

# Minnesota Cognitive Network

April 15, 2008

## Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Evonn Westcott, Brown; Karen Determan, Wright; Kris Carbon, Wright; Carter Diers, Wright; TJ Nelson, Dakota; Dana Norgren, RRC; Randy Nikula, U.S. Probation; Amy West, U.S. Probation; Joyce Griffiths, CMCC; Jason Anderson, DOC; Eric Johnson, Carver; John Klavins, Carver; Christine Fox, Washington; Ashley Johnson, Nicollet; Richard Tieden, Hennepin; Len Anderson, NERCC; Katy O'Sullivan, NERCC; Cindy Cox, DFO; Corey Maybelline, Washington

- I. Welcome and Intros: Introductions were made and representatives from their respective counties gave updates as to cog activities in their area.
- II. Training Updates and Needs

There are two upcoming training opportunities: 4/28-5/1 in Dakota and 6/9-6/12 at U.S. Probation. TJ Nelson will be involved with both training events

- III. Training Component:  
Corey Mabel, Washington County, presented his findings regarding his thesis, "Washington County Behavioral Intervention Program: A Case Study on the Effectiveness of Reasoning and Rehabilitation Program with Offenders." The following points were highlighted:
  - Data was collected from groups from 2001- 2006
  - Clients were referred by LSI-R score with addition of the Semi-Structured Interview included with the curriculum. At first, referrals were low and medium risk clients
  - The rate of recidivism for program and comparison groups were similar with an insignificant difference
  - LSI-R scores reduced with the program group
  - Program group participants recidivated at lower offense levels

- A significant number of reoffenses with the program group were DWIs

Recommendations as a result of study: Make appropriate referrals, improve follow-up with program participants to reinforce cog skills, complete CD treatment before if an issue. Ongoing caution of a study such as this is that cog skills programs are only one thing an offender is exposed to.

Better follow up with clients: How? Give updates to P.O.s about client's progress in particular program, training of non-facilitating staff, etc...

Corey's presentation spurred a long discussion regarding probation violations and how to restructure probation to include cog or other interventions.

Wright County (Carter and Kris) discussed the implementation of Thinking for a Change in their department. Staff trained consist of 3 juvenile agents and 3 program agents. At first, they struggled with getting an adequate amount of referrals. They had decided to run 3 groups a year with juvenile males. As more P.O.s have been trained, the staff attitude toward T4C has improved. Their plan is to have 3 sessions per year and the six trainers would switch off during the groups. The curriculum begins with Cognitive Self Change, followed by Skills, and ending with Problem Solving. The groups have been made up of a mix of probation and human service kids.

There was a discussion around feedback to Wright County regarding the implementation of T4C. It was recommended to keep a reasonable continuity in terms of facilitators instead of the "platoon" of facilitators. Concerns expressed on the other side is that the facilitators may not become familiar enough with the material if they only instruct one group per year, which is a valid concern. There was further discussion about who should facilitate groups. Should workers be forced to teach groups? Most agreed that they shouldn't, however, they should be trained in the curriculum so they know how to speak the language, etc... There was closing discussion on settings/environment of cog groups and what types of clients to refer.

#### IV. Think Tank- EBP and Cog Skills Program Policy:

Not much discussion in this area, as the first 3 agenda items took the majority of the meeting. There was some discussion about a general cog policy. It was agreed that a statewide policy would have to be very general, as counties will implement programs in whatever ways that work for them. There was some agreement as to some components that would have to be included in a policy, but there was no end product that was presented. It was suggested that perhaps a few people can meet as a subcommittee. TJ Nelson and John Klavins agreed to spearhead such a committee.

#### V. Training and Marketing

Corey Mabis asked for a volunteer to take over the E-newsletter for the network. The identity of this volunteer escaped this writer.