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News, updates, stories, and more from the Center for Urban Community Services.

June 2023

Dear Friends of CUCS,

As I reflect on the stories and information we are sharing with you, I'm thinking about the diversity of programs and services that CUCS provides. The issue of homelessness is so complex and the paths towards solutions are fraught with misunderstandings and misinformation.

CUCS provides lifesaving and life enriching work one person at a time, ensuring dignity, inspiring trust, and committing to the highest quality of care. In order to do this, we meet our clients wherever they are on their unique journey and offer them all the support we can to ensure they live the healthiest and most meaningful life as defined by them.

To that end, in this report we are focusing on the Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT) teams at CUCS. Though we provide you with data, it's important to keep in mind the very complex nature of each of the clients served by IMT teams.

Our lead story about Peer Specialists gives us great insight into the depth of caring and support by our IMT Teams.

Our expert this month is Eve Goodman, Director of In-Service Training for CUCS. Eve helps us understand the critical role of staff training to ensure that CUCS consistently delivers the highest quality of service to our clients.

As always, we welcome your comments and questions and we thank you for your partnership as, together, we work towards a solution to this crisis one person at a time.

Best Regards,

Rise Roth
Chief Development and Communications Officer

Trusted Connections

"The relationship between the participants and the IMT staff is the foundation of the work we do. We work with people who have extensive histories of trauma, and they tend to be isolated from the community and have few support systems.

We endeavor to build trust with our participants by taking time to understand how they communicate their needs and understand the motivations behind their behavior. The connections we establish with our participants are used as a model to demonstrate healthy relationships and as a framework for successful interpersonal interactions in the larger community."



— Natalie Nokes, Program Director, Intensive Mobile Treatment

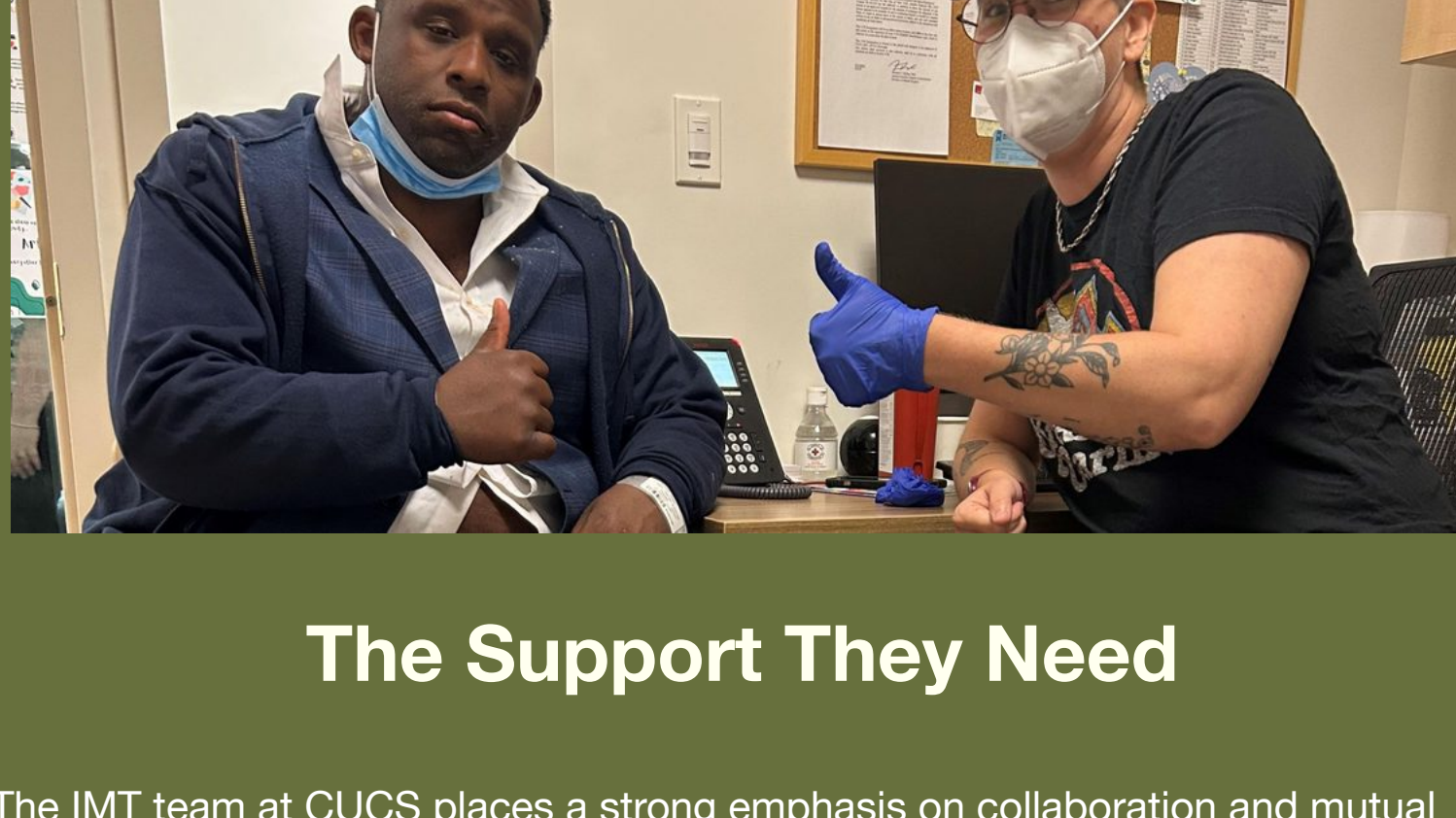
Intensive Mobile Treatment: Collaboration and Peer Support



Peer support and peer specialists have become increasingly valued in the field of mental health and other related services. These individuals bring their lived experience with mental health, substance use, the justice system, eviction, immigration, disabilities, and more, to support and empower others going through similar experiences.

One of the key benefits of peer support is the reduction of separation between the client and provider, which in turn helps to destigmatize the experiences of clients. Peer specialists share their own experiences in an appropriate way that helps clients feel more comfortable opening up and seeking help. This approach creates a sense of community and mutual support, which can be highly beneficial to clients who may feel isolated and alone in their experiences.

At CUCS, there are four peer specialists who work as part of the Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT) team with each member bringing their unique experiences and expertise to the table. The peer specialists on the team provide a level of care that is unique and highly effective due to their lived experience.



The Support They Need

The IMT team at CUCS places a strong emphasis on collaboration and mutual support. Members of the team share insights and ideas to help each other provide an even better level of care. This approach also helps to reduce burnout among team members, as they are able to support and uplift each other through the challenges of the work.

One of the key strengths of the IMT team at CUCS is their interdisciplinary nature; they are proactive and responsive to all the needs of the client. This approach helps to ensure that clients receive the support they need in all areas of their lives.

The peer support model has been around for decades and has played a critical role in positive changes to our mental health and related systems. Peers have been at the forefront of bringing in Recovery Oriented Treatment and person-centered care. These individuals bring a unique perspective to the table, which has helped to drive progress and change in the field.



CUCS Social Worker (left) and two IMT clients participate in group activities

Our Impact

CUCS programs are *data-driven*. We consistently track and measure our impact to ensure the highest quality of service possible.

IMT Quick Stats:

8 Intensive Mobile Treatment Teams, each comprised of psychiatrists, social workers, case managers, nurses, and peer specialists, operate in New York City

35 unique ZIP Codes are served by IMT

216 high-need clients are on the IMT caseload

873 face-to-face client visits were held in May 2023

Questions... and Answers

Ask the Experts at CUCS



Topic: CUCS In-Service Training and Quality Assurance

Expert: Eve Goodman

Director of In-Service Training

What is In-Service Training?

In-Service Training is our internal training program for staff and supervisors working in direct service programs, specifically those who work directly with clients at our various programs. I develop and conduct frequent training classes on topics like client assessments, motivational interviewing, counseling techniques and much more. There are also In-Service Trainings on medical and psychiatric topics which are conducted by Janian Medical Care staff. All In-Service Training at CUCS is managed by the Quality Assurance Department.

What do you teach staff that they don't learn in social work school?

Our work requires specialized knowledge and exceptional people skills. It's not just about being a "people person." It takes a lot of effort to develop the ability to connect with people, engage with them, and earn their trust. Our trainings are designed to help staff acquire and refine these skills, as they are crucial in working with individuals experiencing homelessness and getting them to accept services.

Is In-Service Training primarily for new staff?

Trainings are for both new and existing staff, but new staff and new programs always require significant training. We create a core curriculum to help them get started in their first few years. Additionally, when a new program opens, we provide customized, program-specific trainings for a cluster of staff members who are all starting at once, ensuring they are up to speed quickly. We also offer trainings for master's level social work students who intern with us.

How do you ensure that the trainings provided by the In-Service Training department are of high quality and directly applicable to the everyday work of CUCS staff?

Quality and relevance are of utmost importance to us. Our trainings are customized for each program, and change in response to changing work circumstances. They are not just about providing facts and figures; trainings are interactive, engaging and directly applicable to the daily work of our staff. We emphasize actionable content that can be immediately put into practice. Moreover, our trainings involve follow-up and valuable reference materials to support staff moving forward. All of this helps ensure CUCS services remain effective, relevant, and high-quality.

Stay informed and follow CUCS on social media:



Thank you for reading the CUCS Report. Our goal is to make sure New Yorkers are well-informed as we continue our work to help people rise from poverty, exit homelessness, and be healthy.

The CUCS Report is a publication of the Center for Urban Community Services.

Do you have questions about the CUCS Report, our services, facilities or programs? Contact: devcom@cucs.org

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