Developing Logic Models For Systems Of Care: A Theory Of Change Approach

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"From an early age, we are taught to break apart problems, to fragment the world. This apparently makes complex tasks and subjects more manageable, but we pay a hidden, enormous price. We can no longer see the consequences of our actions; we lose our intrinsic sense of connection to a larger whole" (p.3). 


The Challenge Of Complexity

- Human service systems are often asked to respond to multiple and changing needs
- Service delivery environments are complex and frequently changing
- Size
- Effective systems must find ways to respond and manage complexity

Goals Of Workshop For Grantees

- Develop local capacity for using theories of change to build a broad vision of local system of care.
- Develop local capacity for using logic models to translate the broad vision of the federal grant program into a theory of change that captures the complexities and textures that are inherent in their local communities.

So That Local Vision Grounded In:

- Clear understanding of mission and expectations of Federal Grant Program
- Clear understanding of ideas inherent in Systems of Care as they relate to grant program

Defacto System

- Diffused Child Mental Health Services
- Unclear Pathways to Care
- Other Sectors Growing
Reform: Systems Of Care

- Improved pathways to care
- Improved availability of services
- Improved implementation of effective practices across organization levels

Values and Principles of a System of Care

Basic Information About Theories Of Change

What Is A Theory Of Change?

The underlying assumptions and strategies that guide local system of care development and are believed by local planners/builders to be critical to producing changes in available service/supports that are expected to lead to improvements for children and their families.

Linking Ideas To Action

Assumption: the degree of overlap between the two functions contributes to improved planning and service delivery

Conceptualization and Operationalization

Implementation of Services

Theory Of Change

Beliefs that system, planners, builders, and implementers have about:

- What children with serious emotional/behavioral challenges and their families need from services/supports in order to thrive in their communities
  and...

- What local strategies will enable these services/supports to become available and meet those needs

Theory Of Change Component 1

Three core elements of a Theory of Change:

- A clear description of the local population of concern
- A clear articulation of goals and outcomes
- A clear description of local strategies that includes services/supports and the associated infrastructure
Theory of Change
Component 2

A clearly expressed relationship between the three core elements

- Flexibility of response
- Consistency
- Service organization, assessment, monitoring, and evaluation
- Funding
- Client behavior
- Needs assessment
- Operations evaluation
- Risk assessment
- Data management
- Reporting

Outcome

Where Theories of Change Can Be Found

- In the Recipient Documents (Conceptualization)
  - Intended outcomes
  - Described in grant proposals, statements of purpose, and other written communications

- In the Expressions (Operationalization)
  - Expected outcomes
  - Described in written policies and procedures

- In the Active Service Delivery (Implementation)
  - Actual activities
  - Described in written policies and procedures

- In the Active Policy Implementation (Monitoring, Evaluation)
  - Documented through evaluation processes

Contra Costa County Juvenile Probation/Mental Health Subsystem

Populations

- Families
- Individuals
- Communities

Values/Principles

- Respect for human dignity
- Full participation in decision-making
- Supportive relationships
- Social justice
- Quality

Strategies

- Supportive services
- Group and individual counseling
- Mental health treatment
- Education services
- Employment services

Outcomes

- Improved quality of life for children and families
- Increased access to services
- Reduced recidivism
- Improved mental health outcomes

Children's Services Board

Strategic Framework

- Children
- Families
- Communities

Especially For Girls

- Prevention
- Early intervention
- Support services
- Advocacy
- Social services

Challenges

- Social isolation
- Economic instability
- Limited education opportunities

Strategies

- Building partnerships
- Advocacy
- Social services

Outcomes

- Increased access to services
- Improved educational outcomes
- Reduced recidivism

DRAFT
Community-Based Theories Of Change
Lessons Learned
Using A Theory Of Change Approach

Benefits:
- Targets efforts of organization
- Allows organization to link their ideas to action
- Provides stability in times of crisis or change

Challenges:
- Must have an idea or theory
- Must support the implementation of this idea
- Must know if implementation is true to the idea
- Must know whether theory produced anticipated change
- Must maintain ability to adapt idea

Maximize The Relationship

Role Of Evaluator(s)

- Dual Role
  - Collect national data
  - Be useful to local implementation
    - Includes using national data
    - Includes local efforts that support implementation

Why Are You Doing An Evaluation?

- Improving your program
- Evaluating the effectiveness of a program
- Generating new knowledge

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The theory of change approach helps to clarify each element of the initiative, it enables the community to respond to the question:

“To what do I want to be held accountable?”

Beyond Accountability

- Unlike approaches that rely only on the tracking of outcomes and indicators to build accountability, the theory of change approach:
  - focuses on more than outcome information
  - anchors measures in a context
  - increases the usefulness of collected information

Evaluation Questions

- An effective way to narrow the possible field of evaluation questions is through the development of a theory of change framework.
- Once you have built consensus on a theory of change framework, you will find that it provides you and your evaluation team with a focus for your evaluation by clarifying which variables are critical to achieving desired outcomes.

Developing Local Theory

- Phase I: Pre-Planning
  - Stage 1: Research Background
  - Stage 2: Articulate Mission
  - Stage 3: Identify Goals and Guiding Principles
- Phase II: Theory of Change Development
  - Stage 4: Map Resources and Assets
  - Stage 5: Assess System Flows
  - Stage 6: Identify Outcomes and Measurable Indicators
  - Stage 7: Design Strategies
  - Stage 8: Create and Fine-Tune the Framework
- Phase III: Implementation
  - Stage 9: Use Framework to Inform Planning, Evaluation, and Routine Application
  - Stage 10: Use Framework to Track Progress and Revise Theory of Change

http://logicmodel.fmhi.usf.edu