



PARTNERS
Improving Lives. Strengthening Communities.

Geriatric Adult Mental Health Specialty Team



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What is the Geriatric Adult Mental Health Specialty Team Program (GAST)

Purpose

To increase the ability of people working in community agencies/organizations in providing services and support to older adults with mental health and substance use issues.

Activities

- ▶ Provide training on topics such as signs & symptoms of depression, anxiety, and dementia; crisis prevention; substance use/misuse.
- ▶ Provide consultation to the people receiving training to enhance topic taught
- ▶ Serve as Coaches for community agencies/organizations implementing Healthy IDEAS.



Geriatric Adult Mental Health Specialty Team Program (GAST)

- ▶ Adult Care Home (ACH)
- ▶ Family Care Home (FCH)
- ▶ Nursing Home
- ▶ Senior Centers
- ▶ Home Care Agencies
- ▶ Home Health Agencies
- ▶ Meals-on-Wheels Programs
- ▶ Faith-Based Organizations
- ▶ Departments of Social Services
- ▶ Law Enforcement and Judicial system
- ▶ Veteran Affairs
- ▶ NC Community Resource Connections



GAST Training Topics

- ▶ Typical symptoms and behaviors associated with mental illness and/or substance use disorders among older adults
- ▶ Mood Disorders (depression, bipolar disorder)
- ▶ Anxiety disorders (PTSD, OCD, panic disorder)
- ▶ Schizophrenia and other Psychotic Disorders (paranoid, delusional, and psychotic disorders)
- ▶ Substance use disorders and Issues (alcohol use, prescription medication misuse, illicit drugs use)
- ▶ Cognitive Disorders (delirium, dementia to include Alzheimer's disease).
- ▶ Personality Disorders
- ▶ Typical medications used & associated side effects



GAST Training Topics

- Effective communication - verbal and non-verbal
- Crisis prevention and de-escalation techniques
- Accessing crisis services through the LME/MCO
- Suicide indicators, response, and prevention
- Communicating mental health and/or substance use observations and interaction with psychiatrist, physician, and nurses
- Techniques to assess behaviors that may be the result of medical conditions or environmental factors
- Understanding the LME/MCO system and how to make referrals for mental health and/or substance use treatment and services.



GAST Program

- GAST is available in all 100 Counties.
- Teams are composed of Registered Nurses and QMHP with a Master Degree in a human service.
- Other staff may include Registered Nurses, Advanced Practice Nurses and Master or Bachelor QMHP with degree in a human service field.
- All Team Members have experience working with older adults with mental health and substance use disorders and training experience



GAST Community Interaction

- ▶ Partners Behavioral Health Management GAST has become very active in the community
- ▶ Our GAST is involved with the Council on Aging, Meals on Wheels, Senior Centers, Adult Day Programs, Continuing Care Retirement Communities, Law Enforcement, Community Watch Groups, Faith Based Organizations, NC Community Care Block Grant Advisory Committee, Adult Protective Services, Adult and Aging Services, DSS
- ▶ Also a part of the NC Institute of Medicine task force for older adults at the state level
- ▶ The NC GAST also helped write a portion of training for the NC Justice Academy on Elder Abuse



What does this mean to you?

- ▶ **Call your local GAST!**
- ▶ The Geriatric Adult Specialty Team can be a huge benefit to your agency, group, or community organization.
- ▶ It is provided at no cost.
- ▶ The trainings are high quality and provide valuable information.
- ▶ We are in a pivotal time of change.
- ▶ The spirit of the coming generations is very independent and their living choices will echo such!



Benefits to the Community

- ▶ Being prepared
- ▶ Understanding the challenges we are facing currently and with the generations to come
- ▶ Being able to provide higher quality of care
- ▶ Developing your staff's tools to interact with the elderly
- ▶ Prepare the community for elderly individuals who make the choice to live with assistance in whatever community setting they choose.



Contact Information

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