:

Department of Public Welfare

The Need:

To assist vendor case managers and job developers to better serve clients with serious barriers to employment, the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare sought to develop a two-day training seminar series, delivered monthly throughout the state, to enhance vendor staffs' ability to identify barriers including substance abuse, mental health issues, domestic violence, and HIV-related problems.

The Project:

In December of 2002, InspiriTec was awarded a contract to provide the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) with Specialized Case Management Training. The project delivered a skills-based training that allows case managers and job developers to better serve their clients with serious, and sometimes hidden, barriers to employment. InspiriTec collaborated closely with BETP and other consultants in the design and development of this two-day curriculum focusing on the issues of Domestic Violence, Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Chronic Medical Issues such as HIV. The curriculum developed for this seminar includes the following content:

Understanding Hidden Needs

- Identify potential barriers for DPW clients encountering issues of domestic violence, mental health, physical health and substance abuse.
- Articulate the cultural context that influences how clients experience barriers to job placement.

Effective Case Management

- Identify how each stage of Case Management (Assessment, Planning, Networking, Monitoring, and Advocacy) and Job Development can be used to assist clients who are encountering barriers to job placement.
- Creatively assess opportunities to enhance collaboration between the client, Case Manager and Job Developer.

Job Placement and Retention

- State techniques for how to match a client with an appropriate job opportunity based on client skills and employer needs.
- Document and manage information critical for the Case Manager and Job Developer.
- Enumerate successful job search techniques for clients with barriers to job placement.
Articulate successful job retention strategies.

InspiriTec relied on its vast network of agencies and other contacts to recruit and engage professional trainers, who are themselves persons with disabilities, as a means of increasing the efficacy of the training experience. Curriculum developers prepared InspiriTec's team of trainers for the seminar delivery through a rigorous "train the trainer" phase of this project.

Over 600 social services professionals at various BETP-funded agencies across the state were required to participate in this training. InspiriTec coordinated a successful outreach strategy that utilized a website to disseminate seminar course descriptions, trainer backgrounds, and location information. In addition, participants could view available seminar dates offered and complete an application online profile. InspiriTec reviewed and approved applications and upon approval the system automatically emailed the participants with their approval notice and information to finalize their registration. InspiriTec has processed over 500 applications.

InspiriTec delivered this training on a monthly basis to approximately fifty attendees at sites alternating between Philadelphia, Harrisburg and Pittsburgh. InspiriTec has designed and implemented a seminar evaluation form offered to all attendees at the conclusion of the two-day seminar. This information is used by BETP and InspiriTec to monitor program quality and opportunities for improvement. In addition to the training materials presented in three-ring binders during the session, "graduates" of the seminar can find this information available for download via the website.