Candidates for the solution: “Fix the Problem” Worksheet and Feedback from Consumer Research Team

After a few meetings, we had come to better understand the problem of poor health among homeless people with mental health challenges in Edgewater-Uptown. We asked the Consumer Research Team what could be done to “fix the problem.” Below is the list of the questions we asked and the solutions the team produced:

• **What can be done to fix this problem?**
  - “More employment, housing, healthcare, food availability.”
    - EXPLANATION: When people’s basic needs are not being met, it is difficult to concentrate on one’s health.
  - “Have resource information listed. Create an up-to-date catalogue.”
    - EXPLANATION: Many resource lists are not current and provide incorrect information. Make sure that information being distributed is accurate.

• **What can the community do?**
  - “Limit dangers of picking up medications.”
    - EXPLANATION: This is problematic in dangerous neighborhoods. Some people are scared to pick up medications; especially psychotropic medications for fear that others will try to steal them. These medications have street value.
  - “Attend Community Area Policing Strategy (CAPS) meetings.”
    - EXPLANATION: Safe communities are healthier communities. Get involved in things that can make your neighborhood safer.

• **What can Heartland Health Outreach do?**
  - “ Longer hours at clinic.”
    - EXPLANATION: Clinic hours can be limiting. Clinic closes at 5pm each day and does not have weekend hours.
  - “ Shorter wait time for referrals.”
    - EXPLANATION: Many members reported waiting months to be seen by specialists such as a nutritionist, dentist, etc.

• **What can peers do for each other?**
  - “ More comprehensive services; cross train staff so they can provide more services.”
    - EXPLANATION: Teach clinic staff to be able to provide a wider spectrum of services. This would help alleviate the amount of time people spend to get their issues resolved.
  - “ Community Health Workers (Cook County) educate a small group of persons with lived experience to teach individuals about healthcare.”
    - EXPLANATION: Peer Navigators.
• **What can people do for themselves?**
  
  • “Work with the community.”
    - EXPLANATION: Being aware of what is available and accessible in one’s community
  
  • “Preventative care- reaching out to people that don’t know they are sick.”
    - EXPLANATION: Encourage peers to seek regular care and advise where to go for that care
  
  • “Moral support; teach others to help selves.”
    - EXPLANATION: Teach people how to identify their own health problems (breast exams, dental problems) so they connect to care earlier in their illness.