A Compass for Integration: An Overview of Nurse Navigator Services

Presented by
Vince Mercuri, M.Ed., C.A.D.C., LPC
Executive Director
The Open Door, Indiana, PA
The Nurse Navigator is a full-time R.N. who works with the clients to provide health education and bridge the gap between physical and behavioral health care by acting as an advocate for clients and being able to act as a liaison between Primary Care Physicians, AOD treatment providers and therapists, Mental Health Treatment Providers, as well as Emergency Services. This service is available to all clients while in any level of outpatient treatment.
The Nurse Navigator helps to:

- Advocate for the overall health and well-being of clients by referring, and facilitating access to, quality physical and behavioral health services intended to:
  1. Meet individualized needs of clients
  2. Facilitate access to and coordination of behavioral health services
  3. Being responsive to the needs expressed by the clients themselves

- Provide education and promote holistic health and wellness

- Increase education on areas such as nutrition, drug and prescription medication management
• Promote routine screenings and physicals and assist clients to develop an individualized wellness plan

• Empower and assist clients in self-advocacy when attending meetings with health care providers

• Provide education and promote awareness on alternative practices for well-being, such as acupuncture, yoga, stress relief/breathing exercises, etc.

• Identify individuals with co-morbid physical and mental health conditions
• Assess clients with current medical concerns (i.e. a client was having abdominal pain while in session and after assessment by the Nurse Navigator the client was sent to the ER for possible gall bladder issues. The client had surgery that evening to remove the gall bladder)

• Assess and advocate the coordination of care for pregnant females

• Educate clients/staff on the effects of drug use on the body (i.e. cocaine use can increase cardiac issues)

• Educate clients on HCV/HIV risk factors, prevention, and treatment.
• Train clients, community members, and staff on the use of Narcan

• Assist in interpreting urine drug screen results

• Monitor client’s prescriptions with the use of the PDMP

• Educate on the use of MAT

• Work directly with contracted physician to provide MAT services and support clients enrolled in the in-house Buprenorphine program. Administer Sublocade
• Monitor and record client vital signs when needed and as appropriate

• Refer clients for the Vivitrol program

• Provide medical education to the treatment team

• Operates as a member of the treatment team

• Maintain drug screening supplies