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The Family Networks Implementation Study

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The Family Networks Implementation Study

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STUDY OVERVIEW

The partnership between MA/DSS and UMMS 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/DSS and UMMS project leads.
- Creation of a Study Design Team (SDT). The SDT includes representatives from MA/DSS and UMMS working together to determine the study framework, sampling, research methods, measures, and analyses.
- Creation of a Study Advisory Team (SAT). The SAT includes representatives from MA/DSS, family advocates, providers, and UMMS 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 feeding back study findings and products to relevant stakeholders.

Building Research Partnerships

Implementation Study vs Outcomes Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation Study</th>
<th>Outcomes Study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questions: What are the study objectives?</td>
<td>Hypotheses are specified before the study begins &amp; tested with study data.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participants interpret &amp; select stories for analysis.</td>
<td>Interaction between researchers &amp; study participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants sort &amp; rate statements re: success criteria, &amp; select stories for analysis.</td>
<td>Investigators specify the methods &amp; data &amp; analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researchers &amp; study participants interpret data collected &amp; reviewed by stakeholders to determine shared criteria for success, and to identify the most significant change stories.</td>
<td>Typically quantitative methods &amp; data analysis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participants identify key components that could be included in the study, &amp; design feedback loops.</td>
<td>Typically a well-developed study design at the beginning, with set stages.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participants &amp; key contributors to the study are asked to identify &amp; select domains that will guide the study.</td>
<td>Participants plan &amp; set study parameters not specified from the study design.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participants interpret &amp; select stories for analysis.</td>
<td>Participants provide feedback in real-time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants sort &amp; rate statements re: “key ingredients” for change</td>
<td>Typically requires revised methods &amp; data, i.e., qualitative &amp; quantitative. May include unanticipated interactions with many of stakeholders, collection of relevant documents from groups monitoring of the implementation process; feedback from families served by the child welfare system.</td>
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WHAT IS IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH?

Implementation research is the study of strategies to promote the translation and adoption of new knowledge into practice. Implementation is the process through which research results are translated into practice and translated into practice that is sustained over time (Rutledge & M化身ematical, 2000). (Purposes of innovations acknowledge the difficulty overcoming barriers to implementation, the importance of effectively adapting interventions to the needs of health care and human service organizations (e.g., Haffajee et al., 2000, Schoenwald & Hoagwood, 2001). Implementation research focuses on questions like (Werner, 2004):

- How is it happening as it is?
- Why is it happening as it is?
- Is it expected or desired?
- What is happening?

STUDY IMPLICATIONS

Findings from the Family Networks Implementation Study will inform MA/DSS 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 CDHPS agencies with similar service delivery systems and agendas.

Project activities and products are part of the MA/DSS/UMMS partnership 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?
- Has what 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 that organizes the ideas of a large group that combines qualitative methods, e.g., brainstorming with triangulation, and cluster analysis. Participants from the Family Networks Implementation Study identified domains from interviews conducted in the summer of 2007 with a representative sample of MA/DSS social workers and supervisors, family advocates, providers, and the SAT. Focus group participants brainstormed items 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 future data collection procedures.

To identify criteria for successful change

Most significant change (RISC) technique is a form of participatory monitoring that can be used to assess the progress of program implementation (Start & Davies, 2005). Change stories are systematically collected and reviewed by stakeholder groups to determine shared criteria for success and to identify 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 a subset of most significant change stories, to collect detailed information about factors contributing to the change, i.e., the key ingredients that facilitate change. Case studies will be developed that elaborate these key ingredients.