The MS Social Workers Collaborative of Washington (MSSWC-W): Sustainable and Thriving at Year 3!

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Background

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Social Workers play an integral role on MS Care Team by addressing a myriad of biopsychosocial, spiritual, and economic issues associated with MS.

MS Social Workers provide MS-specialized care with individuals, groups, families and caregivers in diverse settings. They navigate social services and medical systems. They use a strengths-based, holistic, systems approach to client care.

MSSWC-W was established in 2009 as a collaboration of MS Social Workers and allied health professionals in The Pacific Northwest for networking, resource sharing, consultation and collaboration.

Third year! MSSWC-W is now well established and sustainable with 35 members from 14 different MS clinics or organizations. The Collaborative tackles issues and offers a professional network of support for MS Social Workers who can sometimes feel overwhelmed and isolated as the only Social Worker in a particular geographical area or medical system working with MS.

Objectives

- A mission, vision and “shared” leadership model
- Encourage professional development through:
  - Monthly meetings and networking events
  - Website, email listserv
  - Professional referral system
  - Case conferences
  - Presentations at national and international MS conferences

MSSWC-W has enhanced my MS Social Work practice by...

- "Being a group gives us the ability to draw speakers for educational purposes and the opportunity to coordinate workshops like SSDI and Social Work panels."
- "The Collaborative provides a means to identify gaps in service for our population and an opportunity to problem-solve those issues creatively as a group."

Author Organizations and Centers:

1 MS Center of Excellence-West, Veterans Health Administration, Seattle, WA
2 MultiCare Neurosciences Center of Washington, Tacoma, WA
3 Counseling for Inner Balance (Private Practice), Accord Associates, Eric Living, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Greater Northwest Chapter, Seattle, WA
4 Virginia Mason Medical Center, Seattle, WA
5 University of Washington MS Rehabilitation Research and Training Center, Seattle, WA