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## Effectively Serving Children with Special Needs and their Families: What Does it Take?

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## Common Processes and Functions

Based on research in:

- Child Mental Health
- Developmental Disabilities
- Adult Mental Health
- Substance Abuse
- Public Health
- Child Welfare
- Community Development
- Prevention



## Coming Together

- Key stakeholders coming together to express their commitment and develop a plan




## Defining and Understanding the Population of Concern

- What are their needs?
- What are their strengths?
- Where can they be found?
- What works to support them and their families?
- How are they currently being served by the system?



## Achieving Agreement on Values and Principles

- Provides key foundation for efforts to provide effective services and supports
- Not just a pretty statement but a strong statement that is used as an ongoing barometer of how the system is functioning



## Sample Values

- Person-centered/Child and Family Focused
- Individualized
- Culturally Competent
- Needs-Based and Strengths-Based
- Promotes Community Integration

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## Individualized Care

Consistent w/ President's New Freedom Commission


- "In a transformed mental health system, a diagnosis of a serious mental illness or a serious emotional disturbance will set in motion a well-planned, coordinated array of services and treatments defined in a single plan of care" (p. 8)
- The individualized plan of care...will include treatments, supports, and other assistance to enable consumers to better integrate into their communities" (p. 8)
- "Creative programs will be developed to respond to the needs and preferences of consumers and families, as reflected in their individualized plan of care" (p. 8)



## Establishing a "Theory of Change"

Involves Three Parts:

1. Who are we intending to serve?
2. What are our goals for those we intend to serve?
3. How do we believe we can best achieve those goals?



## How do we believe we can best achieve those goals?

- Review of knowledge in field;
- Use of consultants;
- Input from key stakeholders;
- Identification of strengths of community and system;
- Referral back to values and principles;
- New ways of thinking – new mental models, new frameworks!!!



## Development of a Plan of Implementation


- What resources are needed and how will we get them?
- What program/system changes are required and how will we achieve them
- What training/coaching/supervision is needed and how will we provide it?
- What support is needed and how will we obtain it?
- What feedback mechanisms are needed and how will we obtain it?



## Implementation


It is one thing to say with the prophet Amos, "Let justice roll down the mighty waters," and quite another to work out the irrigation system.

— William Sloane Coffin  
Social Activist and Clergyman



## Development of a Performance Measurement System


- Based on theory of change;
- For purposes of continuous improvement;
- To assist in data-based decision-making;



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## Performance Measurement and Evidence-Based Practice:

- Two Complementary but Different Concepts
- Performance measurement focuses on how we are doing *right now* and *right here* for purposes of continually improving our system or program performance;
- Evidence-based practice involves the use of interventions that have met a specific scientific criteria at some other time and in some other place with some other group of children and families




## Performance Measurement and Evidence Based Practice

Data on system performance helps stakeholders to determine if they need to make changes. It should come before efforts to make change. If the need is identified, then stakeholders should exam alternative approaches to making change.




## Performance Measurement

- Involves aggregate and in-depth data collection;
- Involves qualitative and quantitative data;
- Involves data from multiple perspectives;
- Involves feedback loops to decision-makers, provider agencies, line workers, and all key stakeholders;
- Is not just a measurement but a powerful intervention itself!



## Review

- Who do we want to serve and what do we know about them?
- What are our values and principles about serving this group?
- What is our goal for this group and what is our theory of how we can best achieve that goal?
- What do we need to do to implement our theory of change?
- How will we gather information on how well we are doing and what we need to do to make improvements?



## Outreach Mechanisms and Clear Pathways Into Care

- Are there clear pathways into care?
- Do families and other potential referral sources know about these pathways?
- Are these pathways user friendly and culturally competent?



## A Broad and Comprehensive Range of Effective Services and Supports


- Availability of individualized and culturally competent services and supports;
- Availability of effective care coordination mechanisms;
- Availability of family-friendly and participatory treatment planning processes;
- Comprehensiveness of services, supports, and treatment plans.



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### Skilled, Diverse, and Extensive Provider Network

- Importance of having provider network that is large enough, skilled enough, and diverse enough to provide meaningful choice to families.



### Accountability at the Provider Level

- What financing and evaluative mechanisms are in place to provide accountability at the provider level?
- What is the role of families in the accountability process?
- Does the process provide practical information that can assist families and treatment teams in making informed choices?




### Mechanisms to Ensure Family Choice of Services and Providers

- "In a consumer- and family-driven system, consumers choose their own programs and the providers that will help them most. Their needs and preferences drive the policy and financing decisions that affect them."
  - President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, p. 28



### Choice

The right thing to do and an evidence based process



### Collaboration and "Buy-In" from Key Stakeholders

- Within multiple service sectors;
- At multiple levels;
- Including families;



### Why Collaboration?


- Children are in multiple service sectors;
- Children and families require services from multiple sectors;
- Fragmentation and lack of collaboration is confusing to families, and contributes to narrow rather than comprehensive treatment plans;
- Funders and other stakeholders appreciate and "reward" collaboration;
- Aren't they all "our children?"



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### Financing Plan

- That provides adequate resources;
- That provides adequate flexibility so that comprehensive, individualized treatment plans can be developed and implemented;
- That provides incentives consistent with the values and goals, and theory of change;
- That leverages local and state money and provides maximum payoff.



### Governance Mechanisms and Organizational Strategies

- That provide clear and consistent direction;
- That maintain the focus on the values, principles, goals, and theory of change;
- That use systematic data and stakeholder inputs to continuously strengthen the system.


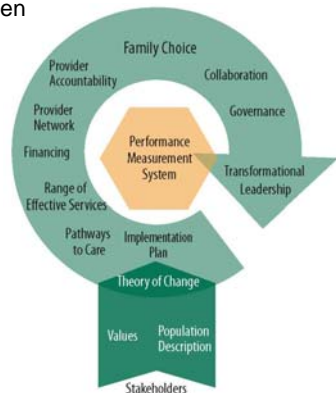


### Transformational Leadership

- That appreciates the inter-relatedness of each of the processes and functions with a system;
- Recognizes the importance of community-specific contextual factors;
- Creates win-win situations for all of the key stakeholders;
- Keeps the focus on the bottom line;
- Thinks systemically and is open to new ideas.
- Is the essence of the system!!




### Making it Happen




### A System of Care

This is what it is!




### Role of the System of Care

To provide access to effect services to a large and diverse population within a specified community.



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## Your Challenge

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- To come together and work together
- To stick together for the long haul
- To confront the present situation
- To create a vision for a more effective system
- To develop a theory of change, implementation plan, performance measurement system to make it happen!

