**PROJECT CONNECT OVERVIEW AND INFORMATION**

**History/Background**

Project Connect began as an outcome from the Solutions Building Community Collaborative (2007-2012) funded by CPP dollars, where Exodus Recovery Inc. served on a multi-systems team of experts as the forensic Mental Health Navigator that provided recommendations and systems navigation for Regional Center clients involved in the criminal justice system and/or needed mental health treatment through the county mental health system. At that time, the target population was high utilizers of the EMS and in patient psychiatric admissions. The intent was to provide integrated services across systems to assist in stabilization in the community. During this project, a pattern of treatment was identified. Many clients were in need of therapy that addressed poor impulse control and emotion regulation. In the general population, this is often addressed by providing dialectical behavior therapy; an evidence based practice in the field. Through research, this Collaborative identified Dr. Julie Brown; trained in DBT who authored the Skills System which is an adapted more concrete approach to DBT. (<http://www.skillssystem.com/>) This approach is highly successful with persons who have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. The Skills system was piloted by another agency, The Center for Personal Growth and they continue to offer this service.

Another trend in this Collaborative was that 37% of all persons referred were known to the Criminal Justice system. However, the Center for Personal Growth does not accept persons with aggressive behavior, or significant criminal history as they are housed in a group of community therapists providing treatment to the general population. Therefore, we looked to another community partner for those clients with forensic needs.

Exodus Recovery, Inc. provides county contracted mental health services including walk in assessment centers, and other counseling in Los Angeles, Fresno and San Diego. In San Diego, they previously held the contract for Mental Health Court with the criminal justice system; they currently are the largest provider of mental health treatment for persons re-aligned out of prison under AB109 and have a strong partnership with both the courts, law enforcement and probation. As well, they provide two walk in assessment centers via county funds for persons in need of emergency psychiatric care.

**Project Connect Services**

Based upon the above data and successes, Exodus was awarded $700,000 in CPP start up funds for fiscal years 2011/12. They provided services to 42 clients, completed 30 assessments, 31 criminal justice plans and 2 containment plans. During this phase, Project Connect worked in close collaboration with the Probation Department especially the Mentally Ill Offender unit. They used a retired supervising Deputy Public Defender and a Criminal Justice system consultant previously with the Sherriff’s Department to ensure that linkages with all systems were created and integrated into these plans. They also used an inter-agency consultant with expertise in Developmental Disabilities to ensure these plans were in cooperation with SDRC IPPs and planning team processes for identified participants. This individual and group psycho-educational approach to teach skills addressed barriers to success including re-incarceration, high utilization of the Emergency Medical Response System such as 911 and Emergency Room visits as well as psychiatric in patient admissions. Other barriers to success that were addressed included substance use/abuse, medication management, and understanding mental health.

Exodus was awarded additional funds ($200,00) in fiscal years 13-14 under CPP start up funds to provide ongoing services and fine tune Criminal Justice plans and follow up to ensure that clients are successful in meeting the conditions of probation, parole, court orders etc., as well as learning 9 coping skills to manage emotion regulation. In the course of this second phase, the courts began to recognize the benefits of this model and authorized Project Connect and this therapy approach to meet the conditions of court ordered classes in Domestic Violence and Anger Management. In this phase, Project Connect was also providing Criminal Justice/Containment plans for most participants.

**Ongoing Services**

Project Connect Services were transitioned to ongoing purchase of services rates and guidelines in 2014. Services are purchased using a tier system under Service Code 017 (Crisis Team Evaluation and Intervention). They include:

* **Intake** Assessment ($600)
* Complete Services which in 6-8 sessions per month of training and intervention ($1445.32/month)
* **Limited** Services for those who have circumstances which preclude complete involvement for 3-5 sessions per month ($722.66 /month)
* **Maintenance** phase for those who have successfully completed most program components but require additional monitoring to ensure success for 1-2 sessions per month. ($361.33 /month)

It should be noted that research has shown persons with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities receiving therapy such as DBT typically require approximately 4 years to integrate these skills into day to day living on a regular basis.

**Project Connect Data**

The information in the attached document - Project Connect Data.6.8.16.pdf identifies data collected through Project Connect since it’s start up in 2011.