Building Strong SOAR Communities: An Online Training

SAMHSA's SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery Technical Assistance (SOAR TA) Center is funded by the <u>Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)</u>. This national project is designed to increase access to the disability income benefit programs administered by the <u>Social Security Administration (SSA)</u> for eligible adults who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and have a mental illness and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder.

SOAR trainings inspire trainees to begin their first SOAR applications. Yet how does a SOAR community support case workers to submit quality SOAR applications over the long term? Geographic and funding challenges make scheduling 2-day in-person SOAR trainings nearly impossible for some provider agencies. What tools do agencies have to remedy this situation? With shrinking budgets and increased pressures on case managers, the importance of answering these stubborn questions is greater than ever. Enter SAMHSA's online SOAR training!

SAMHSA's easy-to-use, self-paced, online training curriculum, slated to go live in November, will help communities initiate or strengthen SOAR programs. Agencies can use the training website not only to build expertise for assisting with SSI/SSDI applications, but to connect with other SOAR programs and the SOAR leadership in their state. To receive a certificate of completion, enrollees will complete a sample application packet, which the SOAR TA Center will review and provide feedback on. The SOAR TA Center staff will be available to respond to any questions, as well.

The free training has been approved by the National Association of Social Workers for 16 continuing education credit hours. Upon receipt of the SOAR online curriculum certificate of completion, enrollees will be able to request credit.

SAMHSA and the SOAR TA Center are excited about expanding SOAR to rural and other communities that have not had access to SOAR trainings. Likewise, they are excited to offer the opportunity to review and renew to experienced providers. Stay tuned for more information in October!

Please contact one of us (contact information below) for further information on how you or someone you know can become trained in the SOAR process. Utilization of this process can enhance the odds that the applicant will be approved for social security benefits.

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