

Community Engagement Program

This program offers resources and mentorship for participants of Bronx Community Solutions. Together with local providers, specialists or “credible messengers” provide support to participants and the community.

Overview and Eligibility

The Community Engagement Program focuses on connecting participants to resources, workshops, community events, and ongoing mentorship. Working in tandem with the case management team, participants are referred to the Community Engagement Program by their case manager on a voluntary basis based on an initial assessment of need and client interest. Interested participants are then introduced to their assigned community engagement specialist, a credible messenger with relevant lived experiences, for a program introduction. If the participant consents to program involvement, the initial sessions are scheduled. The program continues to serve participants on a voluntary basis, beyond any pending cases in court, and until the client no longer desires ongoing services.

Mentorship

With lived experience, a strong connection to the Bronx, and their ability to relate to participants, community engagement specialists serve an important role in an individual’s participation. Participants share with them their short- and long-term goals, hobbies, and challenges. Together, the pair evaluate their goals, discuss obstacles, and create problem-solving approaches, establishing the main priorities to work towards. Regular recurring sessions focus on creating sustainable solutions, working towards prosocial goals, and creating a diverse network of support. Community engagement specialists advocate for participants’ needs while working with the courts, educational institutions, employers, and families.

Resource Liaison

Community engagement specialists work with participants to obtain resources, such as access to benefits, housing, and employment services. The Community Engagement Program also has a strong network of partnerships with local organizations to provide clients with additional points of community connection. If participants identify a need that cannot be serviced through the Community Engagement Program, such as mental health concerns or substance abuse treatment, community engagement specialists are able to make the appropriate voluntary referrals.

Workshops

The community engagement specialist team facilitates a variety of psychoeducational and skills development groups. Workshops include topics such as financial literacy, work readiness, and mens’ focused groups. Additionally, the Community Engagement Program brings in guest speakers to present on topics of interest to the participants and welcomes the wider Bronx community to attend.

Community Events

The Community Engagement Program is highly focused on serving the wider Bronx community and bringing awareness to local resources. The team does community work regularly by hosting events—such as coat and holiday drives—volunteering alongside participants and partnering with other local organizations.