

Introduction to the Therapeutic Community



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Introduction

You have made a wise choice to enter this drug treatment program while serving your time.

To acquire the tools and skills to succeed in this program, you will learn the structure, function and fundamental concepts of a therapeutic community.

What you will learn

The *Introduction to the Therapeutic Community* Journal will give you an opportunity to:

- ◆ Understand how to work together to bring about positive change.
- ◆ Explore the structure and function of a Therapeutic Community.
- ◆ Learn the cardinal rules.
- ◆ Examine your role as a member of the community.
- ◆ Consider important concepts within the community.
- ◆ Learn Therapeutic Community tools.

Name	Date
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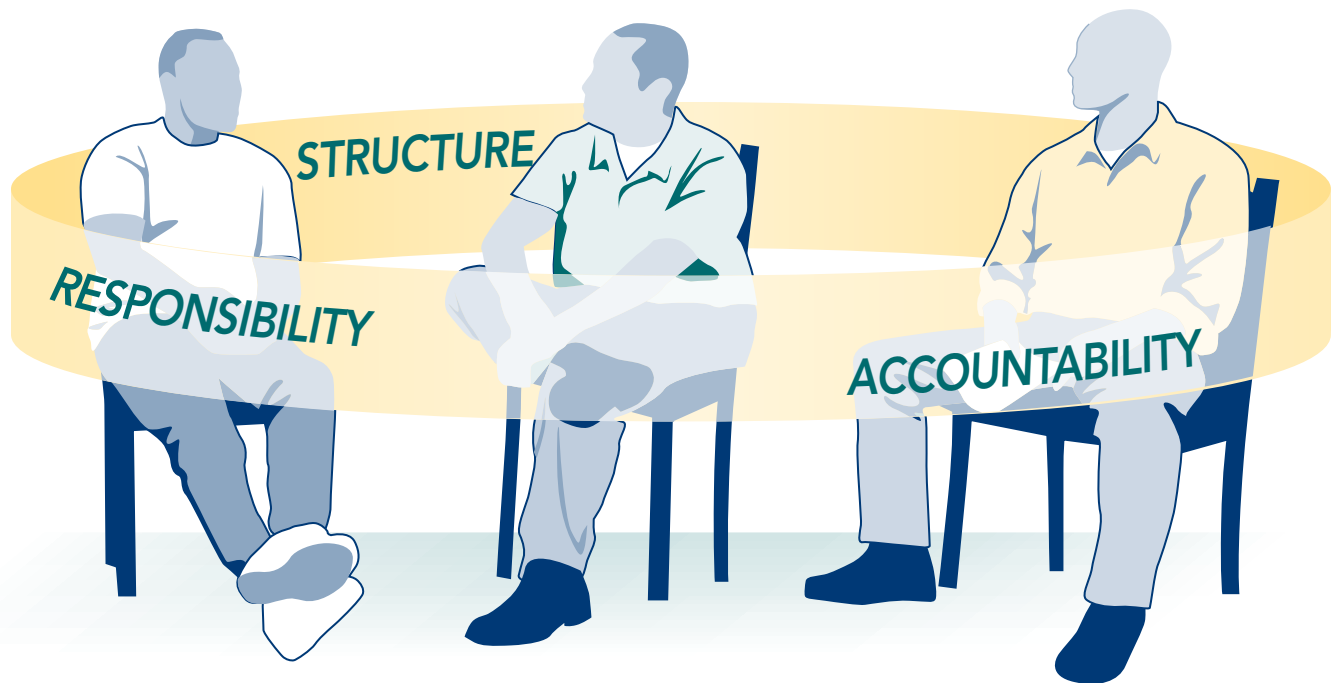
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What is a therapeutic community?

You are a member of a therapeutic community. A therapeutic community treatment model is one in which participants are taught to work with one another. Community members promote self-change by becoming positive role models for one another under the guidance of the staff.

You may be wondering how you can become a positive role model for

others. That's done by being willing to learn about yourself. The phrase "Act as if" will be helpful when you are trying to learn something about yourself that is new and difficult to understand and accept. This learning process will require you to develop new, responsible ways to live and then to model those behaviors for others in the community.



What does being a member of a therapeutic community mean to you?

What is a therapeutic community? (cont.)

Structure and function

A central part of the therapeutic community treatment model is a structure board that has many job functions. The lines of responsibility or chain of command of the structure board are clearly marked and must be followed. Participants will be taught the different job functions as thoroughly as possible so they

may understand how the community operates. Having a well-run structure is critical to a successful treatment community. You must be willing to learn all job functions, teach other members of your community and hold one another accountable in order for the structure to function properly.

Did you know?

A therapeutic community treatment model is one in which participants are taught to work with one another.

What skills do you have today that can help you become a positive role model for other members of the therapeutic community?

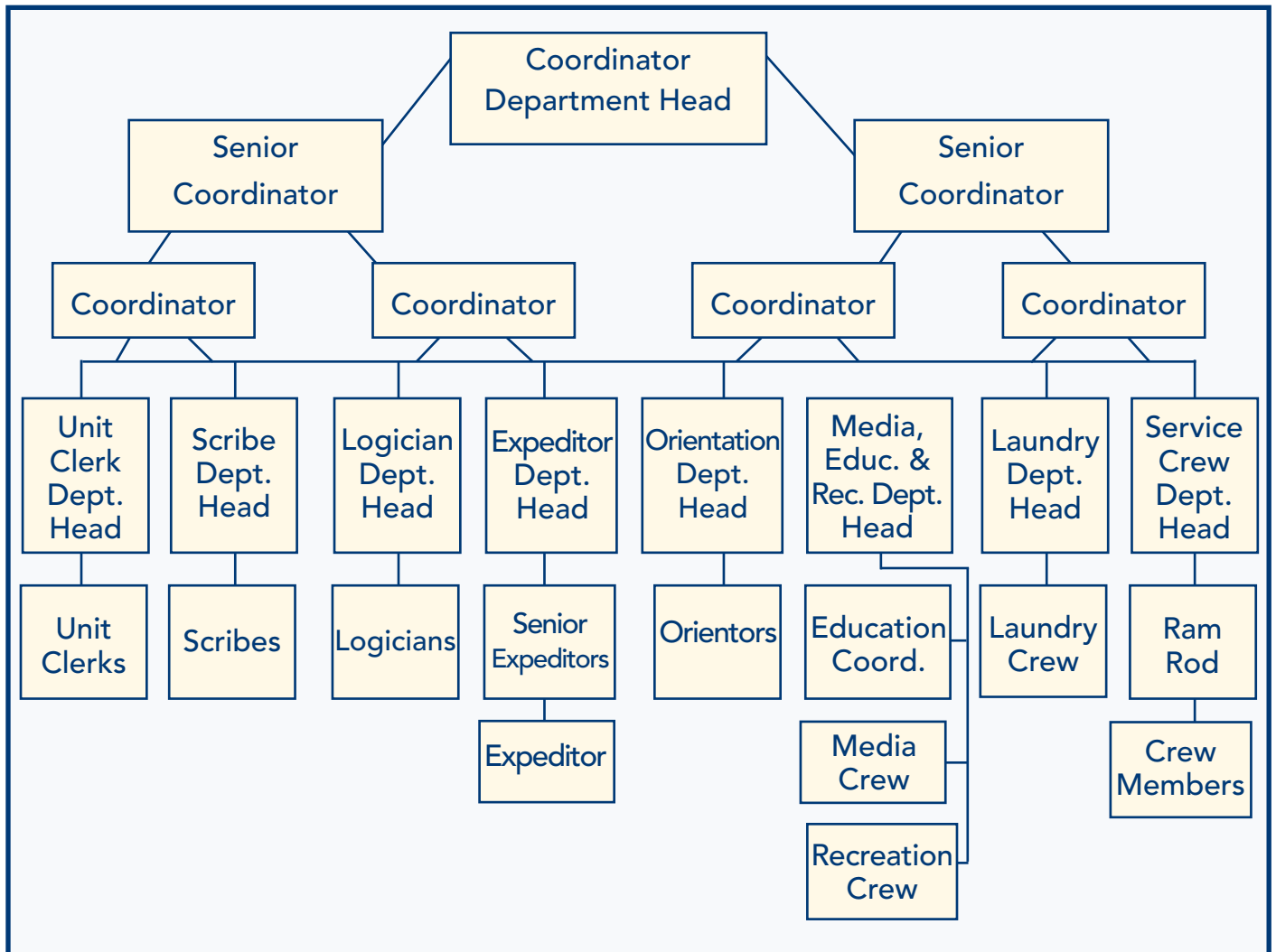
Why do you think structure is important to the success of the therapeutic community?

Are you willing to take responsibility and be held accountable for the therapeutic community to run successfully? yes no... Explain your answer.

TC structure board

Here is what a structure board looks like. One of your tasks will be to learn the structure board and the various job functions. Being part of the treatment

community and carrying out these job functions is a critical part of the treatment program.



What basic skills do you possess that will help you carry out the job function you are assigned?

How can you be of help to other members of the therapeutic community as they carry out their job functions?

Making a therapeutic community...

The therapeutic community program is a positive environment for learning how to be accountable for one's choices in a caring community where members can help themselves and each other make positive changes. Staff and residents work together to establish and maintain a positive, growth-filled environment. Community members focus on behavioral change, accountability and confronting attitudes, behaviors

and criminal thinking patterns, which are destructive to individuals and the life of the program. It is a place to set goals, develop discipline and practice behaviors that lead to successful living. It is a place where you learn to let go of a "victim mentality" and incorporate an "accountability mentality" into all of your relationships. The program allows you a chance to change, to confront mistakes and accept responsibility for your life.

Notice:

Violation of a cardinal rule may result in expulsion from the program.



Cardinal rules of the therapeutic community

Following rules is an important part of everyday life. It is also essential to ensure your success in this community. If your goal is positive and permanent lifestyle change, it will be up to you to follow the rules and procedures of the program.

The following cardinal rules must be followed in order to participate in this program.

1. No escape or attempts to escape.
2. No violence or imminent threats of bodily harm.
3. No possession or use of weapons.
4. No possession or use of alcohol or other drugs nor refusal to submit to urinalysis testing.
5. No gang-related or racially motivated activities, specifically violence, intimidation and/or recruiting.
6. No sexual misconduct.

...work for you

Why is following rules an important part of this program?

Here are other rules and procedures I will follow:

“Successful living requires me to follow rules and regulations; even when I find them frustrating.”

'Things about me as a member...



If you are going to make changes in your lifestyle, it is necessary to know as much about your total self as possible.

When you look into a mirror, who do you see looking back at you? How do you describe that person... not just in terms of what appears on the outside, but what do you see coming through from the inside?

The more you can reflect on who you are today and how you wish to change, the closer you will move to living a more responsible life.

Check (✓) all of the phrases that describe you. Use the blank spaces to add some of your own phrases that aren't on the list. Don't try to "overthink" your answers. Be spontaneous and open.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I don't fit in anywhere. | <input type="checkbox"/> I'm easily persuaded. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I make friends easily. | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't feel worthy of love. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I often feel frightened. | <input type="checkbox"/> I'm fun to be around. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm self-centered. | <input type="checkbox"/> I lie a lot. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm not as intelligent as most of my friends. | <input type="checkbox"/> I like to con people. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am easily angered. | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't like myself very much. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I like to win. | <input type="checkbox"/> I like my family. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I like to be alone. | <input type="checkbox"/> I'm smart. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm ashamed of many things I've done. | <input type="checkbox"/> I laugh a lot. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I like to take the easy route. | <input type="checkbox"/> I take good care of myself. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> I dream a lot. |

...of a therapeutic community'

You overhear your best friend describing you to a stranger. This is what you think you would hear...

This is what I dislike most about me... _____

This is what I like most about me... _____

I don't want people to think I'm not hip.

I lack confidence.

I'm tough.

I get my way.

I'm funny.

I'm critical of others.

I have enough energy for 10 people.

I often feel misunderstood.

I like to work out.

I scare people.

My feelings are easily hurt.

I like to be on the edge.

I follow others.

I complete what I start.

I often feel lonely.

I'm too hard on myself.

I ignore the views of others.

Now go back over your list and circle the three phrases you checked that best describe you.

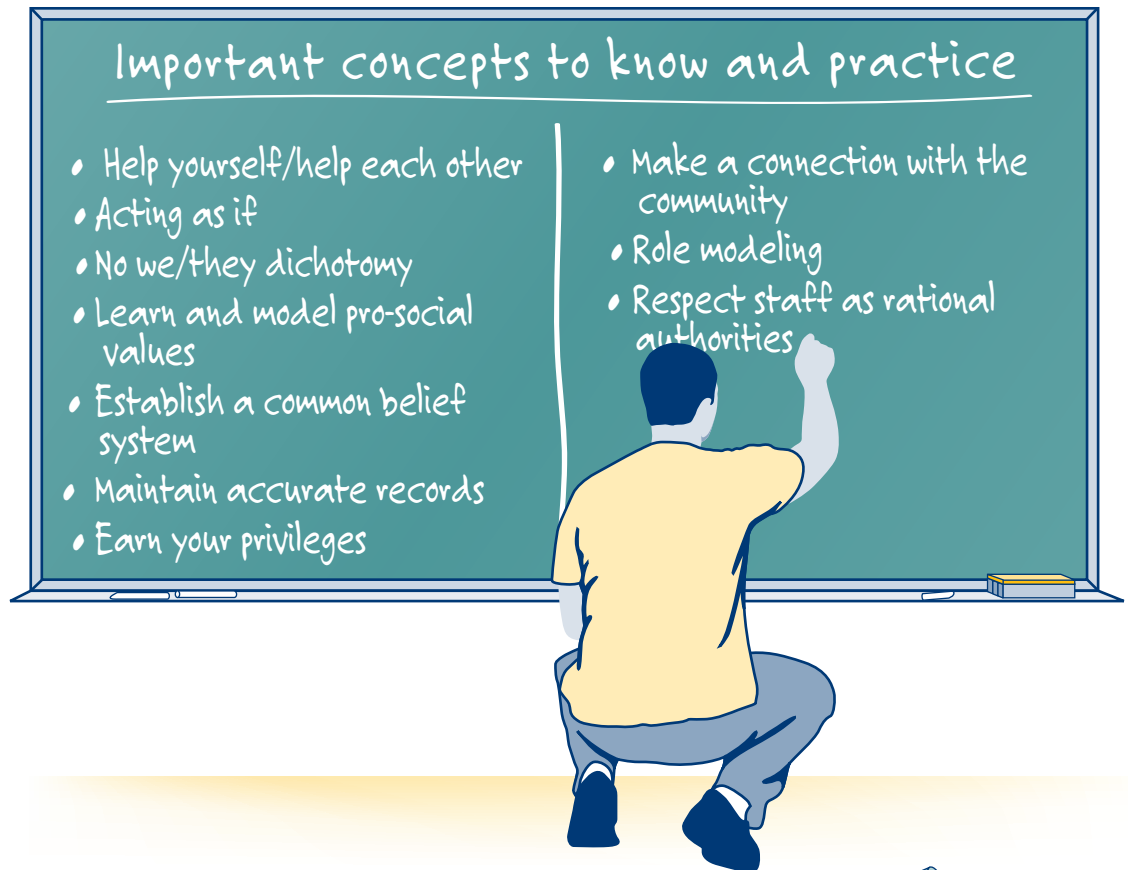
Did you know?

Your success in the therapeutic community will depend in large measure on knowing who you are and sharing your knowledge of yourself with other members of your drug treatment program.

Important concepts...

The therapeutic community program helps participants learn how to be accountable for their choices and behavior in a positive, caring environment.

As a member of the community, you will be helped in your efforts to learn about yourself and model appropriate behaviors for others by learning and practicing the following 10 key concepts.



• Help yourself/help each other

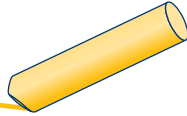
In the therapeutic community, members work together to help each other and themselves. "I am my brother's keeper" is a given. There is great therapeutic value in one addict helping another.

What does the phrase, "I am my brother's keeper" mean to you?

Why is this concept important in a therapeutic community?

...to know and practice

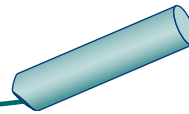
• Acting as if



If a person acts a certain way long enough, he will begin to feel that way and change his attitude in that direction. For example, if you act like a positive person you will soon feel like a positive person and be comfortable doing it.

Describe a situation when you think "Acting as if" will be a useful tool for you.

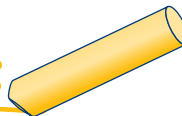
• No we/they dichotomy



In the therapeutic community the differences are minimized. While there is value in the differences among cultural and ethnic backgrounds, all participants suffer from the common problems of addiction. All members are given equal opportunity to succeed.

Why do you think it is important to minimize the differences among members of the therapeutic community?

• Learn and model pro-social values



The learning process in the therapeutic community comes from the community itself. The community is the agent of change. In a healthy therapeutic community, one learns positive pro-social values and models them in the community.

How can you benefit from the way learning takes place in a therapeutic community?

Important concepts...

• Establish a common belief system

In the therapeutic community there is a common belief that people can and do change for the better if they so choose.

Do you believe people can and do change for the better if they so choose? yes no... Explain your answer.

• Maintain accurate records

Recordkeeping means completing and turning in all paperwork to the best of one's ability. Good recordkeeping helps the residents and staff run the program well. It improves the quality of the therapeutic community so that each resident's personal growth can be facilitated, safety can be maintained and progress can be documented. Good recordkeeping also lets the resident show his involvement in the community.

What skills do you have that will be of benefit in maintaining accurate records?

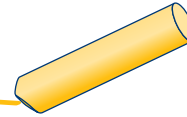
• Earn your privileges

One of the most basic beliefs in the therapeutic community is that you earn what you get. Members of the community are expected to work and grow. "Doing time" is not what the community is all about. All privileges are earned.

What do you think is the difference between earning what you get and "doing time?"

...to know and practice (continued)

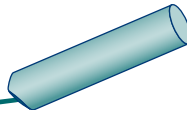
• Make a connection with the community



When residents first enter treatment, their connection is with the community of the “street.” The therapeutic community is a new environment and is quite different in terms of beliefs, values, behaviors and expectations. In the beginning the therapeutic community challenges old beliefs and attitudes. The community, over time, believes and expects that what it has to offer is valuable and beneficial. Residents are asked and are expected to join other community members around the common bond of a substance-free and crime-free lifestyle.

Describe your willingness today to join other community members in the common bond to lead substance-free and crime-free lives.

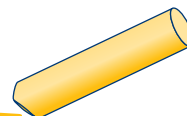
• Role modeling



Throughout your life, you have learned from others. Much of this learning came from watching their behaviors. Sometimes you watched on purpose and other times you may have been unaware that you were learning from what you observed. In the therapeutic community it is often said: “If you’re going to talk the talk, walk the walk.” When you learn by watching others, you are learning from what they model.

What does the phrase, “If you’re going to talk the talk, walk the walk” mean to you?

• Respect staff as rational authorities



In the past therapeutic community members have not seen or trusted authority figures as guides and teachers. Staff in the therapeutic community serve as positive role models and are considered Rational Authorities. They provide reasons for their decisions and the meaning of consequences. Staff facilitate and correct, rather than punish, behaviors.

How can you show respect for the staff as rational authorities?

Tools add structure...

In addition to the key concepts you will use as a member of the therapeutic community, there are 10 tools that are an essential part of the program as well. You will be expected to understand and accept each of the therapeutic community tools and know how they are used.

Therapeutic Community Tools

- *Pull up*

This is a verbal comment to someone to make him aware of a negative action or behavior. The proper response to a pull up is to say, "Thank you," and then correct the behavior.

- *Talking to*

When someone has been pulled up for negative behavior and failed to correct it, the next step would be a "talking to." The "talking to" tool is used by upper structure members or staff.

- *Learning experience*

Dr. George DeLeon teaches that therapeutic communities are "... environments engineered for social learning." Learning experiences are given to help residents focus on problems that are caused by their behaviors and look at solutions to correct them. Learning experiences typically consist of three areas: Behavioral, Cognitive and Social.

- Behavioral learning experiences consist of actions to focus one's attention on what is causing problems;
- Cognitive learning experiences consist of looking at one's thinking;
- Social learning experiences consist of how one's actions affect the community.

- *Ticket*

A ticket is a written pull up given by expeditors, department heads or senior residents. There is usually a learning experience given with a ticket to help the person correct the behavior that is causing problems. All tickets and learning experiences are approved after investigation and agreement by treatment staff.

...to a therapeutic community

- **Therapeutic peer reprimand**
A therapeutic peer reprimand is used to raise an individual's awareness of negative or destructive behavior. This creates an opportunity to teach appropriate behavior that is acceptable. Therapeutic peer reprimands can be conducted in front of the community or in a room with a panel and counselor.
- **Ban contract**
Two people who feed into each other's negativity might be banned from hanging out together for a period of time.
- **Glue contract**
This is a contract used when two clients would benefit from knowing each other at a deeper level. This contract is used to help clients gain insight into each other's culture or belief systems.
- **Encounter slip**
Used to get someone in your Encounter Group to encounter another member about his behavior or to determine how another member is doing in the program. Encountering is done out of care and concern to help the community member and the community.
- **Encounter groups**
This includes both "encounter process" and "special groups." This group is considered the "heartbeat" of a therapeutic community. Many of the residents' behavioral changes are the direct result of the interactions experienced in these groups.
- **Act As If**
If a person acts a certain way long enough, he will begin to feel that way and will change his attitude or behavior in that direction.

Why do the 10 tools play an important role in the structure of the therapeutic community?
