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Triumph Over Tragedy: Living in Recovery

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Project Goals and Objectives

- to educate clients on how to develop and sustain a healthy lifestyle
- to show how to enjoy substance free life
- to help develop positive coping skills and build resilience as a part of recovery process
- to be a part of therapeutic community by providing emotional support
- to provide in-depth information on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases
- to assist clients in achieving a successful rehabilitation
- to act as a new source of information to the clients

Activities

**Mental Health**
- Stress reduction workshop
- Assessment of beliefs worksheet
- Forgiveness IQ quiz
- TED talks on vulnerability, shame vs. guilt, and recovery

**General Health**
- Presentations and discussions on: cardiovascular health, oral hygiene, nutrition, sleep hygiene, smoking cessation, exercise, age-related screening

**HIV/STD**
- Guest speaker
- STI Bingo
- HIV Jeopardy
- Workshop on safe sex practices
- Discussion about HIV stereotypes and HIV related health issues

**Life Skills**
- Meditation
- Budgeting & Finance
- Trip to the Mutter Museum
- Art therapy
- Screening TED talk on relationships
- Workshop on self-acceptance and self-worth

**Personal Statements**

“Working at People with Hope is an experience that has positively impacted me. The past seven weeks has given me a better understanding of what a person with addiction goes through, and I will carry a piece of each of the residents with me as I move forward not only in my career, but in my life.” - Kristen D’Alessandro

“Working at Gaudenzia People with Hope this summer had been an unforgettable and transforming experience. I have had the privilege of seeing the struggles that residents are going through when recovering from addiction. Listening to their life stories had been a truly humbling experience, and it allowed me to understand the difficulties and complexities of dealing with addiction and HIV. But most importantly, I have encountered so many unique individuals, and every day I learned something new from each and every one of them. Interacting with residents, getting to know them, and seeing their personal growth had been immensely rewarding and made my experience at Gaudenzia worthwhile. I have learned from them more than I ever expected. These relationships changed me—I have become a better and more empathetic listener, a more passionate advocate for those recovering from addiction, and, looking forward to my future career, a more compassionate healer.” - Maria Mostyka

Outcome

After time spent at Gaudenzia-PWH, the clients gained knowledge in multiple areas of their lives. Mental health seminars helped the clients to examine their patterns of thinking and challenge their beliefs. Health presentations provided vital information that targeted all aspects of health. Workshops on HIV educated the clients on methods of transmission, safe sex practices, risk reduction, and HIV associated disorders. Life skills sessions provided the clients with the tools they need to deal with life's daily occurrences after completing the program. Along with all the educational parts of the program, the clients learned about each other and discovered even more about themselves on the path to recovery.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the staff and residents of Gaudenzia for a great experience and for welcoming us into their lives. We would also like to thank everyone involved in the Bridging the Gaps program for giving us this opportunity to become deeply involved in the community in new ways while learning skills that will help us in our future professions. We wish the best of luck to everyone involved.