# University of Massachusetts Boston

October 9, 2013

# Practicum 2012 - 2013: LIFT Boston Client Well Being Study

Lisa Kalimon, *University of Massachusetts Boston*
Buki Usidame, *University of Massachusetts Boston*
Ryan Kling, *University of Massachusetts Boston*
Ryan McLane, *University of Massachusetts Boston*
Ryan Whalen, *University of Massachusetts Boston*, et al.

# A Multi-Method Evaluation of Client Well-Being From a Community-Based Outreach Organization

Tanya Stepasiuk, Lisa Kalimon, Ryan Kling, Ryan McLane, Ana Maria Sanchez Rodriguez, Bukola Usidame and Ryan Whalen, University of Massachusetts Boston

## Project Summary

A Boston based non-profit and a team of public policy PhD students engaged in several months of collaborative problem identification and goal setting focused on the effectiveness of the organization's unique service delivery model. The non-profit uses volunteer advocates and a goal-oriented process with no eligibility criteria to assist clients in distress. We collected administrative data, administered a survey, and conducted interviews to explore client well-being.

## Primary Research Question

Our primary research question was:

*What impacts do the organization's services have on the well-being of the clients it serves?*

Client → Organization Service → Client Well-Being (+/-)?
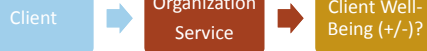
Our research question led us to a variety of research methods including collecting administrative data, conducting a survey of current clients, interviews and focus groups. We also engaged in value focus thinking with our client, a new technique to us.
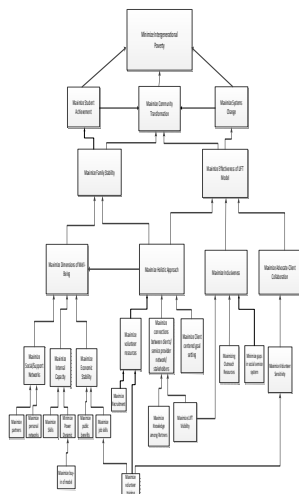
## Well-Being from Survey

Clients were asked to score themselves on their well-being, using the Personal Growth Initiative Scale (Robitschek 1998). Scores are determined by summing the scores of nine survey questions, with values ranging from 9 to 54. Higher scores indicate greater levels of intentional self-change.

|  | Total | | Roxbury | | Somerville | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | n=125 | Mean | n=68 | Mean | n=58 | Mean |
| Personal Growth Initiative Scores |  | 37.8 |  | 38.4 |  | 37.1 |

## Value Focused Thinking (VFT)

We engaged in internal and external **Value Focused Thinking** to narrow our research questions, creating the following guide for our study and partnership.



## Administrative Data

Our project uses administrative data from the organization to describe clients and establish a baseline useful in assessing the service model increases and/or decreases overall client well-being over time.
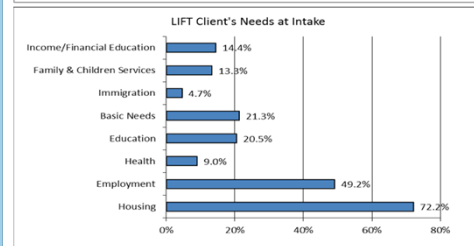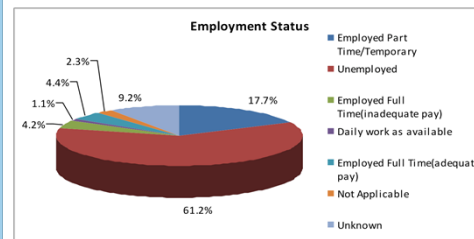




## Survey Data

Survey data was used to confirm and supplement the available administrative data.

We found clients had problems meeting their mortgage expenses (35.8%), and utility bills (30.8%), while 17.5% had problems meeting their medical expenses. More than half of the clients claimed they rely on their family as sources of help, 40.8% rely on their friends, and 53.4% rely on their community and religious groups, while 17.5% claimed to have no sources of help. In terms of social networks, about one-third (30%) of the clients are active participants in religious groups, 22.5% are in neighborhood and school organizations, and 33.3% are in other non-profit organizations. Nearly 30% claimed they are not active in any type of social group.

## Qualitative Data

We collected data through ten semi-structures interviews with current clients. All interviews were transcribed and coded. We worked with grounded theory. From these interviews, we developed a conceptual framework for the intervention's connection to well-being.
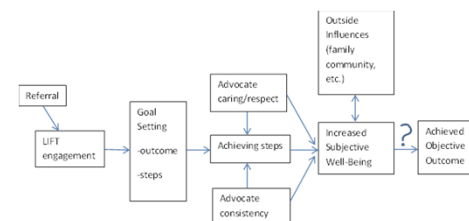


*"It seemed so monumental, but they put it in bite-size steps for me, and it got completed so I saw a result. I needed results in my life. It was so many starts and nothing completed, and that was completed. Even though it's just a little resume, for me that was monumental at the time. It really, really was. That was a big, big high."*

## Important Literature

Robitschek, C. (1998). Personal growth initiative: The construct and its measure. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development, 30*, 183-198.

Overall this research was informed by three strains of literature: (1) strength-based case management, (2) objective and subjective measures of well-being, and (3) the impact of family stability on student achievement.

Additional resources available upon request.