

Program Name: Caring Communities

Your name and date: Eileen Morris

Program Evaluation Template - This template is to be used as an evaluation tool during our program investigation. The questions are designed to assist in determining what elements of each program we want to consider for incorporation into our programs. Feel free to add additional notes as you use the template. This template is the foundation for your presentation about the program you have researched. (Version #4)

Program or Concept Purpose or Mission Statement:

Caring Communities was developed by Robert Judd when he was still working at Sonoma County People for Economic Opportunity. He applied successfully for a HUD grant to fund the program. Immediately following his grant proposal, Judd was hired by the Sonoma County Community Foundation. Consequently, he was not involved in the implementation of the program, which is now in its fifth year. For a variety of reasons, there have been a number of changes made -- throughout this template, I'll provide information on both Judd's original vision and the way the program has been implemented.

The purpose of the program was to help homeless people who had failed many times over take control of their lives.

Principles or Values: (implicit or expressed)

A healthy sense of self esteem and the ability to trust others are prerequisites to making changes.

Program Structure or Key Points:

The program was designed to serve "the notorious clients—those who have failed and failed and failed," said Judd. "We wanted to create something that wouldn't just be another scenario for failure for them."

The common denominator with long-term homeless people, Judd said, is severe trauma somewhere in their history—trauma which destroys their self esteem and their ability to trust. He suggested that, without self esteem and trust, people can never change.

Judd envisioned several components to the program:

- ❖ An "Outward Bound"-like aspect in which participants would go on wilderness adventures which would challenge them physically, emotionally and mentally. These adventures would provide participants with "break-through" experiences which would allow them to realize their own strengths and capabilities. The team-work involved in the adventure would foster trust. In addition, the wilderness adventure would include an opportunity to do some kind of community service.
- ❖ A "caring community" made up of: a staff of formerly homeless people; professional case managers; and the program participants.

- ❖ A weekly, communally cooked meal followed by a “business meeting” in which participants would discuss their goals and report on what progress they had made or problems they had had. The meeting would be structured like a 12-step program, and participants would be sponsored by formerly homeless staff people.
- ❖ Few expectations beyond the establishment of trust. “The case manager would be saying, ‘I’m not here to sell you wellness. I’m here to do what I can for you. Hopefully, someday you’ll trust me,’” said Judd. “This calls for case managers who are very patient.”

In practice, the program has been implemented differently.

For a number of reasons—including work responsibilities, Welfare to Work obligation, family obligations, etc.—participants are unable to devote much time to the program. Similarly, it was difficult to recruit formerly homeless people to help staff the program, so the staff is made up of professional case managers. There have been no outdoor adventures or shared meals. There is a weekly support group meeting and an annual picnic. Support groups members may be eligible for one of the housing vouchers allocated to the program. There are about 15 active participants.

Participants have been reluctant to facilitate their own meetings—a fact which case managers hope to address in the next month with a leadership training course.

How does the program define or measure success? (What evidence does the program provide to show success?)

Describe a successful participant.

To answer this question, I talked to Judd, Gianetta Dietrich of SCPEO and Outward Bound Vice President of Programs Louis Glenn. We have had a presentation about the 12-step approach and know that success in these programs is hard to measure and is mostly communicated anecdotally.

For Judd, success is when participants: have break-through experiences enabling them to identify the causes of their homelessness and a course of action; establish a trusting relationship with a peer or staff member; and, ultimately, come full circle by becoming a Caring Communities staff member. Because the program was never implemented according to his design, its success has never been measured.

For Dietrich, success revolves around housing. “We have participants who have been housed for several years now. When we’re talking about chronically homeless people, that is huge.” Caring Communities is one part of SCPEO’s housing program, so it is difficult to measure what Caring Communities is responsible for and what can be attributed to other aspects of the housing program.

Most of the evidence that Outward Bound succeeds is anecdotal, but there are a few exceptions. The State of Florida has contracted with Outward Bound to provide services to kids who have had problems with the criminal justice system. Participants have a lower rate of recidivism and are more likely to graduate from high school than their peers in other programs, according to Lewis, who is sending me the data to back this up. In addition, he is sending a study which shows that an Outward Bound program in Vermont improved the lives of at-risk kids. This study includes years of follow-up, Glenn said. Outward Bound Australia (outwardbound.com.au) has done a lot of research on the effectiveness of their programs. Their research dates from 1969. Recently, they compiled the results from several of their studies and concluded (among other things):

During the course: Some 68 percent of participants see improvements in academic performance, emotional control, leadership abilities, self-esteem, teamwork, and time management.

After-effects: Participants are tracked for 18 months after completion. The 68 percent success rate holds and even improves. The researchers found that physically-based intervention programs are more successful than cognitive, behavioral or other therapies.

Particular strengths: Outward Bound has its most positive, lasting effects on participants' self-confidence and their ability to manage their time well.

Program length and results: In general, the longer the program, the more dramatically successful the results.

At what level would a participant enter the program?

The program would be appropriate for those clients who do not respond to traditional case management. It could be empowering for both singles and families.

Complete the table below.

Program Approach (Application)	Method (How it's used?)	Outcome (What would it look at COTS?)	Measurement (How do we measure success?)
Human Growth & Transformation	The program as designed and/or implemented involves a variety of techniques: peer support and empowerment; peer mentors; community dining; a 12-step approach; wilderness adventures; housing vouchers.	<p>We could go whole-hog and try to incorporate as many of Judd's elements as possible. Caring Communities could jump-start your participation in COTS programs, or be a tool of last resort.</p> <p>Glenn said he believed any Outward Bound-like program involving the homeless should be carefully constructed. "Plop somebody down in a situation that's too difficult, and you're setting them up for failure." He suggested that it would be ideal to start with some half-day courses, build up to an overnight, and then, finally, a days-long excursion. He also said he thought any wilderness program should be paired with a social skills-building</p>	A Caring Communities approach would definitely not involve an expectation of quick results. But I think our provisional "We are successful when our clients make decisions which will enable them to find and keep housing" would be an appropriate measuring stick—especially if we refined that definition by stating and celebrating all the decisions and revisions which are necessary before one can even begin to look for housing—ie., staying healthy, rejecting abusive relationships, finding work etc.

		class. "We help them get the basic foundation skills of self esteem and trust, but they need a lot more than that to succeed out in the world."	
Staff Interaction with Clients	Case managers would have to drop any expectation of client performance.	This would depend on how we decided to implement ideas from this program.	
Client-to-Client Interaction	There are lots of possibilities here—for peer support and peer mentoring.		

<p>Client Self-Help</p>	<p>There are great possibilities here for clients to develop and practice skills and behaviors which they need to succeed.</p>	<p>”</p>	
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Does this promote a responsible and accountable lifestyle? How?

Yes. Participants help one another and perform community service.

What are the client decision points in this program? (Are they clear and identifiable?)

The decision points are a bit fuzzy—self consciously so. The program is designed to help clients who don't respond well to demands. A client will have to decide to participate—but his level of participation could be minimal until he decides to trust his peers and his case manager.

What would you change to make the program or concept more useful in our setting?

Additional Issues:

- **Staffing Requirements** (Any additional staff? Any staff training requirements?)

Staff time would have to be devoted to program development, to training and to implementation.

Additional Comments (Tell us what you really think.)

What makes you like this program or concept? What makes it appealing or motivating to the clients? How would you sell this to the clients?

How would community support be generated for this program?

I like aspects of Judd's ideas very much. It's tender-hearted, which may be just what a lot of clients need before they can become ready to set and achieve goals.

Community support might be a tricky thing—especially if people decided to look at this as some kind of summer camp for homeless people.

What makes you feel uneasy about this program or concept?

The program as Judd envisioned it would require clients and staff to make large time commitments—something very few people can do. PEO—either because of lack of will or resources, did away with many of the time-consuming aspects of the program.

Also, even though HUD funded the program, I think the current political climate is kinder to programs which have clear goals and easily-measured outcomes.

Sources:

Interviews Robert Judd, Giannetta Dietrich, Louis Glenn

Websites: outwardbound.com; outwardbound.com/au