

BASIC NEEDS INFORMED CURRICULUM

Goals of this workshop

The goal of this curriculum is to encourage consideration of basic needs and poverty in general assessments, intakes and ongoing social service, schools' interactions with both children and families, and medical care delivery to children and families.

Today we'll provide you with information, as well as opportunities to reflect and discuss to help you:

- Learn what basic needs are and why many of the people you serve may lack them
- Identify behaviors and conditions that may spring from a lack of basic needs
- Recognize and overcome barriers to discussing basic needs with the people you serve
- Help other providers to have basic needs conversations with the people they serve
- Develop strategies to link people to basic need resources
- Consider engaging in advocacy to win more support for basic needs

Along with these specific goals, we will ask you to think about the challenges facing people in a different way. We often concentrate on fixing the client, patient or student. We might decide that the best way to help is to get a person into therapy, a parenting class or job skills training. Sometimes, however, problems are as simple as a lack of resources. Missed appointments may not show that the person is depressed or lacks motivation. Maybe she just does not have transportation. When a young child is showing up at pre-school in dirty clothes, it may not be parental neglect. It may simply be that the family cannot afford to use the Laundromat.

Learning to recognize when behaviors are caused by resource problems will change your practice.

- You can avoid sending people to interventions that they do not need and thus make services you provide more efficient.
- Slots in intensive programs can be reserved for those who truly need them.
- You can solve problems quickly. (Imagine if all that's needed to improve school attendance is to make sure that a family has laundry detergent.)
- Providing basic needs is usually cheaper than therapeutic interventions.
- This approach may increase a client, student or patient's self-esteem and sense of competence. (You don't need parenting classes. You're already doing a great job. You just need some help making sure that your kids have toothpaste and shampoo.)



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