Moving Towards Organizational Best Practice

# Human Resources: Staff Onboarding and Orientation

One street intervention supervisor interviewed stated “we are paying people for their trauma”. This statement illustrates a key opportunity uniquely available to Human Resource managers; the value of a street intervention worker to their organization should not be solely defined by their traumatic past. However, from the point of hiring to the point of their departure from street intervention work, many staff sense that their organization only views them through the lens of their suffering. Coupled with a lack of staff development opportunities, street intervention workers may feel that their only ‘tool’ in their toolkit of violence prevention is to draw upon their previous experiences of street involvement and/ or incarceration.

*Is to be fair, it's to be loving and check. Um, there is a difference in our education and world experience, but really constantly working we are human beings, and really drilling that through by deeds mainly.*

*We’re looked down upon as a community as a whole and as a people as a whole, you know, but there's a lot of stereotypes that stains us, you know, and I know we're better than that.*

When a street intervention worker is hired there is a critical opportunity in their onboarding process to communicate the following message; your past suffering may have brought you to this point, but we see so much more in you. This message must be reflected not only in the communication surrounding someone’s hiring but also embedded within their entire orientation. The onboarding of a street intervention worker must include information not only on the program within which they are working, but on other program areas as well. It is recommended that this orientation encompass a variety of learning styles; handing a newly hired worker a paper manual or a series of online videos to watch isn’t maximizing this opportunity.

In order to most effectively onboard and orient newly hired staff, human resource managers must be familiar with street intervention work. This may require spending time with supervisors, with staff, visiting program sites, and finding other ways to better understand the work. This intentional effort of human resource managers may lead to the development of onboarding and orientation materials that is consistent with the recommendations of this report. If done well, street intervention workers may perceive their employment opportunity as the first step in a long career of social justice work.

*As we become more and more educated, formally and informally about a lot of different things, social justice being one, and strap hit home as a way for me to move beyond my guilt and shame of what is done to cause me to be incarcerated. I tried to look for ways, how can I repay? How can I give back? And this social justice work feels more of a passion, a calling than actually a career. So, we started there. We began to develop community violence education, which is a program we developed while in prison to try to mentor.*

# Food for Thought

* + What is the onboarding process for our street intervention staff and which members of our organization play a role in their orientation?
    - What is the content? How is it delivered? Who coordinates the process?
  + Following their initial orientation, what opportunities exist for street intervention staff to become familiar with the various program areas and staff of the organization?