

Focus Group: Older Adults

October 15, 2014 at 1080 Emeline, Santa Cruz, 9:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Facilitated by Dr. Jerry Solomon

Staff in attendance: 5

Number of person in attendance: 20

Question: What is missing? What are the most important needs?

- Transportation
- Inexpensive transportation
- Psychiatric access
- Continuity of care once diagnosed
- Community resources; need information about what is available.
- Hoarding is an issue. Creates isolation. Who do we turn to for help?
- Bullying is an issue.
- More peer workers are needed.
- How do we respect privacy vs. “your house is a mess” (e.g., hoarding)
- Civil liberties vs. interventions.
- 5150s should be done in kind, humane way. Shouldn’t use hand cuffs.
- Need more space in facilities (psychiatric)
- Trained mental health workers should respond with police; mobile crisis.
- System navigator needed to help people access services/resources.
- Need low cost legal services
- Integrated care needed (mental health, physical health, substance abuse)
- Under-representation of substance use issues in elderly; not recognized as an issue. May be alcohol/drugs, or over medication.
- Dual diagnosis services are needed locally.
- Nutrition. Oregon model of distributing food from restaurants.
- Immediate/crisis response is needed.
- Assessment and diagnosis needed.
- Interim care.
- Coordinators do a good job, but psychiatrists at facilities may not be able to hold a person.
- Money is an issue.
- Community Connection food program has peers providing nutrition and support.
- There are some “clever people fooling psychiatrists into believing they are ok”. Make sure psychiatrists are well trained.
- Need less turn over in psychiatry and other staff. How do we retain staff?
- Have addition of medical issues as people age. Psychiatrists need to take into account other medications people may be using.
- Need safe, secure, affordable housing!

What is the priority? (If you had a million dollars what would you spend it on?)

- Housing: safe and affordable
 - crime against (homeless) older adults
 - medical issues get worse (for homeless)

- Have services available at housing
- Double the number of social workers. If we have more, we can avoid burn out of staff.
- Storage units (for older adults that live in small apartments)
- Need more staff trained to do mobile crisis, case management, and system navigation
- CIT training for police.
- A new team that serves all the needs (including housing and transportation)
- Outreach to help let people know what services are available
- Create program to address elder abuse (financial, mental, & physical)
- Mobile crisis team; have plain clothed police and mental health workers respond.
- Peer services. Train and employ people with lived experience.
- More food programs. More meals, better nutrition.

What is needed in South County?

- Not enough bilingual doctors/psychiatrists.
- Cultural sensitivity.
- South County is more family oriented; need family friendly services.
- In home visits.
- Transportation is an issue.

What is working?

- We are talking (focus groups and community meetings)
- Grey Bears provide brown bags of food for house-bound people.
- Senior Network Services: meals on wheels, social events (like dances). Financial help. Have counselors that go out to see house-bound people.
- Senior Center.
- Family Services Senior Outreach. (Barbara Salada)
- Senior Network has a yellow booklet that lists resources.