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Study 2: Case Studies of System Implementation

Holistic Approaches to Studying Community-Based Systems of Care

A Five Year Study Investigating Structures and Processes of System-of-Care Implementation

PURPOSE AND GOALS:

To identify strategies that local communities undertake in implementing community-based systems of care and provide greater understanding of how factors affecting system implementation contribute to the development of local systems of care for children with serious emotional disturbance and their families.

This study will investigate:

- Fundamental mechanisms of system implementation

- How factors contributing to system implementation interact to produce well-functioning systems serving children with serious emotional disturbance and their families

- How system implementation factors are used in specific or unique combinations to develop local systems of care

- How local context influences system-of-care development

- What structures and processes contribute to the implementation of systems of care

- If system of care implementation is marked by identifiable change agents or triggering conditions

- What conditions support or impede the development of systems of care

METHODS:

The investigation will use a multiple-case embedded case study design to investigate how communities operationalize and implement strategies that contribute to the development of community-based systems of care for children with SED and their families. A national nomination process will be conducted to identify established systems of care. A site selection process involving document review and key stakeholder interviews will be used to identify participating sites. Case study data will then be collected using semi-structured interviews with administrators, managers, direct service staff and families; direct observation; document review; and a review of aggregate outcome data. A brief description of these methods follows.

Document review will be used to provide organizational-level data related to system implementation as well as system-of-care development in a historical context. Documents should include any materials related to goals and intent of the system, legislative history, regulations or guidelines, budget justifications, monitoring reports, annual reports, and reports of accomplishments. Documents should be mailed to Sharon Hodges or Kathleen Ferreira one month prior to the site visit.

System implementation factor brainstorming and rating will be conducted in order to identify local factors believed to be critical to system-of-care implementation. This process will consist of identifying system implementation factors, then rating the identified factors on a five-point scale with regard to both their importance and effectiveness in local efforts to develop systems of care. The brainstorming and rating will be completed as an online survey.

Key stakeholder interviews will be conducted in person and by telephone for the purpose of understanding personal perceptions and beliefs about the process of system-of-care implementation and the role of the identified implementation factors in local system development and their relationship with one another. Interviews lasting approximately 1 hour will be held at a time and place that is convenient for the interviewees, and sites will assist in identifying the key people to be included in the interview process. Initial interviews should be scheduled at least two weeks in advance of the site visit.

Direct observation of service delivery structures and processes will be conducted for the purpose of observing aspects of system implementation in action. Direct observations will be coordinated with naturally occurring agency and community meetings.

Aggregate outcome data will be reviewed for the purpose of establishing progress toward system goals and better understanding linkages between specific strategies and outcomes.

Timeline for Case Studies of System Implementation

The investigation will be conducted in three phases:

- Years 1-2— Two cases will be selected from among established systems that have sustained their effort over time. Preliminary findings for Cases 1 and 2 regarding system implementation factors in local system-of-care development will be reported and used in the selection of cases for years 2-3.

- Years 2-3— Four sites will be sampled and findings reported. Sampling strategies for Cases 3-6 will be developed on the basis of what is learned from the initial cases.

- Years 3-4— Four additional sites will be sampled and findings reported. Sampling strategies for Cases 7-10 will be developed in response to the earlier findings of the study.

- Year 5 – Cross-site analysis and summary and dissemination of findings.

Participation:

A total of 10 communities will be selected for this study. Stakeholders in each community will participate in site visits, in-person and phone interviews, and document review. A site selection process involving document review and key informant interviews will be used to identify established system-of-care sites. Participation of organizations, as well as individuals, will be entirely voluntary.

Results:

It is expected that the results of this study will help both established and potential systems of care to identify strategies for successful system implementation within their local contexts. Findings of each phase will be shared with professional and family audiences through workshops, presentations, issue briefs, newsletter articles and published papers. This effort will be extended to cross-site findings as results become available.

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