From the Ideal to the Real:
Testing Fidelity to the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model

19th Annual Research Conference
A System of Care for Children’s Mental Health: Expanding the Research Base
February 24, 2006, Tampa, Florida

The Options program is located at the Youth House, in downtown Vancouver, Washington

The mission of the Youth House is to encourage positive youth development through strengthening youth/adult relationships and to support efforts by and for youth. It is an inclusive, youth friendly location which embraces diversity and operates with joy.

Where is the Options Program now?
- Fourth year of grant funding.
- Options team fully staffed.
- More than 80 youth have enrolled.
- Acquired housing for youth in the program.
- Preliminary youth outcomes and satisfaction encouraging (more on this later...).
- Working on sustainability.

The PSU Options/PYT Evaluation
- Clark County Department of Community Services contract with the RRI.
- Technical assistance, process and outcome evaluation efforts.
  - Gathering and reporting youth and family input during strategic planning process.
  - National outcome study.
  - Youth satisfaction measurement.
  - Process evaluation.
  - Fidelity study major focus for 2005.

Got Fidelity?
- Fidelity-at-a-glance: “How well a specific program conforms to its defined program model...” (Bruns et al.) or, “Are we doing what we said we’d do?”
- Fidelity to what?
  - Program elements of TIP, Core Gifts, and wraparound.
  - Parallel logic model elements for each.

What did we do? Methods
- Time intensive, primarily qualitative, data collection and analysis process.
- Started with TIP Case Study Protocol for Continuous Quality Improvement (Clark & Deschenes, 1999)
- Simplified and reduced number of items.
- Added program-specific principles and guidelines for Core Gifts and wraparound approaches.
Methods (continued)
- Identified three sources of data:
  - Case file review.
  - Youth interview.
  - Transition Specialist interview.
- Developed three instruments (two interviews and document review form).
- Constructed a crosswalk between program model and data sources.

Crosswalk Looked like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Document review</th>
<th>Youth Interview</th>
<th>T.S. Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PCP: Person-Centered Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCP-1 Strength-based Approach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The strengths of the youth have been identified</td>
<td>3, 12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A thorough assessment of needs in all domains has been conducted</td>
<td>2, 4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCP-2 Person-Centered Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The youth participated in the transition planning process</td>
<td>8, 13</td>
<td>6, 12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Methods (continued)
- Obtained IRB approval (including agreement that data would not be used for performance review or employee action).
- Selected a stratified random sample (a total of eight youth) from Options transition specialists’ caseloads.
- Obtained consent from youth to participate.
- Gave $20 gift card as compensation for interview.
- Data from all three data sources for each case was collected by the same evaluator.

Analysis
- Constructed a detailed data matrix (case by source).
- Assigned rating (fidelity indicator).
- Discussed until agreement.
- Created summary matrix, ranking table, and quantitative data table for reporting purposes.

Analysis example: Practice Guideline:
The strengths of the youth have been identified

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice guideline</th>
<th>Document review</th>
<th>Youth interview</th>
<th>T.S. interview</th>
<th>Fidelity indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case #1</td>
<td>Yes, included in each plan</td>
<td>Youth reported &quot;of course&quot;, described task about interests, skills etc.</td>
<td>Systematically stated it worked hard on transition, building relationship, trends, potential discussion of needs and strengths</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #2</td>
<td>Strengths stated in short on success plan</td>
<td>Yes, in all areas but independent living</td>
<td>Change from &quot;I don’t know what to do, relationships limited&quot; to &quot;I don’t know what to do, limited relationships&quot;</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #3</td>
<td>Formal vocational assessment, less informal</td>
<td>Informed on education, housing, SLS. Not working on employment yet</td>
<td>Strengths are stated in success plan, haven’t done employment yet turned to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And still further summary...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice guideline</th>
<th>Summary Statement</th>
<th>Fidelity indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The strengths of the youth have been identified</td>
<td>All transition specialists are(a)participating in a strengths basis. Most youth are aware of this and can articulate strengths. Strengths are documented in general language in a box on the Success Plan. However, strengths often do not change with revision of plan.</td>
<td>2, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5, H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3, M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
So, what did we find out?

- High fidelity to TIP principles (15 of 24 TIP-related guidelines rated 2.5 or higher).
- Uneven implementation of Core Gifts.
- Low integration with wraparound teams.
- Strong youth-driven, youth-centered sense to the TS work.
- Less evidence of work with natural support systems.

How did we share what we found out... (and what was the response?)

- Shared draft report with Options managers first, then met with Options staff as a whole.
- Celebration of program strengths.
- Recognition of areas that could be improved/challenges for the program:
  - Need for new staff to have more training and supervision around TIP and Core Gifts approaches.
  - Coordination with natural supports and formal services when wraparound teams dissolve.

Limitations of this approach to measuring fidelity

- Need for a fidelity evaluation approach that’s tailored to the community/program.
- Need for evaluators to have thorough understanding of elements of model being tested.
- Need for time, skill, and funding for intensive effort involved in qualitative analysis.

More things to consider if you ‘do try this at home’…

- Some youth didn’t have much to say.
- Scheduling can be difficult.
- Limit to what is in the case file.
- Is there a way that youth evaluators could have participated in the fidelity assessment?
- How to balance/account for the effects of the disability vs. the practice of the transition specialists.

6-month trends for 3 key outcomes (n = 35 youth with baseline, 3 mo. & 6 mo. data)

Youth satisfaction over time

- Youth evaluator completes telephone version of questionnaire with youth.
- Timing tied to youth’s Quarterly Transition Assessment.
Youth satisfaction over time II

Figure 5: Satisfaction with own progress

Youth receives $5 gift certificate for completing telephone questionnaire.
Results reported regularly to Options Steering Committee and to Youth Advisory Committee.

Contact Information

- Nancy Koroloff, Ph.D.
  Regional Research Institute for Human Services,
  Portland State University
  nkoroloff@pdx.edu  (503)725-4157

- Lyn Gordon, M.S.W.
  Clark County Department of Community Services,
  Vancouver, Washington
  lyn.gordon@clarkwn.com  (360)397-2130 x7864

- Website:
  www.ri.pdx.edu/CCTransitions/CCTrainhome.htm