

## **Recommended Case Management Strategies with VTC Clients Experiencing Mental Health and Substance Use Symptoms**

*\*Below are a few strategies recommended by six VTC case managers who encounter clients with mental health and substance use symptoms on a daily basis. The experienced case managers recommend using education, training, and role playing scenarios to be most effective with VTC clients.*

### **Review client's profiles to find mental health diagnosis and prescribed medication history:**

A client's profile is a great source to refer to when they are unable to be cooperative during appointments and programming. Lack of cooperation can be due to a client not taking their psychiatric medication. Having a discussion with the client regarding their medication and assisting them in renewing their prescription may help to resolve the lack of cooperation.

### **Use de-escalation techniques with aggressive, threatening, hostile, and violent behavior:**

There are times when a client will enter an appointment with a case manager in an angered state, get into a violent altercation with another client, and approach staff in an aggressive manner. These are times when de-escalation techniques are necessary. De-escalation techniques learned during training will teach how to break up a fight with a calm and respectful tone, never to touch an escalated person, listen to a person's issue without judgment, have an exit strategy, call for assistance, and more.

### **Suicidal ideation and behavior in clients:**

Many clients at VTC have low-self esteem. At times this leads them into a depression that can often be visible. They can appear down, not make eye contact, speak in short words, slouch in a chair during a case management appointment, have poor hygiene, and increase substance use to self medicate. Some clients such as this will have Suicidal Ideation (SI) documented in their profile. This needs to be addressed by checking in with them on how they are feeling. Creating a safety plan and conducting wellness checks whenever necessary. During a crisis, call 911.

### **Call law enforcement when clients are experiencing a break with reality:**

Clients can be unpredictable when showing signs of not knowing who they are, where they are at, and the time of day. If showing signs of delusions, hallucination, harm to themselves or others, then immediately call 911. Do not attempt to handle the situation alone or take them to the hospital yourself. This is for the safety of everyone involved.

### **Seek the help of a program manager and case management supervisor when needed:**

The program manager and case management supervisor help address issues that cannot be resolved by a case manager alone. Their assistance may be needed when clients avoid or refuse programming. Intervention strategies will often be used to address these types of issues, but can ultimately end up in the client's dismissal from VTC for not cooperating with programs.