The Struggle to Develop Accountability: Provider-Policymaker Perspectives on Implementing a Standardized Outcomes System in Maryland

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Background

➢ Outcomes data are being collected in many child and adolescent mental health settings in both the U.S. and Canada

➢ Yet little is known about whether and how the collected information is being used to improve care (Hodges, Woodbridge, & Huang, 2001).

Study Goals

➢ To describe how OMS are used by clinicians and managers within organizations that provide out-of-home services to children and youth

➢ To describe the perspective of policymakers planning for a statewide OMS

Study Context & Data Collection

➢ Multiple Case Study of 2 Residential Treatment Centers and 2 Treatment Foster Care programs using same Internet-based OMS in Maryland

➢ 2004 legislation in Maryland mandated that child-serving state agencies plan for and make recommendations regarding a statewide OMS for out-of-home care placements (RTC, group home, TFC)

IRB Approval from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Committee on Human Research

Provider Vision for Accountability

All staff recognized the need to use outcomes for:

➢ Demonstrating value of the services they provide

➢ Addressing the subjective nature of current decision-making processes

Struggle to Generate Meaning

Staff rarely used outcomes data to inform treatment and quality management decisions.

Staff struggled to generate meaning from the outcomes data that they collected.

This limits data based decision-making.

Policymaker Vision for Accountability

- Pay-for-Performance
- Promote Best Practices
- Inform decision-making at all levels
- Benchmarking and Feedback for providers
- Identify areas of greatest need

Barriers to Attaining Accountability

- Interagency collaboration
- Knowledge regarding outcomes limited
- Lack of transparency
- Overburdened
- Cost of implementing a state-wide system
- Various visions/models for data collection and implementation
- Measurement issues
- Capacity of Child Mental Health System

Struggle for Accountability

- Barriers exist both at micro-level (within provider organizations) and at macro-level (across government agencies)
- Challenge will be to implement a transparent system that is useful to both clinicians as well as informs policy decisions
- Infrastructure support needed for both agency staff and provider organizations

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