

The Coffee Shop Project



2008 BRYAN FELLOW

Crystal Yarborough

HOMETOWN: Wilson, NC

MAJOR/DEGREE:
Master of Social Work
Class of 2009

PROJECT TITLE:
The Coffee Shop Project

FACULTY MENTOR:
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School of Social Work

COMMUNITY PARTNER:
Healing With CAARE, Inc.

PROJECT LOCATION:
Durham, NC

“I learned that health care has to have a holistic approach, including attention to people's stressors on a personal, interpersonal, and societal level, in order to provide a meaningful and lasting impact on health outcomes.”



The Coffee Shop Project consisted of the presentation of a five-week Job Readiness Group Series curriculum to participants of CAARE, Inc. (Case Management for AIDS and Addiction Through Referrals and Education). The people served at CAARE, Inc. are economically disadvantaged, from a minority group, and have a number of chronic illnesses, including HIV/AIDS and substance abuse disorders. Many are either receiving disability or are having difficulty in securing employment because of health problems. For people with chronic illnesses, loss of vocational identity and social isolation are by-products of being out of the job market. The Job Readiness Group Series provided practical information for re-entering the job market, and the Coffee Shop facilitated social interactions.

Project Goals

1. To implement a Job Readiness Group curriculum for the participants of CAARE, Inc.
2. To create a communal space (Coffee Shop) for the organization to conduct programs that will promote the development of social networks among people living with chronic illnesses, including HIV.
3. To increase socialization among the group participants.

Five classes were taught as part of the Job Readiness Group Series: Goal Setting, Job Search Skills/Resume Writing, Interviewing Skills, Budgeting/Credit Management, and Time Manage-



ment. Fifteen participant handbooks were given to group members to complement the sessions. In addition, four speakers presented topics to the group.

After reading my evaluations of the Job Readiness Group Series, I realized that the content of the sessions was not nearly as important as the group process itself.

Although it was my goal to impart practical knowledge, the community reminded me of the importance of inclusion, respect and empowerment in all settings.

The final session of the Job Readiness Group Series included a small awards ceremony for participants who had attended all five of the sessions. The awards session was memorable because of the sense of accomplishment that the group participants felt after receiving their certificates. I also felt a great sense of pride for helping facilitate the relationships between the group participants and the presenters, who represented a broad range of industries. It was rewarding to see how the personal strength and resiliency of the community provided social support, and how often this mediates the relationship between mental and physical wellness.



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