

12. Values Clarification Exercise

The goal of this exercise is to help participants clarify their personal values and how they relate to family involvement in care, through the use of the values clarification exercise. The team leader first provides three pieces of paper labeled "Very Important," "Moderately Important," and "Little or No Importance" at the top. Participants are given the list of values cards and asked to sort them into three piles (very important, moderately important, little or no importance). These values cards include concrete issues of interest to most persons (e.g., "getting along with my family") and those of special relevance to persons with serious psychiatric illnesses (e.g. "staying out of the hospital," "keeping symptoms to a low level," "not embarrassing myself in public"). If a participant says "I don't know," the team leader prompts with, "Make your best guess." If this does not help the participant make a choice, the team leader can make a "Do Not Know" category.

"I want to understand what is really important to you in life. Here is a set of life values cards. They describe experiences and values that are important to some people but not to others. Would you please read each one and then put in the pile which reflects how important that value is personally, to you?"

After all the cards are sorted, the team leader then takes the pile of most importance and discusses how family might be related to each value by asking the participant:

"How do you think your family being involved in your care and getting more support might be related to (this value)?"

Life Values for the Cards

- Living independently in my own apartment or house
- Paying my bills
- Getting along with my family
- Having a fun social life
- Having friends
- Being self-sufficient
- Meeting new people
- Having a partner
- Dating
- Staying out of the hospital
- Feeling proud of myself
- Having nice clothes
- Having a nice car
- Not embarrassing myself in public
- Having something productive to do with my time
- Having extra money
- Keeping my symptoms to a low level
- Having a hobby
- Helping others
- Making others who care about me proud

- Recovering from my mental/emotional problems
- Reducing stress
- Having a strong religious/spiritual life
- Being in good physical health
- Creativity
- Going to school
- Working

Important values and their relation to family involvement are noted on a separate sheet of paper by the team leader. Values that are inconsistent with family involvement are discussed with the client. For example, the client may value “being self-sufficient” and believe that family involvement in care may conflict with this goal. The team leader helps the client resolve the discrepancy between the value and family involvement. For example, in the situation just mentioned, the provider would ask the participant if he/she has known of self-sufficient individuals (perhaps friends or relatives) who still consult with others about health decisions.

This exercise is from the Family Member Provider Outreach Manual:

Glynn, S.M., Cohen, A.N., Murray-Swank, A., Drapalski, A., Dixon, L. (2010). Family Member Provider Outreach (FMPO) Manual. Unpublished manual, VA Maryland Health Care System, Baltimore, MD.