

PROMISING PRACTICES



Extreme Customer Service piques interest of patients and staff members

By Mary M. Massman, Center for Behavioral Health

Like many behavioral health and opioid treatment programs, the [Center for Behavioral Health](#) (CBH) clinics throughout the United States posted a revolving set of flyers about preventing the spread of disease and other healthcare topics.

As beneficial as these flyers were, many patients' senses had seemingly dulled to the messages. Even staff members were beginning to nonchalantly view the topics.

That's before Extreme Customer Service was introduced. People cannot be indifferent to customer service that's radical in its delivery—and more than a flyer hanging on the wall.

Extreme Customer Service was conceived as an occasional monthly theme in one of CBH's clinics. The concept was met with so much enthusiasm that it has become a monthly theme at every CBH location.

CBH managers are asked to use their imagination to craft a variety of creative monthly Extreme Customer Service themes. Examples of their themes include:

- During Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a mammogram mobile performs free mammograms for patients.
- Police officers conduct a bicycle and motorcycle safety class in the parking lot for patients and their families during Bicycle and Motorcycle Safety Month.
- Employment is a monthlong theme every year and each week features a different activity to help patients prepare

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to find a job. One week focuses on writing résumés and the next week on dressing appropriately for an interview. Then mock interviews follow the next week. In the final week, vocational rehabilitation counselors host a job fair. Several CBH clinics have computers for patients to create and print their résumés.

- Throughout July, CBH clinics feature a weekly event highlighting a different aspect of going back to school and school safety. The programs are part of a monthlong drive for donations to fill backpacks with school supplies for the clinic patients' children.
- Each week during Health Fair Month marks a different emphasis—all free. One week, a dental technician demonstrates dental hygiene at clinics and distributes toothbrushes and toothpaste. In another week, the local health department offers cholesterol testing and takes blood pressures. In the third week, HIV and hepatitis C screening is performed on site. In the fourth week, a nutritionist meets one to one with interested patients.

Staff members enjoy preparing the Extreme Customer Service themes, and patients say they learn through participating in the various activities.

A recent CARF survey report for a CBH clinic in Louisiana commented that the organization “has developed and implemented a person-centered treatment philosophy and a staff training program that is exceptional. This exemplary practice includes an element of staff training where each month there is a theme related to person-centered treatment that is the focus of staff trainings and in-service presentations in all clinics.”

The survey report commended “the organization’s forward thinking and emphasis on staff training and person-centered care.”

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