

Wallowa County Vitality Summit – Presenter Questionnaire

Organization: Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness

Presenter name: Stephen Kliewer

Email: Stephen.kliewer@gobhi.net

Phone: 541-426-4524

Website: wvcw.net

Mission and purpose in Wallowa County:

Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness (WVCW) is a full service community-based program focusing on the mental health and life enrichment needs of the citizens of Wallowa County. Programs focus on people with mental and emotional disturbances, those with severe mental illness, people with drug and alcohol abuse issues, and people with developmental disabilities. Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness is the primary provider of these services in Wallowa County. WVCW serves as the Community-Based Mental Health Program (CMHP) for Wallowa County. The Center also works with people seeking to improve their life by providing tools for better living (stress reduction, anger management etc.) Programs are designed to serve individuals, families and groups.

The vision of Wallowa Valley Center is “to ensure mental wellness for all Wallowa County residents and instill a sense of community and belonging in each individual.” The mission of the organization is “to facilitate wellness, recovery and community integration by providing supports and services that empower personal action.”

Key metrics/outcomes/impact for the past year:

This past year we served 390 individuals. Of these around 60 were considered to have severe and chronic mental illness. We provided 5,868 hours of individual therapy, augmented by many additional hours of advocacy, documentation, coordination, and support that are not considered formal therapy. We also provided 854 hours of group therapy. The Medicaid services we provided were worth 125% of the funds received.

Current top 3 priorities/focus areas:

1. Currently Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness is immersed in the effort being put forth in Oregon to transform the health care delivery system. The hallmark of this transformation is integrative care. Integrated care – also known as coordinated care - focuses on more coordinated and integrated forms of care provision. Integrated care is a response to the fragmented delivery of health and social services being an acknowledged problem in many health systems. With integrated care people’s health issues are looked at in a wholistic manner. The focus is not just on physical or mental health, but also on social factors that influence health, such as housing, food security, education, family environments (parenting) and the like. This means that co-ordination and collaboration are critical and a variety of services are wrapped around the person. Physicians might work with a person’s physical issues, collaborating with mental health professionals to address emotional needs, while at the same time a program such as Building Healthy Families might work to improve the family environment and Community Connections might help ensure that the family’s house has heat. A community health worker might help the family engaged in whatever services they need and help them get enrolled in an insurance program.

2. Recovery Focus: The goal is to help people discover optimum quality and satisfaction with life. It is a personal process of overcoming the negative impact of diagnosed mental illness/distress despite its continued presence. The recovery model focuses on nine essential components including: Clinical care, family support (if available), peer support and relationships, Work and/or meaningful activity, supporting meaningful control over their lives and treatment, and minimization of stigma.

3. Improved Access/Increased Engagement: Studies show that over a lifetime almost half of all Americans will suffer from diagnosable mental illness. While only 6% of the people will suffer from severe and chronic mental illness, there are still many people whose lives could be improved from appropriate mental health care. It is our hope to lower stigma, educate people about how our program can help, engage people in care, and provide affordable and effective services.

Challenges that you most need help with, either from another organization or the community at large:

1. Stigma is a huge issue for people with mental illness. The engagement of the community in helping protect and help people with mental illness is critical. Community members individually, or organizations can take courses such as Mental Health First Aid which enable them to provide a positive first response to people with mental illness.
2. It is difficult for people in recovery from addictions issues, especially alcohol issues, to find places to have a meal, or spend time with friends that are alcohol free. It is also difficult for people with emotional/mental issues to find places to socialize. The development of activities or safe place for people to gather would be extremely helpful.
3. Although we are limited in our ability to use volunteers in our work, it would be possible for the community to get involved in supporting the program through the developing public outreach programs, fundraising and in helping with logistical issues.

Top 3 opportunities you see for the coming year:

1. Increased and expanded opportunities for collaboration/coordination of care
2. Expand programs offered to the community at large that improve the overall wellness of the people of Wallowa County. Grief groups, pain management programs, stress management, chronic pain.
3. Provide Mental Health First Aid for community members

of current active/serious collaborators: We work in an ongoing manner with 4 primary care clinics, the Public Health Department, Wallowa Memorial Hospital, 2 pharmacies, 1 functional medicine specialist, The Department of Human Services, Building Healthy Families, Community Connections, local Law Enforcement Agencies (3), the School Districts (3), Safe Harbors (Domestic Violence Program), and several complimentary medicine specialists (Chiropractic, Acupuncture, Massage). So active collaborators numbers over 20.

Who would you like to collaborate with more? We can also improve our communication and collaboration with all of our community partners. We would like to collaborate more with law enforcement and the schools. We would also like to engage the various faith communities on a deeper level.