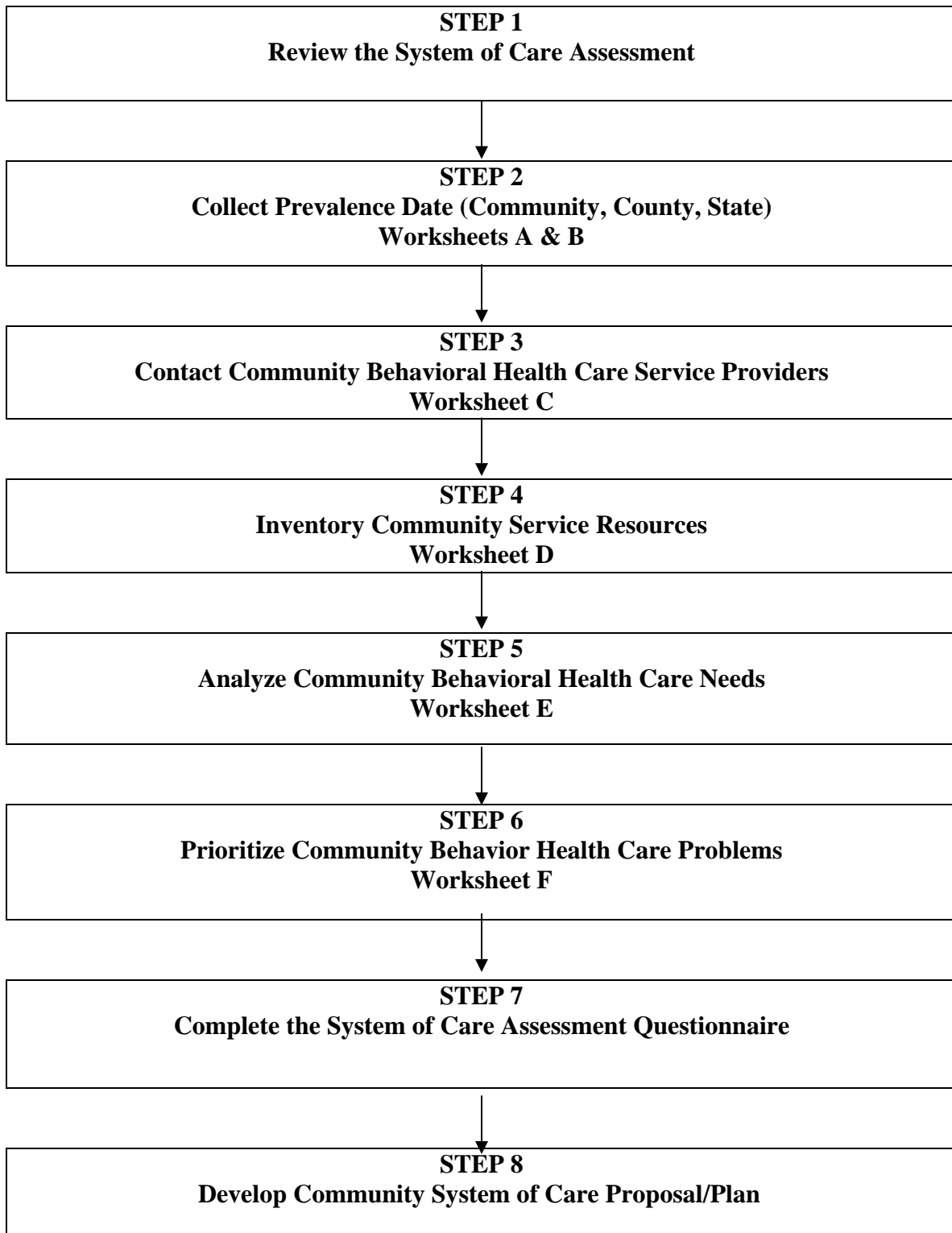


System of Care Assessment Flowchart



1. Review the System of Care Assessment

Assessment questions and worksheets are presented to summarize information, and to provide a framework for evaluating the status of the system of care in your community, county, and state.

Until recently, and despite significant shortcomings in the existing service systems in many states, little attention had been paid to the needs of youth with severe emotional disorders and their families. At present there is growing recognition that effective service systems require a range of services and close interagency collaboration. Significant progress is being made in the development of new service components and in providing case management services to link the various services. Additionally, there has been a growing knowledge base concerning the effectiveness of community-based services, system management and strategies for producing system change. However, change requires information, and information requires data.

The System of Care Assessment is designed to collect, analyze, prioritize and summarize data that are often prepared and distributed by community, county, and state authorities. However, because this data capacity may not exist in many locations, state and federal behavioral health officials may need to be contacted in order to gather the information necessary to complete the System of Care Assessment.

It should be recognized that no community behavioral health care system exists in a vacuum. A myriad of organizations and individuals in the community have a direct impact on the behavioral health status and the provision of services. There are numerous and diverse stakeholders who may potentially derive benefits from the implementation of the System of Care process. There may also be barriers to any effective implementation of the same process. For example, the leaders of other highly visible and successful community programs may be resistant to a System of Care unless they are informed and invited to participate. Business investors in a major new health facility may resist community determination of health needs. Community leaders concerned about scarce local tax money and already committed to supporting a non-health related activity may not recognize the value of undertaking the System of Care process without a detailed explanation of its intent.

To help others understand the focus of this exercise, the following definition is offered:

A system of care is a comprehensive spectrum of mental health and other necessary services which are organized into a coordinated network to meet the multiple and changing needs of children and adolescents with severe emotional disorders.

The purpose therefore, is to assess the existing behavioral health care system of children and adolescents within the student's community, county and state. To accomplish this task students are asked to follow eight specific steps in completing their assessment.

First, they are to understand the intent and focus of the System of Care Assessment. Second, they are to compile data concerning the prevalence and risk related factors associated with various emotional disorders. Third, the student will need to contact various state and private agencies to inquire about their availability and accessibility of various behavioral health care related services. Fourth, the student will need to complete an inventory of community wide system of care services. Fifth, from within the services inventoried, the student will analyze community behavioral health care services. Sixth, the student will then be asked to prioritize the community behavioral care needs identified through the first five steps of the assessment process. The seventh step involves the completion of a system of care assessment questionnaire. The eighth, and final step, requires the student to develop a community plan aimed at improving the existing system of care for youth with emotional and behavioral problems.

The aim of this exercise is to help the student understand the conceptual, philosophical, operational, structural, and procedural mechanisms commonly associated with system level service provision and delivery.

2. Collect Prevalence Data (Community, County, State)

Perhaps the most fundamental and difficult question to be asked and answered in developing a system of care is who are the children to be served? To aid in this behalf, two worksheets (Worksheet A & B) have been constructed. Worksheet A denotes the grade and gender distribution of youth according to city, county and state demographics. This worksheet also reflects the city, county and state distribution of K-12 grade youth according to race and ethnicity. Worksheet B focuses on prevalence rates of youth according to predicted levels of care. Rates are to be listed by city, county and state for the percentage of youth predicted to have a diagnosable emotional disorder, those judged in need of service, those needing system of care services, those predicted to need non-residential care, and those who require residential services. Finally, as a measure of socio-economic change, trend data concerning risk indicators for Georgia are to be reported. Website references are provided at the bottom of this document, which will aid in accumulating the information requested in this step.

3. Contact Community Behavioral Health Care Service

Worksheet C is designed to collect the names of community/county agencies and representatives from which information was obtained concerning the collection of pertinent client and service data collected in order to complete Worksheets D, E, and F. Note-while ten agencies/contact persons are provided on Worksheet C, you are allowed to expand this number by attaching another worksheet. **Remember** to number each contact in order to complete Worksheet D. **While there is no maximum number of contact agencies/representatives, points will be deducted for less than five.**

4. Inventory Community Service Resources

The system of care model is organized into a framework of seven major components of service. Each represents a specific area of need for children and their families. This format is intended to emphasize the fact that youth with severe emotional disorders have multiple needs that span a variety of services, agencies and systems. This structure is also utilized to illustrate the need for linkage between the various components so that services can be easily facilitated and coordinated.

The system of care is designed around function rather than specific agencies. Each service component is seen as necessary in order to provide comprehensive services. Therefore, any function may be fulfilled by a variety of agencies or practitioners from either the private or public sector. Indeed, different providers in different communities offer many of the services.

In order for a system of care to operate, all components of the system should be available and interrelated. Worksheet D is designed to note the availability of seven service areas within the student's community/county. Specifically, the student is to note the availability of services within each service component and to denote the specific source of his or her information by placing the number of the reference (Worksheet C) next to the services outline in worksheet D.

5. Analyze Community Behavioral Health Care Needs

Worksheet E provides a more focused inspection of community/county behavioral health care resources. This worksheet describes the type, age range, gender, capacity and census of existing services. The form also reflects the division of mental health services into seven nonresidential and seven residential categories. Nonresidential services are suggestive of prevention, early identification/intervention, assessment, outpatient treatment, home-based services, day treatment, and emergency services. Therapeutic foster care, therapeutic group home, therapeutic camp services, independent living, residential treatment, crisis residential, and inpatient hospitalization services reflect residential services.

Worksheet E requires the student to compile a list of nonresidential and residential behavior health care services within his/her county. For each service, the student is to indicate its availability (yes/no), age range of consumers, whether the service is available for males and females, the capacity of such services and the current census. Note that the service may entail more than one provider and/or setting. Therefore, the student should indicate the number of service providers reflected by the capacity and census figure derived. **Remember**, only child and adolescent services are to be included.

6. Prioritize Community Behavior Health Care Needs

The System of Care model calls for a diverse array of services to satisfy the complex and multidimensional needs of youth with serious emotional disorders. Therefore, a proper balance in services in each of the service components is necessary to accommodate the unique and changing needs attributable to differences in age, developmental stage, level of functioning, or degree of impairment displayed by youth with serious mental health problems.

With information gathered for Worksheet B & E, students are asked to complete Worksheet F. This worksheet is used to identify and prioritize community/county behavioral health care needs. Three data sets are used to formulate service needs. Those sets include: projected client population for city/county; capacity and census of existing city/county services; and, prioritization of nonresidential and residential needs based upon projected versus available behavioral health care services.

7. Complete the System of Care Assessment Questionnaire

The aim of this course exercise is to develop knowledge and skills concerning the system of care model and assist communities to improve services for severely emotionally disturbed children and adolescents. Many states have begun to improve the behavioral health care systems with greater recognition for the need for an array of services and close interagency collaboration. In addition, progress is being made in the development of new service components and the provision of case management services in linking the various components together. The assessment worksheets, along with the system of care questionnaire, are designed to assess the status of the development of the various system of care components. The worksheets and questionnaire are presented to summarize demographic and service data and to provide a framework for evaluating the status of the system of care for children and adolescents in student's community and state.

8. Develop Community System of Care Proposal/Plan

The System of Care Proposal, as noted in the course syllabus, entails the writing of a 3-5 page plan which compares and contrasts the current service system to the conceptual, philosophical, operational, structural, and procedural mechanisms suggestive of a system of care model. In contrasting the real and ideal service models, students are to provide possible improvement strategies that may assist in the development of a system of care within their own geographical area.