

Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT) A New Approach to Getting Your Loved One Into Treatment

The Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT) intervention is a scientifically based intervention designed to help concerned significant others (CSOs) engage their treatment-refusing Identified Patient (IP) into treatment. CRAFT was developed with the belief that family members can make important contributions in treatment, and that the CSO can play a powerful role in helping to engage the treatment-resistant IP to sample treatment. It is often the IP who reports that family pressure or influence is the reason treatment was eventually sought, and CSOs who attend the CRAFT program often benefit by becoming more independent and reducing their depression, anxiety and anger symptoms even if their IP does not enter treatment.

CRAFT uses an overall positive approach and steers clear of any confrontation. CRAFT is a culturally sensitive program that works with the client's morals and beliefs to develop an appropriate treatment plan. The program emphasizes teaching the CSO new skills to cope with old problems. Some of the components include learning how to stay safe, outlining the context in which substance abusing or other maladaptive behavior occurs, teaching CSOs new communication skills, instructing how to use positive reinforcers (rewards), and understanding how to let the IP suffer the natural consequences for their maladaptive behavior.

No one has better information about the substance user's behavior patterns than a close family member. CRAFT teaches the CSO how to use this information in a motivational way to increase the chance of the IP entering treatment. CRAFT research has shown that almost 7 out of 10 people who use the program get their IP to attend treatment.

DOES IT WORK?

In a NIDA Phase 1 feasibility trial (Meyers et al., 1999), researchers tested CRAFT with the CSOs who were concerned about illicit drug use in a loved one who refused treatment. In this uncontrolled trial, 74% of IPs entered treatment, and again CSOs themselves showed significant improvement in their own depression, anxiety, anger, and physical symptoms.

This led to a randomized trial for this same population, funded again by NIDA (Meyers et al., in press), to compare CRAFT with Twelve-Step (Al-Anon/Nar-Anon) Facilitation Therapy. Half of the CRAFT CSOs were further randomized to receive or not receive weekly CRAFT aftercare group sessions for up to 6 months. CSOs had a 6-month window within which to engage their IP in treatment. Significantly more IPs were engaged in treatment when their CSO was given CRAFT (67%) as compared with Al-Anon/Nar-Anon Facilitation Therapy (31%). Assignment to the CSO aftercare group did not increase IP treatment engagement. In all conditions, CSOs showed similar and substantial improvement throughout a year of follow-up in mood states, social functioning, and physical symptoms.

Further analyses have indicated that when CSOs are assigned to CRAFT, their IP's substance use declines even if the IP is not engaged in formal treatment. No such change was observed when CSOs were assigned to Al-Anon Facilitation.

In summary, family members are not powerless to influence their loved ones to seek treatment, even in a group as resistant to treatment as substance abusers. CRAFT results in a high degree of improvement in CSO functioning, yields a substantially higher rate of successful IP engagement in treatment, and may promote IP behavior change **even without treatment**.

IS IT JUST FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSERS?

No, its not just for substance abusers. Although originally designed for this population, CRAFT is proving to be an elegant and EFFECTIVE model for any treatment-resistant IP. We have experience and success using this model with CSO's of defiant adolescents, severely depressed, and highly anxious IPs.

This is a model for the families of individuals who are not willing to participate in their mental health treatment.

WHAT MAKES CRAFT DIFFERENT?

There are many factors that make CRAFT different from other models out there. The most notable difference between CRAFT and other "family-based" models is the emphasis on non-confrontation. There is no "intervention," no ultimatum, and no nagging. These factors make CRAFT a safer approach and reduce the likelihood of the IP becoming defensive and even MORE resistant to treatment.

Another important difference is the emphasis early in the program on communication. CRAFT teaches the CSO new guidelines for more effective communication with individuals with whom communication can be very challenging. These communication guidelines, the foundation of the CRAFT approach, allow the CSO to get their message delivered and heard in a way that will not further distance the IP nor make the IP defensive or angry.

CRAFT is also a brief model and the CSO need not invest months of time and money.

DOES INSURANCE PAY FOR CRAFT?

CRAFT is for the family members of a treatment-resistant IP, not for the IP. Most health insurers do not reimburse for family treatment if the IP is not present.

WHAT DOES CRAFT COST?

There is no additional charge for CRAFT. Our standard hourly counseling rates apply.

Contact us via telephone or email if you have additional questions about CRAFT. Go to our easy appointment scheduler from our homepage and schedule your CRAFT session **RIGHT NOW!**

*Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy
Center of WNC, PA*

417 Biltmore Avenue, Suite 2E
Asheville, NC 28801

www.BehaviorTherapist.com