

Peer Support for Defendant Clinicians

The Problem

Caregivers are often not recognized as “second victims” in the course of an adverse event or a medical malpractice lawsuit. Involvement in a major event/lawsuit can effect the clinician’s ability to provide patient care after and can have longstanding emotional consequences to the providers involved as well. BIDMC providers who were newly named as defendants in lawsuits were expressed a need for additional support.

Aim/Goal

- To recruit 4-6 former physician defendants to be part of the core peer group that would do outreach with newly named physicians and would be available if the new defendants wanted to reach out to offer support
- To gather some preliminary information from the physicians in the core group about their general experiences and what they would have found helpful
- To roll-out the program and evaluate success through feedback from participants

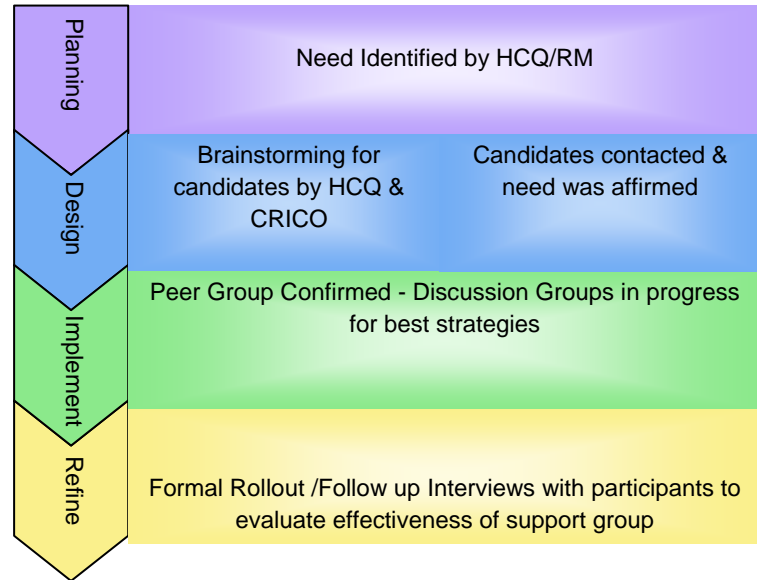
The Team

The planners include: VP HCQ, Director of Patient Safety, Risk Management Specialist (RM), and CRICO Claims Manager. The Core group of peer supporters is made up of 5 different physicians from various areas of the BIDMC community including senior leadership and the APG practices.

The Interventions

- Recruited core support group members
- Interviewed each of the 5 candidates who said they might be willing to be part of the core group
- Completed letter to be sent out by HCQ to all newly named defendants notifying them of the program and the BIDMC’s intention to support them during this stressful time

The Results/Progress to Date



Lessons Learned

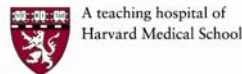
Coordinating times to speak privately and openly with physicians can be challenging and each step took longer than expected to complete due to schedules, conflicts and competing priorities. Despite the length of time between initial meeting and the start of implementation, the peer supporters were still eager and willing to be part of the group due to how important the need for the program is deemed to be. Taking the time to screen the candidates, up front, while being a lengthy process, is vital to the success and sustainability.

Next Steps/What Should Happen Next

- Meeting to discuss best implementation strategy & legal concerns
- Staff from an outside institution to attend a group meeting to discuss the successes and pitfalls there
- Begin reaching out to newly named defendants in FY 2010, Q 1 and Q 2
- Reevaluate program successes, pitfalls & sustainability



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