8 Tips for Delivering Effective MLP Trainings for Healthcare Team Members

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Ongoing training is a critical component of success in a medical-legal partnership (MLP). One aspect of that training focuses on helping healthcare team members strengthen their ability to identify patients' social needs and learn to make effective referrals to the MLP legal team. Below are 8 best practices to ensure trainings meet those goals and are geared to healthcare team members' learning needs.

01

Share information that healthcare team members need to know to identify a legal issue and/or make quality referrals, but DON'T try to turn healthcare team members into lawyers.

It's not a healthcare team member's job to represent someone in court or "treat" the legal issue. They only need as much information as will help them quickly detect legal issues and refer a patient to a legal specialist (i.e., the MLP legal team). Sharing the intricacies of specific laws will overwhelm and distract healthcare team members from what they really need to know. **And remember that while lawyers are trained to the exception, healthcare team members are trained to the rule.** Share the most common scenarios during trainings and use Curbside Consults over time to answer questions about specific scenarios that may differ from the norm.

02

Start with why the issue is urgent and relevant to healthcare team members' work and patients.

People are more likely to pay attention and invest in new information when they first understand why it is relevant to their work, lives, and/or mission. Kick off trainings by helping healthcare team members understand **why** a particular issue is pervasive in their community right now, how it is affecting patients' health and access to health care, and/or how this issue is preventing healthcare team members from focusing on their work as healthcare providers. Some of the best ways to engage people quickly are by telling stories or asking them questions.

03

Explain information in healthcare team members' language.

People learn new information best when it is built upon an existing foundation. In other words, people process information better when it is explained in language, cultural cues, and analogies they are already familiar with. MLP legal teams should invest in learning healthcare team members' terminology and systems and explain legal issues and referral workflows through analogies that healthcare team members will immediately recognize.

04

Use visuals that enhance learning and reinforce key takeaways, but DON'T create too many PowerPoint slides or include too much text on each slide.

Visuals can be critical to explaining complicated concepts, demonstrating workflows, and reinforcing key takeaways. But PowerPoint slides can become distracting and counterproductive when they include information not directly relevant to the goal of the training or when they feature paragraphs of text that the presenter reads from verbatim. Limit yourself to 3-6 PowerPoint slides per training and use visuals to reinforce key takeaways, share relevant diagrams or graphs, and highlight key information the audience might need to reference after the training, such as website addresses, phone numbers, and/or specific information about workflows.

05

Ask a healthcare team member to review the training content in advance and join as a co-presenter.

It's always a good idea to have someone who represents the training audience—in this case a healthcare team member—review the training content in advance. They will be able to flag legal jargon and things that don't make sense, highlight places where more or less information is needed, and share ways to root learnings more strongly in language and systems familiar to the audience. Including a healthcare team member as a co-presenter can also lend credibility to the information being shared, allow them to share their perspective on the issue, and give attendees the chance to hear from someone who shares their experience.

06

Invite healthcare team members to share their stories and positive MLP experiences as part of each training.

If you ask anyone who they are most likely to believe in any situation, most people answer, "someone like me." An important way to build buy-in in the MLP program and to increase referrals is for healthcare team members to hear from their peers about their experiences making referrals and how the MLP legal team was able to answer their questions or solve issues for patients. It's important to regularly make time and space for healthcare team members to share their experiences at every training session so that other healthcare team members can see themselves in their colleagues' experiences.

07

Deliver trainings when and where healthcare team members are used to learning.

Trainings do not have to be long nor do they have to be standalone sessions scheduled just to talk about MLP. In fact, it is often better if brief information is shared in settings where healthcare team members are already used to gathering and learning. Trainings can take place in a variety of settings—from Curbside Consults to MLP Office Hours to clinical team huddles. Meet people where they are and, wherever possible, don't add additional meetings to people's schedules. Brief, frequent touchpoints are more effective than occasional, lengthy sessions.

08

Circulate a brief post-training survey and use the results to improve future trainings.

Feedback is critical for improving trainings. It's a good practice to administer simple, post-training surveys to get a sense of what is working well and could be improved upon. MLP teams can get ideas about the types of questions to ask from the post-training survey used during the Kaiser Permanente Health, Housing, and Justice quality improvement training project. For the highest response rates, MLP teams are encouraged to gather feedback through an electronic tool. If an organization does not already have a paid subscription to a program like Survey-Monkey, they can use a free tool like Google Forms to create the survey. It can be helpful to distribute the survey at the end of the training and give people time to complete it before they leave. Share both a URL link as well as a QR code on slide that participants can scan and complete on their phones or tablets. Google Forms allows users to generate free QR codes.