Strategies for Rapid Development of a Transition to Adulthood Program Information System (TAPIS)

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Objectives

• Programs are increasingly available for supporting transition of youth with SED
• However, measurement methods tailored to their distinctive challenges are lacking
• Objectives of today’s presentation include
  – Describing the measurement challenges of transition support programs
  – Describing plans for automation of the TAPIS
  – Describing a proposed project for rapid refinement and validation of the instrument

New Service Paradigms Offer New Challenges & Opportunity

• Research has shown that innovation diffusion and adoption is difficult
• With emerging innovations, these challenges are even more complex
• Emerging innovations are a “moving target”
• Traditional, “linear” development of measurement and quality improvement is not adequate to this task
• In order to guide QI as services emerge, “real-time” strategies must be used.
• Evolving models of services for transition youth with SED in the mental health sector provide such an opportunity

Problems of Youth in Transition

• Youth with serious emotional disturbance (SED) entering adulthood are increasingly recognized as a priority population
• These youth face a “transition cliff” as they age into adulthood. Problems include:
  – High risk for continued mental health problems
  – High rates of substance use problems
  – Criminal activities and frequent, serious arrests
  – Struggles with basic aspects of adult self-care
  – Most do not finish high school or pursue post-secondary education and training

Gaps in Services

• Only a minority of youth w/ SED receive services in the mental health (MH) sector
• At the outset of young adulthood, utilization rates in the MH sector drop further
• Research suggests this is due to a lack of developmentally-appropriate service
• Innovative MH programs across the country have sought to address this gap
• These programs have distinctive measurement needs. Somewhat paradoxically, these are both pressing and not well described

Measurement Challenges for Transition Programs

• To track both individuals and programs
• To measure and apply data efficiently
• Assessing literature-based objective indicators
• Measurement of individualized goals to promote youth self-determination
• Efficiently capture which specific services are delivered from comprehensive array
• To efficient capture youth satisfaction
• Measurement of fidelity is more important for emerging programs
**Transition to Adulthood Program Information System (TAPIS)**

- The TAPIS is being developed by NCYT in partnership with Mosaic Network to meet these challenges. Its objectives:
  1. To help programs efficiently track progress on both the youth and program level
  2. To provide easily interpretable feedback on objective indicators & individualized goals
  3. To provide a means for integration of service utilization, youth satisfaction, and fidelity data
  4. To provide a means for real-time validation of measurement strategies for #1 through #3

**Overview of the TAPIS**

**A Comprehensive Transition Information System**

- Goal Achiever: Progress on young person’s individualized goals
- Progress Tracker: Progress on objective indicators

**Phases of TAPIS Development**

- Phase I [Complete]:
  - Development of paper versions of Progress Tracker and Goal Achiever instruments
  - Methods included literature review, focus group consultation, initial field testing
- Phase II [Ongoing]:
  - Automation of PT and GA TAPIS elements
  - Site recruitment for formal piloting and validation

**Phases of Development (cont.)**

- Phase III [Planned]:
  - Application of multi-tiered framework for collaboration involving NCYT, Mosaic, and community partners
  - Validate initial versions of measures, pilot refinements, and provide mechanism for multi-trait/multi-method studies
  - Develop remaining components of TAPIS with Lead Research Sites

**“Paper-Based” Features of Measures: Progress Tracker & Goal Achiever**

- **Progress Tracker:**
  - Multi-domain assessment corresponding to key domains of transition progress:
    - Employment, Education, Living Situation (housing), Community/Social Responsibility, Emotional/Behavioral Well-being, Physical Health, Parenting
  - Assessment of these can be every 90 days or rotated
  - Each domain consists of objective indicators and an overall, subjective (i.e., “transition facilitator” [TF]) rating of the domain.
  - TFs use multiple data sources to rate (e.g., youth self-report, collaterals, observation, records)

- **Goal Achiever:**
  - Simple treatment plan format
  - Simplicity is sought to encourage collaborative generation and frequent revision of plans
  - Goals are organized by Progress Tracker domain
  - By domain organization encourages alignment of individualized goals with “objective” domains of transition
Features of Progress Tracker (cont.)

- What GEMS automation can add:
  - A carry-over system
  - Automated methods of quality control
    - e.g., automated skip rules, item “red-flagging”, formal mechanisms for supervisor review and “sealing”
  - Methods for matching progress in “objective domains” with individual goals (Goal Achiever).
  - Automated reporting to help providers appreciate change over time and across domains
  - Web-based training

GEMS-TAPIS Validation Project

- Using the GEMS, NCYT and Mosaic can easily combine data across sites
- A “validation module” is planned containing fields for:
  - Entry of ratings from multiple raters per subject;
  - Linking of GEMS-TAPIS data with other data sources for concurrent validation
- GEMS contains a “survey builder” tool to rapidly automate new data elements
  - This will allow sites to pilot their own items and share these with other participating sites
A Proposed Research-Practice Framework

- Earlier, it was proposed that a “linear” R to P model does not meet the needs of emerging service models.
- NCYT has proposed a “hierarchical and simultaneous” framework for R to P:
  - Depending on their interests and resources, sites can participate at multiple levels.
  - Sites with fewer resources still use early versions of the instrument and generate data.
  - Sites with greater resources collaborate more fully, and enjoy benefits of helping to shape the instrument and its evaluation design.

Proposed Research to Practice Framework

LEVEL 1: Lead Research Site
- All elements from Levels 1 and 2
- Collaboration on development of training curriculum
- Collaboration on research regarding additional critical questions

LEVEL 2: Research Contributor Site
- All elements from Level 1
- Collection of all GEMS - TAPIS data elements for project evaluation
- Participation in 2-stage research & training process, including:
  - Level 1 training and instrument reliability analyses
  - Training and technical support by analysts on remaining GEMS - TAPIS data

LEVEL 3: GEMS - TAPIS Pilot Testing Site
- Pilot testing
- Initial collection of agency selected GEMS - TAPIS data elements
- Participation in single-phase instrument reliability training and analysis focusing on TAPIS - global summary items

GEMS Demonstration

GEMS Overview
Grant Evaluation & Project Management for Human Service Initiatives

- Designed for complex multi-site initiatives
- Data you can trust
- Answers that are real time
- Information that supports decision making
- Technology that meets custom needs of each “individual” project & user

Reporting and Data Analysis
Real-Time Access to Results Through a Variety of Report and Exports

- Predefined Report
- GIS Report
- Periodic Project Progress Reports
- End of Project Reports
- Advanced Custom Reporting and Export

GEMS TAPIS
Integrating TAPIS Vision along with GEMS Vision