

The Challenge of Being a Good Server When That is Not Made Easy

Wednesday, July 6, 2022

Manresa Renewal Center, 2325 Liverpool Rd, Pickering, ON L1X 1V4

Co-sponsored by the Southern Ontario Training Group, NABORS, and Brampton Caledon Community Living

Presenters: Peg Jenner, Jane Barken and Steve Tiffany

Direct service work is where “the rubber meets the road”; where the needs of people who receive various types of human services are addressed. However, good direct service work can get lost in all the other things that surround and impinge on it, such as laws and regulations, union rules, family concerns and demands, etc. This workshop is intended to be an opportunity for direct human service workers and those who supervise them to reflect on the challenge of trying to be a good server to people in need when, for all sorts of reasons, that is not easy to do. Family members, volunteers, direct service workers, and those in supervisory or administrative positions will all find this workshop beneficial.

The workshop will outline different kinds of direct service, such as teaching, nursing, assisting with daily living, whether at home or in another setting, and employment assistance. It will explain how necessary and meritorious such service is, and then describe some characteristics that distinguish good direct service from service that is harmful, bad, or simply indifferent.

The workshop will next present some of the most common obstacles to good service, and explain why it is so hard to provide good direct service. These obstacles include services being very formalized or rigid, and societal values that do not support good service, direct service work, servers, and the people being served being viewed as of low value. Furthermore, some kinds of direct service work are seen as the last option for people who cannot get any other kind of employment. Also, services are often expected to do more than they can realistically accomplish.

The last part of the workshop will review some possible actions for direct service workers and those who supervise them in light of all that has been covered. These actions have to do with being or becoming a person of moral integrity within problem-ridden systems. A number of these actions will require the service worker to reflect on what kind of person they want to be. While very helpful, these are not actions that will fix all the problems that will be reviewed.

The workshop consists of lectures, with opportunities for questions and discussion during the day.

