

3 Principles Services Division
Department of Alcohol and Drug Services
Santa Clara Valley Health & Hospital Systems

Impact and Possibilities

***A Summary Report on the Findings of a Survey of
Principles-Based Training Participants***

Conducted and Presented by
Collaborative Solutions Consulting CSC

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Executive Summary

The 3 Principles Services Division (formerly Health Realization Services Division) of the Department of Alcohol and Drug Services (DADS) of the County of Santa Clara contracted the services of Collaborative Solutions Consulting (CSC) to conduct a survey of current and past participants in its training and educational programs. The purpose of the survey was: a) to assess how current and past participants in principles-based programs have benefited from training in the Principles both in their personal and their professional lives and b) to develop ideas on ways to continue expanding the Principles-based services to reach more individuals and organizations in Santa Clara County. In order to accomplish the above stated goals, staff from CSC interviewed eighteen participants. The interviews took place from December 27, 2006 to January 30, 2007.

The survey questionnaire included among others, the following questions:

- How has learning about the Principles influenced the way you approach life in general?
- How has learning about the Principles influenced the way you approach your job?
- How do you envision the future of Principles-based services in Santa Clara County?
- How do you envision an ideal process for continued support among Principles-based practitioners in Santa Clara County?

Summary of findings

In this report, we present a summary of the main themes that emerged during these interviews. We have organized the report as follows: first, we present an overview of the 3 Principles Services Division (3PSD) as a way to put in context the purpose of the present study. Second, we present a summary of the major findings, and we conclude with a summary of recommendations and next steps.

Certain themes emerged from the survey.

- The Principles offer a fresh and positive view of human psychological experience and provide an antidote to the deficit-oriented approaches in the field of counseling and psychotherapy.
- Learning about the Principles had and continues having a positive impact on the personal lives of those who have learned about them.
- The Principles offer a positive and hopeful approach to life. An approach that is particularly effective in dealing with the challenges and stresses that people face at work.
- There is a bright future for teaching the Principles in Santa Clara County and forming a network of practitioners would enhance its efforts in reaching more individuals and groups.

Many people contributed to the success of this project. First, I am deeply in debt to the staff of the 3 Principles Services Division of the Department of Alcohol and Drug Services, Linda Ramus, Division Director, Division trainers Gabriela Maldonado and Sister Margarita Tran for their love, dedication and commitment to this project. Their wisdom and perspective have really touched my life. Also, I want to extend my deep appreciation to those who participated in this study for opening their hearts and sharing with us their personal stories, hope, enthusiasm and passion for the Principles. They have really inspired me. *Gracias !!*

Sincerely,
Raul Rojas, CSC

Introduction

More and more, learning about the Principles of Mind, Thought and Consciousness upon which 3 Principles Services Division programs are based, is recognized as an effective approach for improving the quality of life of individuals, organizations and communities. A growing number of civic organizations, community-based organizations and academic institutions are embracing the Principles and their power to effect positive change in individuals and to transform communities. Across the United States, public agencies, private business and community-based organizations are embracing the teaching of the Principles as a means to improve the quality of life of the communities and organizations that they serve. At the local level, the 3 Principles Services Division of the Department of Alcohol and Drug Services (DADS) has been instrumental in bringing the Principles to Santa Clara County.

Since the first introductory training in 1994, the program has grown to become the solid and well-respected program that it is today. In 2000, Robert Garner, Director of the Department of Drug and Alcohol Services established the Health Realization Services Division, now called the 3 Principles Services Division (3PSD). The purpose of this new division was to share this understanding with DADS clients as well as other county departments and community-based organizations. Today 3PSD provides over 45 weekly classes and numerous professional development training and technical assistance services to other county departments and divisions, numerous community-based organizations and hundreds of individuals throughout Santa Clara County and beyond. In 2006-2007 it served over 2,000 individuals. What began as a small program of DADS, has quietly permeated a great number of other sectors in the County. However, after thirteen years it is time to assess its progress and examine how to enhance its growth in the county. One of the purposes of this study, therefore, was to identify ways to reach more individuals, organizations and communities in Santa Clara County and beyond.

Methodology

3 Principles Services Division staff and an independent consultant from CSC identified and selected a representative sample of twenty-five individuals who had participated in 3PSD trainings. They represent a variety of sectors (public health, mental health, social services, education, adult and juvenile criminal justice) and ethnic groups (African American, Caucasian, Asian and Hispanic). The survey was conducted in one-hour face-to-face interviews. It consisted of twenty open-ended questions. Survey questions included:

- “How has the learning more about the Principles influenced the way you approach your life in general?”
- “How much has learning about the Principles influenced the way you approach your job?”

- “How do you envision the future of the Principles-based programs in Santa Clara County?”

Information Gathering Process

The 3 Principles Services Division mailed letters to the twenty-five prospective survey participants explaining the purpose of the study and inviting them to participate. A week later, a staff of CSC contacted the potential survey participants and provided them with detailed information about the study. Eighteen accepted the invitation to participate in this study. The interviews took place between December 27, 2006 to January 30, 2007. All interviews were audio taped and then transcribed. Afterwards the responses were analyzed and codified using Grounded Theory methodology. Grounded Theory is a qualitative research methodology that is particularly effective in identifying common themes and trends in small groups with common interests and narratives.

Relevant Findings

“I knew I was in front of something very powerful”- Survey Respondent

In this section, we present the themes, narratives and patterns that emerged in this study. First, we present what participants consider unique about 3PSD trainings. Then we examine how learning about the Principles has influenced their lives, followed by an analysis of the impact of the training in the work place. Finally we conclude with a summary of recommendations as based on their suggestions about the future of programs based on the three Principles in Santa Clara County.

I. The Uniqueness of the Principles Approach

The themes that emerged in this area:

- 1. The Principles offers a positive view about human beings.*
- 2. The Principles offer a hopeful, optimistic and empowering understanding about life.*
- 3. The Principles provide a “universal language.” A language that connects all human beings regardless of their background.*
- 4. The Principles offer an “effortless” view of the healing experience.*
- 5. The Principles offer a holistic view of the human psychological experience.*

1. The Principles offer a positive view of human beings

Almost all participants said one of the most important characteristics of the Principle-based approach is its emphasis on the positive nature of human beings. According to most respondents, one of the most appealing elements of this approach is its profound belief in people’s natural resources for health and well-being. In relations to this, one of them said, “The very fact of knowing that we ALL are the embodiment of health and well-being represents an empowering concept.” This concept is in contrast to the more deficit-oriented, problem-oriented approaches that have dominated the field of substance abuse treatment, counseling and mental health for many years. Along this line, one respondent expressed:

“What I like most about this training is its focus on wellness and health in ALL people”

The program's certainty in people's inner wisdom and personal strength offers an optimistic and hopeful view of the human psychological experience.

"...the concept of the ability in all human beings to access their positive psychological resources is very hopeful."

This profound belief in the existence of psychological resources for health and well-being in all human beings all the time, regardless of their past experiences and/or present circumstances, is unique and encourages people to look inside themselves for answers to life's day-to-day dilemmas and difficulties.

"The Principles provides a positive concept of human beings.... emphasizing the strengths and health in people."

The Principles provide for a positive, optimistic and hopeful view of the human psychological experience.

"...Knowing that health and well-being is with me all the time, gives me the faith that I need to face the difficult situations in my life."

Likewise another survey respondent also stated:

"This is a great refreshing approach, because it really puts together the principles of life and the process that allow us to enhance our quality of life."

Another element that differentiates work based on the Principles from other approaches is its emphasis on helping people become aware of their own role as the thinker of their thoughts. As they gain an understanding of the function of thought and their role as the creator of thought, they are less frightened or gripped by conditioned, negative habits of thinking. This can be particularly important for people with behavioral and impulse control problems.

"You can have control over urges, habitual dysfunctional behavior, actions and this approach has a great protocol in this intervention. Understanding the Principles provides people with the ability to have a sense of control. This is particularly important with population in the judicial system due to the nature of oppression,

discrimination and abuse that sometimes they experience before they commit their crimes and after as criminals in the judicial system.”

2. The Principles offers a hopeful, optimistic and empowering understanding about life

The Principles offers an understanding of the human psychological experience in which the individual has the capacity for freeing him/herself from the conditioning of their experiences and circumstances. This psychological capacity allows people to fully live and enjoy life in the present moment. Knowing that the past and the future are just thoughts provide people with the freedom and perspective to enjoy life in the present moment. Learning about the Principles, according to some of the participants, provided them with a sense of confidence enabling them to have a greater sense of control in their in lives.

“[Learning about] the Principles helped me to learn to live in the present and to stop feeling like a victim, and to take responsibility about my own life and my actions.”

“Learning about the Principles provided me with the strength and faith to remain calm in very stressful times and to gain perspective to respond to challenges in life.”

3. The Principles provide a “universal language that connects all human beings

Another recurrent theme that emerges in this study was that the Principles of Mind, Thought and Consciousness provide a “universal language” that allows people from diverse cultures, ethnicities, races and life experiences to establish deep and meaningful human connections. According to some survey respondents, the understanding of the Principles facilitates connection among all human beings by transcending any “perceived difference” such as differences in education, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.

“One of the wonderful things is the universality of the three Principles and their power to unify people from diverse

*backgrounds, beliefs, religions, traditions
and more.”*

Another respondent, a mental health professional, stated:

*“I think that the Principles offer a language
that is very effective in connecting with hard
to reach population, the transient homeless
and patient with mental health issues that
require a variety of communication styles.”*

4. The Principles offers an “effortless” view of the healing experience

There is a healing process that learning about the Principles facilitates that makes this understanding unique and different from other approaches. The healing comes from insights and realizations that happened spontaneously, were effortless in nature, but had a deep impact in their lives. This is the innate nature of health manifesting itself. One of the participants beautifully describes this process.

*“Thanks to the trainings I have experienced
important realizations in my life; like a thick
glacier that has fallen down in front of my
eyes allowing me to see the beauty and
transparency of the ice...it is magnificent;
powerful, wonderful realizations that have
had a great impact on my life and a great
magnitude in my experience of life.”*

5. The Principles provides a holistic view of human psychological functioning

The Principles offer a holistic view of the human psychological experience. They present a single unified explanation for all human experiences. They describe the deep and natural interconnection of the often-seeming separate dimensions of a human being - mind and spirit. Some of the participants expressed that deeper levels of understanding of the Principles has allowed them to get in touch with their personal spiritual life.

*“The Principles provides a very
comprehensive and holistic approach to the
human experience. The shift is in the client’s
innate health and innate wisdom and their*

inner capacity to heal and connect with their spiritual self. This gives them hope. This is particularly relevant in working with the hard to reach and vulnerable population.”

Another said:

“With mentally ill patients I use the word wholeness. This particular population is always labeled or defined by others as dysfunctional. I encourage them to see that they are whole. I encourage them to get the strength to not allow anybody to define their lives for them.”

In summary, according to the survey participants, this educational approach used by the DADS program offers a positive, strength-base view of human beings and presents an optimistic, hopeful statement about the nature of the human psychological experience. Moreover, the Principles offer an effortless and holistic approach to human psychological and spiritual healing.

II. Impact of the Principles in Participants’ Lives

“I was out of Hope.... and something finally worked!”

“Once I learned about the Principles, I got a deep sense of faith and hope about life.”

“I had spent almost 20 years of my life carrying the big burden of always being right and having the rights answer.”

Three themes emerged in this topic:

- 1. Learning about the Principles represented a “liberating experience.”*
- 2. Learning about the Principles improved the quality of their relationships with others.*
- 3. Once they experience a realization they continued having more and more.*

1. Learning about the Principles represented a liberating experience

Most participants in this study indicated that as they deepened their understanding of the Principles, they noticed dramatic improvement in their personal well-being. They experienced a sense of freedom from their past and negative conditioning and learned to get more perspective on their own thoughts.

“I experienced the freedom from my own thinking and the negative feelings and emotions associated with them. I was able to get rid of the emotional burden and sense of exhaustion as a result of them.”

Another participant describes this feeling as follows:

“I experienced an amazing feeling of relief and freedom. I experienced a freedom from attachment... I had been working about 20 years in public services and I was always carrying the big burden and responsibility of being always right and having the right answer and approach to life.”

The respondents also stated that they were better able to understand the nature of their temporal moods and to avoid being trapped in them. One of the survey respondents, who had suffered from depression for several years, spoke about the dramatic change that she experienced as result of learning about the Principles.

“In the past, I suffered from a profound depression. I was attending therapy and taking medication for my depression...but after my participation in training, now I have a better understanding about my moods. Sometimes I feel down or depressed but now I know that it is just a temporary thing. I let it go and the feeling goes away. I stopped taking medication and now I am able to manage my depression without medication.”

2. Learning about the Principles improved the quality of their personal relationships

Some respondents observed that as they began to understand the nature of thought and different realities as well as the changing nature of moods, the quality of their relationships with others improved. They were able to establish deeper and more meaningful relationships with others.

“The training helped me to understand and to love, and to unconditionally accept others, to see the innocence in me and others, to be more understanding, more patient, and to be more compassionate and forgiving with myself and with others.”

Another participant stated:

“Now I am happier and more content; my relationships with relatives and co-workers have improved dramatically. I enjoy life.”

Another participant noticed a dramatic improvement in her “engagement with life” and in the way she connects with people.

“The training helped me to feel more connected with my world, to connect to everyone, to have love and compassion for myself and for others, to truly see that we are all the same...realizing that, was a powerful experience.”

According to respondents, learning about the Principles has allowed them to enjoy life to it fullest. One of the participants describing this feeling very eloquently said: “I feel connected with life and able to appreciate its beauty.” Another said:

“ I think that now I’m happier then I was before learning about the Principles...now I understand that my past has no power over my life. ...Learning about the Principles has allowed me to improve the quality of my life... to be more optimistic, hopeful and confident in my life... to have closer and healthier relationships...My ability to love has stretched to love life, to love everybody. That

is good for them but it is more beneficial for me—I feel love for people.”

Another participant stated:

“I learned how much thinking I had and how it affected the way I was feeling. I became aware of the entire thick thoughts that were blocking me...I learned how to get back on track when I was getting away from the present moment ...I am in better condition to manage my stress and to be present and to enjoy whatever is in front of me.”

Learning about the Principles provides the ability to gain perspective on life even in difficult moments.

“Learning about the Principles helped me to learn to remain in calm in the midst of confusion, uncertainty and chaos and to respond with clarity and perspective from a healthy state of mind.”

Another respondent:

“I still have my shortcoming and areas of learning but this realization had a tremendous impact. Now I feel more relaxed and take situations less seriously. Whenever I am about to experience any uncomfortable feeling towards others I try to remind myself to not take seriously people and situations. I take my thinking and my feelings less seriously.”

3. Once they experienced one realization, they would continue having more and more realizations

According to some of the participants, once they experienced an insight they would continue having more and more insights and revelations - insights and revelations that would deeply affect their lives. These insights and changes happened effortlessly, sometimes unnoticed except by others.

“...and the wonderful thing is that once you start having these revelations you continue having another and another... in diverse areas and dimension of your life. These realizations have really transformed my life. The only thing that I regret is that I spent 20 years of my career suffering the consequences of not having this understanding.”

In summary, most survey respondents observed a dramatic improvement in the quality of their lives. According to them, as they deepened their understanding of the Principles, they observed a dramatic improvement in their mental and emotional well-being, in their interpersonal relationships, and in their quality of life in general.

III. The Principles In The Work Place

Three themes emerged in the responses to this question:

- 1. Understanding the Principles helps in improving communication and establishing meaningful human connections.*
- 2. Understanding the Principles is a great help dealing with of chaos, confusion and conflict in the workplace.*

1. Understanding the Principles leads to improvement in communication and in establishing deep and meaningful human connections

Most participants indicated that their communication with co-workers improved dramatically as they learned about Principles. Learning about related concepts such as deep listening and different realities, as well as learning about the nature of thought provided them with perspective and the ability to communicate and interact more effectively with others. Learning about the Principles provides a basis for building and strengthening interpersonal relationships and has allowed them see the innocence in themselves and in others.

“Learning about the Principles has helped me to approach conflict, personal differences and disagreement in different ways....Now I clear my head, take a breath, and try to bring myself to a place of calmness and balance. I have learned to clear my head, understand my moods and avoid making decisions or intervening when I am not at my best.”

Another said:

“The realization is that it is all about me...One of the things that I discovered is the reason I was so upset about people negligence, reckless behavior and other problems was because of my own fears and insecurities with myself...My realization was no one owns my fears but me. They are my own thoughts. ...This realization really had a tremendous and transforming impact in my whole way of dealing with others.”

In summary, most participants said that the quality of their work experience and interpersonal relationships improved dramatically as result of their exposure to the Principles. They were able to communicate more effectively with coworkers, to establish meaning relationships with them and to deal appropriately with the day-to-day challenges associated with their jobs.

2. Understanding the Principles is a great help in dealing with of chaos, confusion and conflict

Most survey participants reported that learning about the Principles has provided them with the ability to remain calm even in the midst of chaos, emergencies and confusion. They stated that learning about the Principles has helped them reduce their stress and improve job satisfaction.

“I learned to have more perspective and to remain calm even in the midst of chaos and confusion ... it has helped me to deal more effectively with the stresses of my job.”

“The training has helped me to respond with calmness, perspective and to approach conflict in a different way.”

IV. The Future of Principle-based Services In Santa Clara County

There was, among most participants in this survey, an agreement about the need to continue to share the Principles with broader audiences in Santa Clara County. They made the following suggestions as to how we might do this.

- Create a network of Principles-based practitioners in Santa Clara County
- Make the Principles more widely available at the community level and develop a community-wide and grass roots effort to make trainings in the Principles an important part of the community.
- Make the Principles available to more people from diverse ethnic backgrounds.
- Continue providing training and technical assistance to other County agencies.
- Conduct more research to support with data the positive impact of learning about the Principles.
- Develop more prevention and early intervention programs based on the Principles for children and youth.
- Continue working on community-building and community revitalization projects based on the Principles.

Most of the respondents in this study agreed that the 3PSD has accomplished a lot in its relatively short life. They also agreed that there is still a lot that needs to be done to make the Principles accessible to more individuals, communities and organizations. They also agreed that this task is not achievable by the 3PSD alone. It will require Principle-based practitioners to join together and work collaboratively to exchange ideas, support each other and to continue to deepen their understanding of the Principles.

The dynamic, ever changing nature of our work in the community ensures that whatever form we create will be constantly changing. What is proposed here or later most certainly will over time emerge somewhat differently than how it is initially envisioned. However, what is proposed here provides a direction toward which we can point ourselves. The one given is our understanding that the Principles are the most important and powerful force for improving the health and well-being of individuals and the community and therefore need to be shared with as large an audience as possible.

Authors Notes

The philosophical foundations of the work of the 3 Principles Services Division are found in the works of Sydney Banks. Mr. Banks presents the Principles of Mind, Thought and Consciousness from their theosophical origins. His works are available from:

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1808 B Street NW, Suite 140
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You may also find Sydney Banks works on his website:
www.sydneybanks.org

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