The Family Networks Implementation Study

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STUDY OVERVIEW

Building Research Partnerships

The partnership between MA/DS and UMSM is the foundation of the Family Networks Implementation Study. The benefits of active stakeholder involvement are numerous, including increased buy-in to the study process, assistance in identifying key outcomes, and the proliferation of study results (Kaufman et al., 2006).

- Shared Project Management – The study is co-managed by MA/DS and UMSM project leads.
- Creation of a Study Design Team (SDT) – The SDT includes representatives from MA/DS and UMSM working together to determine the study framework, sampling, research methods, measures, and analyses.
- Creation of a Study Advisory Team (SAT) – The SAT represents representatives from MA/DS, family advocates, providers, and UMSM who assist in framing research questions, providing input into data collection strategies, interpreting findings, designing feedback loops, and reviewing products, and
- Design of Feedback Loops – The SAT is creating strategies for feedback back study findings and products to relevant stakeholders.

WHAT IS IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH?

Implementation research is the study of strategies to promote the translation and adoption of research findings into routine practice (Stokes & Wittmer, 2006). Purveyors of innovations acknowledge the difficulty overcoming barriers to implementation, particularly at the practice, managerial, and systemic levels of health care and human services. Overcoming barriers to implementation of innovations acknowledge the difficulty overcoming barriers to implementation, particularly at the practice, managerial, and systemic levels of health care and human services.

STUDY IMPLICATIONS

Findings from the Family Networks Implementation Study will inform MA/DS strategic planning, system refinements, and the Family Networks outcomes evaluation. Continuous quality improvement strategies, drawn from the findings, will be relevant and useful to other Massachusetts EOHHS agencies with similar service delivery systems and agendas. Project activities and products will promote the Commonwealth’s participation in the national dialogue regarding systems transformation in child welfare, mental health, and juvenile justice.

The Research Questions

What structures, processes, and conditions influence the implementation of Family Networks?

What needs to happen over the next 6 to 12 months?

What has worked so far, i.e., in the past 6 to 12 months?

How do we keep our eye on what’s happening?

STUDY DESIGN & METHODS

To identify change domains — Concept Mapping

Concept mapping is a participatory approach to organizing the ideas of a large group that combines qualitative methods, e.g., brainstorming, with quantitative methods, e.g., multidimensional scaling and cluster analysis. Comprehensive maps are generated that visually display results. Four focus groups were conducted in the Summer of 2007 with a purposeful sample of MA/DSS social workers and supervisors, family advocates, providers, and the SAT focus group participants. The questions related to change, sorted them into conceptual groups, and rated them for importance and feasibility. The results and feedback from participants will determine study change domains, and will inform further data collection procedures.

To identify criteria for successful change — Most Significant Change Technique

The most significant change (MSC) technique is a form of participatory monitoring that can be used to assess the process of program implementation (Starbuck & Davies, 2003). Change stories are systematically collected and reviewed by stakeholder groups to determine shared stories related to identifying the most significant change stories. The results are continually fed back to stakeholders in iterative feedback loops.

To elaborate the key ingredients of change — In-Depth Interviewing and Case Studies

In-depth interviews will be conducted with relevant stakeholders regarding salient stories of most significant change stories, to elicit and organize them, to capture stories and to obtain detailed information about factors contributing to change, i.e., the key ingredients that facilitate change. Studies will be developed that elaborate these key ingredients.