Implementing Effective Systems of Care: What Have We Learned from the National Evaluation?

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National Evaluation Studies

- Cross-Sectional Descriptive Study
- Child and Family Outcome Study
- Service Experience Study
- Services and Costs Study
- System-of-Care Assessment
- Sustainability Study
- Comparison Studies in 3 pairs of sites, Service Experience Substudy of caregivers and providers
- Treatment Effectiveness Studies in 6 sites with 3 different treatments, Practice-based Evidence Study
- Provider Surveys on systems of care attitudes and practices, evidence-based treatment, cultural competence, primary care and mental health
- Researcher Secondary Data Analyses

Implementing and Sustaining Systems

Three Approaches to Understanding

- System of Care Assessment
  - Infrastructure Domain
  - Service Delivery Domain
  - Application and Development of Principles in Each Domain
- Sustainability Survey
- Secondary Analyses

What Do We Know?

- Federally-funded systems of care are engaged with/embedded in systems of various types (e.g., agency, social, State, fiscal, community values, personal beliefs) that are hard to change.
- Funded programs have greater difficulty in creating, implementing, and sustaining systems of care if they have not laid the groundwork in advance of Federal funding.
- Implementing complex programs is extremely difficult and time-consuming.* (SOC project directors will agree)

Creating Implementing, and Sustaining Effective Systems

The National Evaluation Asks:

- Who is the program reaching in funded systems of care?
- What are the characteristics of children served in the diverse funded programs?
- How are systems of care implemented locally, and what developmental changes have occurred over the years of program funding?
- What kinds of services are received? What are families’ service experiences?
- How much does it cost to serve children and families in systems of care?
- What are the outcomes for children and families?
- What factors influence sustainability?
- And . . . answers questions on special topical areas of interest to systems of care (e.g., cultural competence, family involvement, evidence-based treatment, provider practices, primary care provider knowledge of mental health)
Creating, Implementing, and Sustaining Effective Systems

- System change occurs across years of funding, but is affected by funding parameters
  - Years of funding: Change is slow, 6 years is a start
  - Match requirement: Difficulty meeting match may reduce scope and progress in later years
    - e.g., loss of family organizations, flex funds, family support services, partnerships, etc.
- System change varies
  - Among communities
  - Across values and principles
  - Within service delivery and infrastructure domains

Creating Effective Systems

- Sites need to interpret what this means
- Local characteristics affect systems
  - Stakeholders, population served, geographic locations, governmental jurisdictions, goals for improvement, strategies applied
- Stakeholders need buy-in on shared vision
- Clear structures and processes for establishing the shared vision help (logic models, governance, agreements)

Implementing Effective Systems

Factors Affecting Implementation

- Knowing what the goals are
- Clear strategies to reach goals
- Feedback system to know progress
- Communication and social marketing
- Full ownership by decision-makers for policy and system reform
- Real power of collaborating partners
- Families fully integrated as drivers of change

Implementing Effective Systems

Factors Affecting Implementation

- Struggle between the need to meet grant requirements to deliver services and developing and improving systems
- Mental health emphasis may create obstacles to partnership and shared resources
- Staff experience and turnover
- Interagency conflict management

Creating Effective Systems

What do we mean by an effective system?

- Funded program is able to change larger child-serving systems forever?
- Values, principles, philosophy of systems of care pervasive and long-lasting?
- System change improves availability of mental health and support services for children, youth and families?
- Program/changed system reaches and improves outcomes for the children, youth and families for which it was designed?
- Overall costs of addressing mental health needs and social consequences across systems reduced?
Implementing Effective Systems

- System of Care programs have higher ratings on system of care principles at the service delivery level as they begin services, than at the infrastructure level.
- System of Care programs show improvement in their application of system of care principles at the infrastructure level over years of funding. They vary by site.
- In aggregate, little change occurs at the service delivery level; change varies across principles by site.
- Lowest scores at outset are received for cultural competence, interagency, and least restrictive principles.
- Sites in newer cycles of funding generally start at the same place as their predecessors.

Progress on System of Care Principles Sites Funded 1999-2000

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Creating, Implementing, and Sustaining Systems

- Programs make increasing but slow improvements in achieving increased positive child outcomes over program years.
- Children and youth as a whole make improvements in symptoms, functioning, strengths, caregiver strain are greatest in first 6 months in services, with continued improvement to slower increasing improvement seen at subsequent assessments.
- Differences in progress exist for subgroups of children (e.g., by age, diagnosis, race, etc.)
- Reductions in caregiver strain generally parallel improvements in children’s problems.

Implementing Effective Systems

- How Do We Enhance Effective Change?

  - Logic Model/ Theory of Change
  - Implementation Plans
  - Revisions
  - Participation Evaluation
  - Data Driven TA
  - CQI Reports
  - Implementation
  - Revisions
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Sustaining Systems of Care
Strategies Considered Successful

- Cultivating strong interagency relationships
- Involving stakeholders
- Increasing the ability to obtain Medicaid reimbursement; obtaining new or increased state funds
- Creating an ongoing focal point for managing the system of care
- Establishing/enlisting strong family organization to advocate for services
- Using evaluation results to document service effectiveness

Strategy emphasized is generally the one considered successful by the community.

Conditions that may Impact Use of Strategies for Sustainability

- Utility of strategy in local environment.
- Recognizing how a strategy can benefit the system of care.
- Planning for resilience to external factors beyond control of system of care (changes in leadership, State infrastructure, State resources, managed care, etc.).
- Knowing how to maximize access to existing resources such as Medicaid.
- Existing relationships.
- Availability of evaluation or other data.

Implications for Sustainability Planning

- Attend to infrastructure elements in sustainability planning (e.g., focal point for system management, evaluation, maintaining family organization)
- Maximize factors that enhance sustainability (e.g., nurture state partnerships)
- Develop an understanding early of which services (respite, home-based, family support, mentoring, flexible funds) might be the most difficult to sustain
- Increase emphasis on developing and maintaining principles at the system level (family involvement and interagency coordination) as well as service level
- Use multiple sustainability strategies (e.g., create a viable focal point, forge interagency partnerships, include key stakeholders, create a strong family organization, infuse SOC into larger system, partner with state to make needed policy/regulatory changes)

What’s Next?
At the National or Program Level – a few examples

- Continue to do what is occurring in the session – work to better understand systems change models.
- Synthesize information around specific topics as accessible resource materials for program implementers and policy makers.
- Improve learning models that bring together experts and learners.
- Develop performance measurement models and benchmarks for local use.
- Develop a better understanding of program characteristics that are not well understood.