Contingency Planning for Nonprofits during Pandemics

Alliance of Local Service Organizations

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GRANTS FOR OUTREACH
AND SERVICES TO
UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

THROUGH THE OFFICE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Agenda

- Welcome
- Why is Planning Important?
- Principles of Contingency Planning
- Wellness supports
- Closing

Learning Objectives

- Describe Principles of Contingency Planning and ALSO's approach to implementing these during the current Pandemics.
- Explore how agency policies and practices can support staff wellness and be built into planning.

Learning from Crises

"The struggle you're in today is developing the strength you need tomorrow." – Robert Tew

"What I treasure most in life is being able to dream. During my most difficult moments and complex situations I have been able to dream of a more beautiful future." – Rigoberta Menchu

Why is planning important?

Always important for nonprofits to engage in strategic planning.

- 1. Scenario planning involves looking at different trajectories and outcomes (positive and negative), and studying the outcomes to assist with decision-making.
 - Now, critical due to pandemics, and economic uncertainty in the current climate.
- 1. Intentionality: Staff, clients, & communities who would be **most impacted** by pandemics and economic downturns are also those most affected by racism, sexism, transphobia, homophobia, xenophobia, & ableism.

Why is planning important? (cont'd)

- 3. Contingency planning is <u>one type of scenario planning</u>, and it involves looking at sudden changes.
 - Contingency planning is critical for ensuring that core operations continue during a crisis, and minimizing or mitigating loss and damage.
 - The advantage of a contingency approach to planning is the understanding that what works in one setting, or at one point in time, may not work in another. (<u>Bradshaw</u>, 2009)

Principles of Contingency Planning for Nonprofits

- Mission-centered decision making
- Case scenario planning
- Financially protecting your core programs and staff
- Engaging staff & board
- Handling remote operations/returning to "normal"
- Wellness

Mission Centered Decision Making

- Agency beliefs and values should guide your decisions as much as concern for your bottom line.
- Case scenario:
 - Recognizing various privileges within staff (related to role/position, job activities, race, education, gender, etc.) and related risk levels re: COVID-19 and otherwise
 - Mission-commitment bonus payment for essential nonprofit workers (vs hazard pay)

Case Scenario Planning

- Financial and program planning
 - Best case
 - Most likely case
 - Worst case
 - Applying an equity lens

Core Programs and Staff

- Financially protect your core.
 - What programs support your mission and bring in revenue?
 - Who are your key staff?

 If downsizing must occur, start with consultants and "non-core" programs (balance both mission and finances).

Finance Planning

- Talk with funders
 - CARES Act
- Reserve funds (maintain liquidity)
- Financial program projections (short term and long term)
- Case scenario planning for finances
 - Modify budgets based on new needs and conditions
 - Personnel considerations (hazard pay, bonuses, furloughs, layoffs)

Engaging Staff and Board

Use Data along with staff and client narratives

Regular communication and transparency

- Shared decision making
 - Layoffs, furloughs and other hard decisions
 - Remote operations and safe in-person practices
 - Wellness of staff members

Handling Remote Operations

- Joint decision making to protect health and safety
 - Involve various levels of the agency
- Use of data to inform when/how to "go back"
 - Include staff and client narratives
- Logistical and technology concerns and needs
- Remote staff supervision
- Attending to agency culture and ongoing connection

Handling Return to "Normal" Operations

- Treat this as a fluctuating situation, not a static event
- Analyze data from multiple sources
 - Including talking with staff and clients
 - Use equity lens

Handling Return to "Normal" Operations (cont'd)

- Balancing programmatic excellence with the staff's and clients'
 - health
 - safety
 - well-being

Considerations around accessibility

Handling Return to "Normal" Operations (cont'd)

Maintain transparent communication and shared decision-making

- Track expenses related to COVID modifications/current climate
 - How can increased accessibility be sustained?

Wellness

Agency Policies & Practices

- Benefits (vacation, sick, comp, etc.)
- Board support & additional time off
- Liability Insurance
- Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act)
- Employment Assistance Program (EAP)
- Leaves of Absences
- Transparent processes related to accountability
- "Piecing out the difference between overworked and overwhelmed" (Dr. Darlene Perry, Owner/ P&S Evolutions, LLC)
 - job descriptions & evaluation processes

Prioritize Your Own Health and Well-being

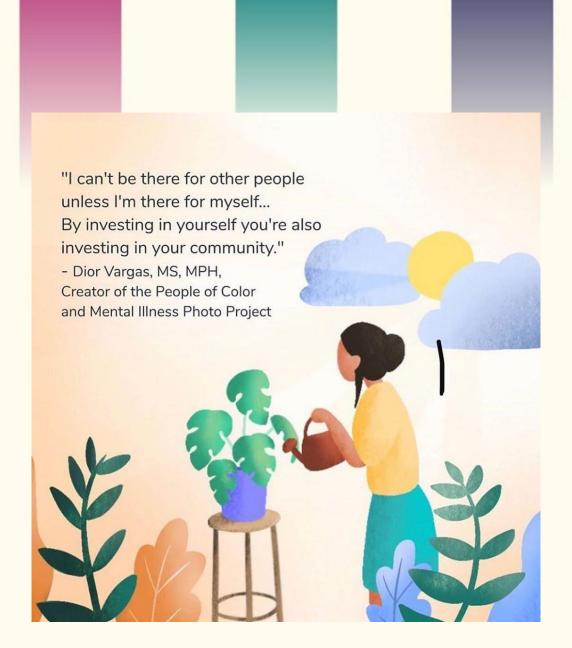
- This is a marathon, not a sprint!
- This is stressful work on a good day, and extremely stressful during pandemics.

• This work needs you to strive to remain safe, healthy, clear-headed, and rooted in person-centered values.

Wellness

Personal

- When was the last time you took a break from work?
- Are you able to find times when work is not on your mind?
- What are you doing to find joy and nourishment during this time?
- How are you incorporating care into your own routine?
 - Doctor Appointment? Therapy? Consultation? Community?
- What communities are you a part of that are of great value to you and bring you feelings of connection?
- How is your workspace and schedule if at home/with children/youth/other dependents?
- Grounding techniques and mind/body awareness.



From @dior_vargas, Reposted by @counseling4allseasons

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