

Unit 14 – Teacher's Book

Outreach work (Street Work)

Video – Outreach: Covenant House

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnXK6QHJJPc>

Poem:

Outreach

*In this hollow sphere of never-ending night
We work our way through paths into their homes;
Quietly we sneak, most coercive in our sight
To heal the sick, to damn their sorrows some.
Who gives Us leave? Who grants us ministry
To mark the air with words of hope and faith?
What stranger, wrangling in his artistry,
Should take us to his home on rocks of slate?
We cannot but deceive with truths so sweet
They touch as lies; We fool them all.
We pray that at our end we one day meet
That stranger lying hollow to our call.

And yet in all the fooling, fool and fair,
We may grow closer, willing that we dare.*

—JULIAN BALL

Office and Outreach Emergency Procedures Including Safety and Security for Outreach Workers (according to www.cdc.gov/outreach/resources/SafetyProtocols.doc)

I. General Safety Precautions:

- 1) Workers are to remain in pairs at all times.
- 2) When approaching a client, workers should be aware of their hands.
- 3) When encountering dangerous activity in an outreach area (i.e.: police activity, fights etc.) workers should leave the area immediately. If the worker is with a client, the worker is to tell the client they have to leave and will return later.
- 4) If the worker is under threat of robbery let them have what they want and get away as soon as possible.

II. Suicidal Behaviour:

- 1) Worker is to stay calm and remain objective.
- 2) Client should be offered food or drink.
- 3) Worker is to ask if the client has any weapons. If yes the worker is to ask if they may hold the weapon for the client.
- 4) If the client refuses to hand over the weapon the worker is to call 911.
- 5) If no weapon is involved, but the situation continues to escalate and client is out of control call 911.

- 6) If there is no weapon and the client is coherent, the worker should continue counseling efforts to diffuse the crisis and assess the need for a referral to an assisting agency.

III. Emergency Street Escort Procedures:

- 1) Outreach workers are never to be alone with a client when escorting a client off the street.
- 2) Outreach workers should always meet a client in public well-lit areas.
- 3) If a client is homebound, and an escort is necessary the 2-outreach workers will work in conjunction with 911 services and not enter the building until other assistance arrives.
- 4) When completing an escort outreach workers are to seek out the social worker in the Hospital or Agency they have escorted the client to and provide follow-up.
- 5) In a hospital if the worker encounters difficulty they should locate the Administrator on Duty (AOD). This person is there for client advocacy, and can assist them with questions.
- 6) If a client is severely ill a determination should be made if an ambulance should be call.
- 7) If a client appears mentally ill (psychotic) and out of control call 911.

IV. Assault, Attacks, Threats Made by a Client during Outreach:

- 1) If the worker is attacked or threatened by a client they must try to remove themselves from the area and if possible call their Supervisor, or Coordinator immediately (as soon as it is safe). If the worker cannot contact any supervisors, leave the streets entirely for the night.
- 2) An Incident Report must be filled out as soon as possible after the incident.
- 3) Outreach workers are to act in the best interest of their safety. If you perceive the need to call 911 for help, do so.

V. Assault, Attacks, Threats made by a Client in the office:

- 1) If a fight breaks out in the office, workers are to call 911 immediately.
- 2) An incident report is to be filled out immediately after the incident.

VI. Emergency Phone Counseling:

- 1) Some Workers may be beeped at any time by the Runaway Youth Hotline.
- 2) Workers are to answer all beepers immediately.
- 3) The Workers needs to assess the situation to determine if the client is in need of escort services. If escort services are necessary, the worker is to locate a worker that can assist in the escort. If no assistance is available the escort will not take place. The worker will then contact 911 on behalf of the client.

VII. Emergency While Doing a Home Visit:

- 1) All Home Visits should be done in pairs.
- 2) Before leaving the office, the outreach worker should leave the Name, address, phone number and time of the appointment with the office.
- 3) If the worker sees a situation in the home escalating, in the early stages, all efforts should be made to diffuse the situation. If it continues to escalate and the worker senses physical danger they should leave immediately.
- 4) As soon as the worker has reached safety they should contact 911 if they assess it is necessary and then their Supervisor or Coordinator.
- 5) Upon Returning to the office and incident report should be filled out and copies CC'd to the Coordinator.

VIII. Weapons:

- 1) There are no weapons allowed in the office or on street outreach vehicles.
- 2) If a client admits they have a weapon in their possession the worker should ask the client to leave the premises and return when the weapon has been removed for their possession.

Peer driven outreach (volunteers)

Voluntary peer outreach work needs to be taken into account as a part of successful interventions, especially in countries and areas where the target group's activity is hidden and can't be found and accessed without difficulties (e.g. no visible drug use in the streets, street prostitution and rough sleepers).

Peer outreach work differs from professional outreach work in two ways. Firstly, it aims to introduce changes in the behaviour of the specific target group from inside the network. Secondly, the aim is to introduce change via peers/cultural mediators that are either current or ex group members. Peer outreach workers can also be called as peer educators or tutors.

Peer workers get seldom permanent contracts. They usually work as volunteers at times that suit them. In many countries, peer outreach workers are paid tax-free remunerations/expenses. Harm reducing peer support is based on the idea that peer workers can act responsibly as important information distributors and support mentors, even if they themselves use drugs or work in the sex industry. Peer workers belong to the target group that the support organisation offers services to.

The strength of peer activity lies in the similar lifestyles of the peer workers and the people they are helping. Peer workers can ultimately change attitudes, habits, beliefs and risk behaviours in their own social networks. Peer workers have the unique opportunity of getting involved in those concrete, daily situations in which the target group lives. Peer workers can also reach those people who do not otherwise access the services offered by the organisation.

The status of peer workers can be defined three dimensionally as follows. Peer supporter: a person from the peer group who offers support. In principle, this can be anyone. This position does not include any obligations or responsibilities. Peer educator: a person from the peer group that has completed peer education training and is committed to a certain time limited undertaking. Peer worker: a person from the peer group who receives continuous training and ongoing supervision, provided by the organisation that provides services. Peer workers can also have an important role in developing services. They can supply up to date information on possible changes and additional needs amongst the target group. Peer activities must meet the ever-changing needs of the clients and adapt to each challenge, phenomenon and problem typical for that time.

The work must be persistent, continuous, and constantly developing. Peer workers must be a part of the development. Peer workers need professional, social and medical support. Both individual and group support is important. The support generated by peer educators when they work, access and analyse their work together can also develop the peer activities further.

Peer workers require a clear definition of their role. They need to be treated with respect as fellow associates and the organisation needs to ensure that their voice is heard. This is important for peer educators development and motivation. Respecting peer workers and taking them seriously will enhance their self-esteem and motivate them to continue and develop their work.