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Community Activators
2018 Training Catalogue
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Half-Day Sessions
(3-4 hours suggested time frame)

ONE: That's My Story and You're Sticking To It

How do you tell stories that stick in listener's hearts and minds? What kinds of stories should I tell when I want to respond to another person's story in a helpful way? This session provides three kinds of information. First, a brief overview of the evolving brain science about stories that's helpful in understanding how and why stories effect us in so many ways. Second, how to respond to other's stories using the *Responsive Storytelling* model that helps us to both decide what story to tell and when to tell it. Third, what kinds of stories "stick" over the long term and why. Along the way, we'll both tell and listen to stories as a way to ground the learning and give us energy to go out and tell more stories.

TWO: Questions as Gifts

Most people will be able to get to their own solutions if we can hold tight to using listening and questioning as our two primary "helping" interactions. Questions are key to empowerment, since they pivot the dynamic from "I know" to "You Know". Expanding beyond our usual questioning style puts us in a position to support a wider variety of folks in more and deeper ways. We'll describe—and you'll have a chance to try out—four different kinds of questioning methods including the *Click-Down*, the *What is?*, *Strategic Questions*, and *Source Questioning*.

THREE: We All Belong: Four Paths to Belonging

Most of us think of belonging and inclusion as the result of the number and quality of relationships in different parts of our lives. But what if that limited definition

of belonging actually restricts our ability to feel like we belong? This session explores the idea that humans desire four different kinds of belonging, only one of them related to other people. When we expand to this larger understanding of belonging, it can result in very powerful feelings of belonging, even though we may have limited social connections. This conversational hour will provide an overview of the Four Paths to Belonging, and give you the opportunity to explore how each of the four paths offers opportunities for connectedness, action, and love to grow.

FOUR: What's Gifts Got To Do With It?

Everything! Identifying and using gifts is central to supporting individuals, organizations and communities that are strong, compassionate, and accomplished. Why? Because gifts help us distinguish between what we CAN do, and what we REALLY WANT TO DO AND WILL STICK WITH. But it's confusing when we start. How do we identify gifts? How can I help others identify gifts if I'm not sure of my own? What happens when employee's gifts don't seem aligned with their daily tasks? How do we integrate gifts into our current planning processes with people we support and in our organizational strategies? How do we support people in deciding on how to use their gifts? Building gift cultures takes time, and will substantially change your organization. Bruce will provide some distinctions between gifts and skills, introduce and give participants time to work with the 3 Gift Buckets tool, and offer lots of examples of ways organizations have integrated gifts into both employee and service strategies. (Note: This session does not include training in the use of the Core Gift Discovery tool. The all-day session is required for the time necessary to learn to use that tool.)

FIVE: Your Legacy: What will you leave behind?

This session is designed for mid to late career professionals of all kinds who want to reflect and begin acting on an intentional legacy resulting from their work. The word legacy comes from "legatia" which translates to "sent on a mission." What has your mission been? All of us want to believe that our commitment to disability and community-building work has mattered, and this is the opportunity to dive into what that means for you. This activity-oriented session will reveal the three primary legacy-building questions, provide participants opportunity to put some borders and clarity around their legacy, and talk to others who are thinking about what they, too, want to leave behind.

Full-Day Sessions
(9-4pm suggested timeframe)

ONE: Uncovering What Matters: The Theory and Practice of Core Gift Discovery

Strength-based practices require identifying and utilizing the capacities in a person as a significant tool in helping them to move forward in their life. Leading-edge practitioners are discovering the benefits of recognizing that a strength is not simply a strength—it is a skill, gift, or a core gift. Knowing the difference is critical because 1) motivation is directly tied to the distinction between skills and gifts, 2) behavior change can be understood and supported with this knowledge, and 3) clarity about gifts gives deep insight into how to structure opportunities for a person to be welcomed and included in community places of their choice. Equally applicable to employees in helping professions, core gifts form the foundation for employee engagement in the workplace by 1) framing the kinds of contributions and approaches the employee uses during the day with both other staff and people receiving help and 2) defining the acknowledgement he/she would like to receive. During this intensive and hands-on training, participants will learn how the idea of gifts originated and was used in older cultures, why it's essential to reframe "problems" as "initiations," learn the Core Gift Discovery Assessment Tool process, and receive specific information about how to use gifts for planning and action with whatever types of individuals or groups they are working with. Activities include each participant identifying his or her core gift and primary talents.

Core Competencies:
- Understand the evolution of strengths tools in social service practice.
- Identify how initiations reframe a deficit model into a gift-based model of service.
- Identify how welcoming and gifts can be interconnected in current practices
- Break down a strengths list into skills, talents, and gifts, and core gift.
- Use the Core Gift Discovery capacity assessment tool.
- Identify the ten primary ways to use this methodology within organizations

TWO: Our Door Is Open: Creating Welcoming Cultures in Helping Organizations

Welcoming—What is it? More than good customer service, more than creating a "friendly atmosphere," a welcoming culture leads to increased hope, improved teamwork, and targeted outcomes. It provides a reliable foundation for *connecting the core beliefs* of an organization with its *daily practices*. Creating a welcoming culture in any group requires a focus in four distinct areas. First, continuing to learn how to help

people find places in the community where they are valued. Second, carefully evaluating how well we welcome and create a positive experience for people when they show up on our doorsteps asking for help.

Third, our connections and collaboration with other civic, faith, and social service organizations. And fourth, how well we work together and welcome the unique contributions of each of our employees. Research shows that employees will not be more welcoming to customers than they feel welcome within their own organization, so this area is critical to making substantial improvements in overall welcoming capacity in an organization. During this training, we will describe in detail how to build a welcoming culture in any social service program. Part One includes an overview of welcoming philosophy and its ties to social services, cultural competence, and community development. Part Two includes an opportunity for employees and advocates to evaluate the current condition of the organization in the four welcoming focus areas described above. Part Three provides the time and structure to create a specific action plan which will be put into motion when participants walk out the door.

Core Competencies:

- Can describe the four primary links between welcoming, community development and social-service practices.
- Define the word welcoming.
- Understands how concepts of initiation and exiles relates to creating welcoming culture.
- Understand the four focus areas for developing a welcoming organization.
- Complete Creating Welcoming Places Inventory for their group or organization.
- Can identify at least four individual and group improvements in welcoming capacity.

THREE: Checklist for Success: Finding, Hiring, and Keeping Great Employees

What are the proven factors that increase employee retention in helping organizations? There are many studies of the causes of employee burnout and turnover in helping professions, but burnout is only one of the many possible causes of an employee leaving a job. Average worker salaries are also commonly cited as a significant source of employee turnover, but research demonstrates that many employees stay in jobs with lower wages because of their commitment to living into their values and offering service to people needing support. Employee retention has many factors, some of which are only beginning to be fully understood as

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organizations focus on this area of learning and development. No single improvement or practice metric can be used to gauge the success or failure of employee retention in an organization. This highly participatory training uses a 5-part assessment tool to understand the dynamics of retention and can also be used as a rating tool that highlights both the strengths and the weaknesses in retention strategies in any organization. Participants will engage with other teams to discover common strategies and build competency together during the session.

Core Competencies:
- Participate in an overview of retention principles and historical approaches.
- Understand the five most critical retention requirements in each module of the retention assessment tool.
- Rate their team in each of the five areas and identify the two most significant strengths and weaknesses in each module.
- Review the retention change items most often chosen by helping organizations.
- Review the instructions and components of establishing a learning-group to increase retention within an organization.

FOUR: Increasing Your Creative Solution-Finding Skills

When a person or is facing difficult times, their problem-solving ability begins to shut down as they move from a proactive to a reactive stance. Part of the job of an ally is to help the person expand their imagination—correctly identifying the real problem, coming up with a solution, and then developing a workable plan. What we know for sure is this: none of us is naturally good at all steps in problem solving. For example, some of us are good at brainstorming ideas while others are good at making detailed plans. Our strongest problem-solving skill indicates a corresponding weakness in another area of problem solving. During this training, participants will clarify their own creative problem-solving process, compare it to the standard seven-step methodology, and refine their skills. The session is a mixture of presentation, reflection on personal styles and attributes, and practice in small groups solving real-life issues. The focus is on building skills for time- limited focused problem solving with individuals and groups. The session also includes an overview and practice of the Strategic Questioning technique, which expands a facilitator's ability to ask powerful questions.

Core Competencies:
- Understand the seven process steps for effective problem solving.
- Identify your natural strengths and weaknesses in the 7-step model.
- Practice leading a problem-solving session and receiving feedback.

- Observe/provide feedback to other participants facilitating problem-solving sessions.
- Learn and practice the Strategic Questioning model of question development.
- Identify your most creative environment for solution-finding.
- Identify the five levels of authority in decision-making.

FIVE: Hope at Work: Building Positive, Resilient Organizations

Teams can get temporarily stronger during team-building retreats, but teams stay strong through the use of carefully designed activities integrated into the ongoing work life of the group. These "ritualized" activities form a foundation of resilience that keeps the work team hopeful, inspired, productive, and communicating in ways that build a positive helping environment. Research shows that helping professionals spend very little time in activities which maintain the health of the team—most work time is spent on serving the customer. Research also clearly demonstrates that unless the individual employee has access to activities which build internal resilience, co-worker relationships, continuing clarification of tasks, and opportunity for mutual problem solving, there will be decreased productivity and quality of service, burnout, and high rates of turnover. This training will focus on the three critical areas for building a hopeful and resilient work culture: 1) Understanding the sources of both individual and organizational toxicity that undermine hope and resilience, 2) Understanding the theory of hope and resilience and how they relate to each other, and 3) Building a systemic group of activities within the workgroup that build hope and resilience. Within each of these areas, we will offer assessment tools, structures for culture change, and samples of activities which will build hope and resilience.

Core Competencies:

- Identify definitions and differences between hope and optimism.
- Identify differences between individual and group resilience.
- Identify the organizational conditions for hope and hopelessness.
- Identify the four domains for organizational resilience.
- Assess current activities in each domain.
- Identify typical resistance to healthy rituals and strategies to overcome.
- Assess their group's current developmental needs in each domain.
- Identify typical activities used to strengthen hope in each domain.

SIX: Stories Work! How to Choose, Create, and Use Powerful Stories to Encourage Change in Individuals and Groups

The telling of stories can create change that is difficult to reach by our usual

methods of logical persuasion or simply stating the facts. Facts establish basic truths, but stories are the way we learn. When we hear a powerful story, we may discover a reason to change, see how other people have been through a similar situation and get problem-solving tips, and believe we might have a chance to make it, too. Several attributes related to stories are shifting in social service and community organizing, including boundaries related to telling personal stories, the kinds of stories that are used to help others, and the use of stories as a self-advocacy tool. This workshop is designed for individuals who are interested in expanding their storytelling skills to capture the opportunities for change that surface when a powerful story is told. During this training you will learn the "circular" storytelling technique, identify what stories to use in particular situations, learn how to reduce nervousness, and how to enhance your own style. This is not a public speaking seminar! The focus is on telling informal stories in daily situations when you want to make an impact.

Core Competencies:
- Understands function of stories in empowerment processes.
- Can use "circular" story technique.
- Knows and practices the four rules for reducing nervousness.
- Has identified and crafted three personal ally stories for telling.
- Can understand and follow the eight rules for using personal stories.
- Has knowledge of current boundary rules in their organization.

SEVEN: Recovery-Oriented Leadership

The principles of "recovery" are used by a wide variety of mental health, substance abuse, and domestic violence organizations as the primary tool for helping their customers become empowered and regain healthy life in their community. This intensive and paradigm- shifting seminar asks a fundamental question: What would happen if we applied those very same principles of recovery to our own organization? Through the use of dialogue, cutting-edge organizational assessment tools, and action planning, participants evaluate and

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make plans for bringing their organization into alignment with the Recovery principles of increased hope, community engagement, proper use of authority, and healing. Outcomes for the seminar include increased leadership understanding and commitment to Recovery values and principles, and practical plans for using the principles of Recovery to create hope, commitment, and action in your organization. This session is designed for executives, mid-managers, team leaders, and advocates within helping organizations. This seminar was

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designed by Community Activators and the Village, an award-winning program of the Mental Health Association of Los Angeles.

Core Competencies

- Has developed or chosen a working definition for Recovery.
- Understands how ROL differs from other organizational development tools.
- Understands how each of the four focus areas of recovery is currently functioning
- within their organizational culture of employees and systems.
- Participates in dialogue with other leaders to build awareness about how Recovery
- principles can be used as an organizational development tool.
- Has identified action items in self, others, and structure of organization to align
- Recovery principles with current functioning.