**MHSA Building Bridges Project Manual**

**1) Introduction**

North Bay Regional Center has a long history of working with local mental health service providers and regional center vendors to meet the service needs of individuals who are dually diagnosed with developmental disabilities and mental illness (DD/MI). We have seen an increasing need for improved collaborations as well as training in identification and treatment of mental health needs in individuals with developmental disabilities. After NBRC staff attended a training funded by MHSA at San Gabriel-Pomona Regional Center, it was decided this would be a model that should be replicated for Northern California to meet our training, service delivery system development, and collaboration needs. Additionally, we recognized that the need for collaborative work continued beyond the scope of the conference itself and therefore requested funding for the full 3-year cycle. This would facilitate continued collaboration specific to each of our tri-county (Sonoma, Solano and Napa) areas.

**2) Program Development**

Building Bridges was created in recognition of the need for greater understanding regarding support for individuals with dual diagnoses, and to improve collaboration between stakeholder groups providing services to those individuals. While NBRC started with replicating a project that had been completed at SGPRC, we quickly discovered that there would be different steps to NBRC’s long-term project goals.

The process undertaken to develop and fulfill this project included:

* Identify the Grant Team and Project Manager
* Identify the stakeholder groups the conference would be targeted to reach
* Coordination and scheduling of the “Building Bridges: Meeting the Needs of Individuals with Dual Diagnoses” conference
* Contracting with Dr. Robert Fletcher, CEO and founder of the National Association of Dually Diagnosed (NADD)
* Development of marketing materials and marketing to stakeholder groups
* Conference implementation
  + Develop pre- and post-surveys
* Coordination and facilitation of post-conference county-specific taskforces
* Identification of county-specific taskforce projects
* Facilitation of county-specific taskforces
* Coordination and implementation of taskforce projects, including Mythbusters and First Responders training conferences
* Conference feedback survey

**3) Program Implementation**

The Building Bridges program implementation was broken out into 3 segments, each with an annual goal.

The first year’s goal was to hold the Building Bridges: Meetings the Needs of Individuals with Dual Diagnoses conference with Dr. Fletcher of NADD. This was held for two days in March 2012 with two different cohorts: the first cohort was for licensed and/or experienced professionals working in the mental health or clinical fields. The focus here was to provide tools and resources which could be utilized in practice to improve service outcomes for individuals with dual diagnoses. Secondly, this group included a break-out, small group activity to identify areas for expanding on and improving collaboration between stakeholders. Volunteers were solicited from small group members to form county-specific taskforces to address continued collaboration and additional project goals identified through the small group activity.

The goal of the second year was for each county taskforce, i.e., Sonoma, Solano and Napa, to take information collected after the conference and identify priority areas, or objectives, that each taskforce wanted to work on and strategize how those priorities would be addresses. As work on this second year was concluded, Dr. Fletcher would return to provide consultation and support for each taskforce.

The goal of the third year was for each county taskforce to receive the support needed to implement their priority projects and/or activity areas. For Napa County this was the Mythbusters corss-training between Napa County Mental Health and NBRC, and for Solano County this was the First Responders training.

**4) Conclusion: Lessons Learned and Next Steps**

Through the Building Bridges program, participants have come to understand the needs of individuals with a dual diagnosis and how these differ from individuals with solely mental health or developmental disabilities. Systematically, through this effort professionals working with individuals with dual diagnoses have enhanced their communication skills, streamlined referral processes, and completed collaborative cross-systems case management that improves services for individuals with dual MH/ID diagnoses.

The following major ‘lessons’ emerged from the successes of this project:

* Our stakeholder community is very interested in receiving more guidance and training in working with individuals with dual diagnoses based on participant feedback and conference attendance
* Star small: assess the feasibility of additional goals associated with the project and receive stakeholder commitments to perform additional project tasks
* Given the diversity of our stakeholder community in terms of professional background, providing more clinical-focused content would have improved the learning experience
* Identifying mental health stakeholder interest and commitment from the onset of the project would have allowed for a more focused stakeholder group, including greater incentive to complete the full 3-year cycle
* Contract with an outside agency for project management

Next Steps

NBRC and the Napa and Solano County mental health are committed to continued collaborative cross-training of staff to ensure our Memoranda of Understanding are subject to continual quality improvement. NBRC continues to meet with collaborative stakeholder groups in Solano, Sonoma, and Napa counties to meet the diverse needs of individuals with dual diagnoses. It is our hope that through increased community outreach and education regarding our service delivery systems we can improve access to and utilization of combined resources for meeting the needs of those we jointly serve.