

“BEING EVERYTHING TO EVERYBODY”

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AN ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN OF SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED
BY AIDS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS ONTARIO



Team:

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Advisory Committee:

Greg Downer (*PWA*), Haran Vijayanathan (*ACYR*), John MacTavish (*HARS*), Keith Hambly (*Fife House*), Shannon Doherty (*RHAC*), Tom Hammond (*ACG*), Mark Forsythe (*RAN*), Anne Marie DiCenso (*PASAN*), Jocelyn Watchorn (*ACT*), Patrick Truong (*ACAS*), Elisa Hatton (*BLACKCAP*)







SCAN TEAM

- Understand the scope and range of support services and the challenges and strengths of support services provided at ASOs.
- Understand the partnerships that ASOs have developed with HIV clinics and identify opportunities for meaningful partnerships with HIV clinics in Ontario.
- Examine the extent to which GIPA/MIPA (Greater/Meaningful Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS) principles and practices are reflected in support services.
- Identify training priorities for ASO support service workers
- Examine the turnover of support workers within ASOs and identify strategies to improve staff retention.

SCAN OBJECTIVES

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- **Examine the extent to which GIPA/MIPA (Greater/Meaningful Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS) principles and practices are reflected in support services.**
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TODAY'S PRESENTATION

Participants	Total Number	Focus Groups	Online Surveys	Phone Interviews
Support Workers	42			
Executive Directors	21			
HIV Clinic Staff	34			

OUR PARTICIPANTS

- Although a wide range of services are offered, some services are provided more often than others:
 - practical assistance, referrals, case management, intake & assessment and individual advocacy.
- Service definitions vary:
 - overlap in delivery of some support services
 - lack of comprehensive and specific definitions



CORE SUPPORT SERVICES



- Inclusivity
- Flexibility
- Blurring of prevention and support services
- Harm reduction lens
- Dedicated staff
- Portability of services
- ‘one-stop-shop’ model

“..we tailor our services to people rather than have the people tailor to our supports..”

STRENGTHS

- Resource issues:
 - Lack of time & funding

“I only have time to focus on the one or two service users who are high intense and the other service users get a band-aid solution”



- Service-User related issues:
 - Increased demand for services– *“being everything to everybody”*
 - Some workers feel that some service users have a *“sense of entitlement”*
 - Culture of service provision may be encouraging service user dependence

CHALLENGES

- Systemic Issues:

- Lack of affordable housing & mental health services
- Stigma in the communities
- Complex social assistance system
- Geographic Distances



CHALLENGES

- **Agencies report being committed - Moving to adopt Ontario Accord**
- **36% of support workers and 48% of EDs in scan disclosed they were HIV+**
- **GIPA enhances effectiveness and capacity, and provides positive role models**

Challenges

- Service Users not wanting to be more involved
- Geographic/transportation barriers
- Need for training to fulfill certain roles
- Boundary/confidentiality issues
- Personal costs to PHA on staff (e.g., loss of social support, higher expectations)



GIPA/MIPA

- Agencies try to recruit people who will be a good fit for the job and for the agency
- Many support workers don't see themselves in their role in the long term
- Burnout is the greatest threat to staff retention
- Only about one quarter of agencies provide clinical consultations for staff
- Support workers need access and the ability to attend training opportunities
- Support workers see open communication as the key to effective supervision

STAFFING ISSUES

On staffing issues:

- Provide effective supervision and supports for staff (consultations, debriefs)
- Create safe, healthy, respectful workplace (address boundary issues with clients)
- Provide Training to meet clients evolving needs (e.g., mental health issues)
- More advanced training for experienced workers

On support services:

- Establish a support services best practices working group that includes EDs and support workers
- To support workers in implementing best practices and providing high quality services
- To clarify expectations of scope of support services (ie. What is realistic?)



RECOMMENDATIONS



- Meet with Advisory Committee to refine recommendations
- Complete the report
- Develop a KTE plan to distribute the results & recommendations to stakeholders (agency staff, EDs, HIV clinics etc.)
- Develop a set of guidelines or best practices for support services

NEXT STEPS

QUESTIONS?

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THANK YOU.