

BRAIN BLAST

WEEKLY VOLUNTARY AND UNSTRUCTURED CLIENT GROUP
MEETINGS THAT PRODUCE EXCEPTIONAL RESULTS

BIAM ANNUAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE
TIMONIUM, MARYLAND
APRIL 2011

Presenters

- Chris Kirtz, Brain Blast
Facilitator / Caregiver
301-990-7935
ckirtz@hotmail.com
- Ellen Dugan, Caregiver
Ellendug@gmail.com
- Desmond Ofordire
Survivor
- Maggie Hunter
Director of Admissions and
Quality
Head Injury Rehabilitation &
Referral Services, Inc.
301-309-2228

OUTCOMES OF SESSION

By the end of the session participants will:

1. Have seen and heard the positive outcomes for participants of the Brain Blast sessions.
2. Have the opportunity to assess feasibility/desirability of initiating similar type groups at their facilities.
3. Been made aware of the parameters are most likely to enhance positive results in client group meetings.

Benefits Observed:

- Participants have an opportunity to mentor one another and experience the positive feeling of making a difference in a fellow survivor's recovery journey.
- Enhanced sense of compassion and empathy for themselves, fellow clients, staff members, caregivers, family members, and others.
- Greater ability to acknowledge, give thanks, and have gratitude and appreciation for self and others.
- Have full and open self-expression about their rehabilitation and recovery in a non-threatening environment.
- Learn and practice the skills of self-advocacy.
- Develop communication skills on a multitude of levels.
- Develop a greater awareness of the importance of communication and skills in its employment.
- Develop a greater awareness of the importance of and skills in problem-identification and resolution.
- Develop the ability to identify and exploit problem-solving/growth opportunities.
- Awareness of the fact it's far easier to complain than to identify a goal requiring venturing outside the safety zone to accomplish.
- Awareness of the courage and hard work it takes to build "new muscles" and skill sets for a more fulfilling life.
- Acknowledgment of the recovery ground covered thus far, notwithstanding a sense of pre-injury loss, and the fact continued recovery remains an arduous and ongoing undertaking.

Parameters Most likely to Enhance Positive Results:

- The facilitator's job is to get out of the way and encourage attendees to express themselves fully.
- The facilitator should encourage the group to agree on minimal meeting ground rules.
- Participants are guaranteed confidentiality. What happens at the meeting stays at the meeting.
- If participants want, and facilitator agrees, s/he can take a request, question, concern, or suggestion to appropriate staff.
- It is useful if the facilitator prepares written meetings summaries for staff and participants.
- Summaries should protect confidentiality, e.g. "participant said" vs. "John said".
- Facilitator should be a volunteer, not a paid employee.
- To have credibility, facilitator should be a survivor, TBI caregiver and/or family member.

Questions and Answers

Please raise your hand to ask a question.