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The Massachusetts Family Networks Implementation Study

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The Massachusetts Family Networks Implementation Study

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MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

FAMILY NETWORKS

Family Networks is a comprehensive systems transformation initiative to redesign and reengineer inter-agency collaboration between the Commonwealth into local community networks for children, youth, and families served by the child welfare system.

The Family Networks Implementation Study, a partnership between MA/DSS and UMMS that began in January 2007, and will continue through December 2008.

Phase 2: IDENTIFYING CHANGE DOMAINS

Four focus groups (n = 170) generated statements in response to the prompt: “Generate a list of actions that need to happen in the next 6 to 12 months to continue to develop and sustain Family Networks.” Focus group participants included MA/DSS and Lead Agency managers, MA/DSS Supervisors and Social Workers, Family Advocates and Providers.

Participants (n = 150) sorted 1,740 statements into conceptual clusters.

MAPS were prepared to display results of cluster analysis and multidimensional scaling.

Study Advisory Team members met to interpret the concept mapping and statement rating data. They distilled findings from the six cluster solution generated in the concept mapping exercise into the relevant data clusters of priority for the next 6 to 12 months. Some activities are already underway. Others will benefit from increased attention.

- FAMILY INVOLVEMENT includes activities to enhance family involvement in all aspects of family networks and MA/DSS service planning and delivery.
- ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, RELATIONSHIPS AND RULES suggests that clear guidance is required regarding the roles and responsibilities of MA/DSS staff Lead Agency and provider staff, and families.
- EDUCATION AND TRAINING is required to support people in their new roles.
- CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT will ensure the continual refinement of Family Networks in response to lessons learned, new opportunities, insights, etc.

EXAMPLES OF MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE STORIES

INSTRUCTIONS: From your point of view, describe a story that epitomizes the most significant change that has resulted from Family Networks in the past year.

- A PROVIDER’S PERSPECTIVE:
  “The most significant change that I have experienced is being able to work with the entire family… it provides the opportunity to develop family plans that incorporate all members including those who may be involved outside the home. I have been more successful with overweight children with more appropriate services and a better understanding of early interventions.”

- A MA/DSS SOCIAL WORKER’S PERSPECTIVE:
  “My most significant story would be to watch a successful transition of a child that was in residential placement for years to 12 months to continue to develop and sustain Family Networks.”

RATING IMPORTANCE AND FEASIBILITY

Participants rated statements on importance and feasibility from 1 = “not very…” to 5 = “extremely.”

Ladder graphics were generated to show the relationship between average rating of importance and feasibility for specific clusters.

STUDY IMPLICATIONS

Findings from the Family Networks Implementation Study will inform MA/DSS strategic planning, system refinements, and the Family Networks outcomes evaluation. Continued quality improvement strategies, drawn from study findings, will be relevant and may be applied to other Massachusetts EDPRS 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.