Reviewer's report

Title: Working Together for Mental Health: Evaluation of a one-day mental health course for NGO service providers.

Version: 1 Date: 12 June 2006

Reviewer: Paul S Appelbaum

Reviewer's report:

General

This paper presents the results of an evaluation of a training course for human service providers regarding working with mentally ill clients. The data show that providers have increased levels of confidence and they self-report increased knowledge regarding how to help people with mental illness after the training. This appears to be a straightforward study, with just a few issues that require attention.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

1. The title does not seem to be accurate. Although this is portrayed as a course for NGO service providers, in fact only 53% of the sample worked for NGOs. It would better be described as a course for human services providers, or some similar term, which would more accurately capture the full nature of the sample.

2. The tables in the paper, particularly Tables 3 and 4, are either not quite right or unusually difficult to make out. A footnote at the bottom says that positive responses include participants who either strongly agreed or agreed a little to positively worded questions and the converse with negatively worded questions. However, as I attempt to apply that framework to the individual items, I am not sure it always works. For example, in Table 3, Item 2, "people who have a mental illness are more likely than other people to be dangerous" is the probe, and it appears that, since this is a positively worded question, there is an increase in people believing that persons with mental illness are dangerous after the training. Yes, we know from the text that just the opposite is true. This has to be described much more clearly so people can make sense of these tables.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'