Impact of MAYSI-2 Mental Health Screening in Juvenile Detention

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We began a study in 2003 focused on the use and consequences of the MAYSI-2. This project addressed the following research questions:

- What factors influenced the rapid adoption of the MAYSI-2?
- What were the barriers to and facilitators of implementation?
- How is the MAYSI-2 actually being used in juvenile justice settings? What are the variations in its use?

We have reviewed the consequences and outcomes of routine MAYSI-2 mental health screening as part of juvenile justice programs in three states (n=19). These data were coded using an iterative, constant-comparative process to identify themes related to factors facilitating implementation of mental health screening.

A few key quotes are provided below to represent the nature of responses that characterize each theme.

**Themes related to barriers and resistance to adoption and implementation of the MAYSI-2 or mental health screening in general:**

1. **"I needed the kids had mental health needs and...needed services but "we needed numbers to show the situation."**
2. **"We were hoping that it would validate what staff conducting intakes...and it does."**
3. **"We needed to have the continuity that the MAYSI would bring. Our mental health service provider is under contract. What if that contract is not renewed?"**

Themes related to barriers and resistance to adoption and implementation of the MAYSI-2 or mental health screening in general:

1. **"We had a rough time in the beginning convincing staff that it would work and just convincing them to do it."**
2. **"Everything new makes staff skeptical. They are already under a lot of pressure...a lot of work. To them, it seems like just another thing to do."**
3. **"A center needs to have enough staff so that things can get done right even when a lot of kids come in at once."**

Themes related to factors facilitating implementation of mental health screening:

1. **"Use a standard set of instructions when introducing youths to the MAYSI-2 or any other psychiatric screening tool that is routine. We noticed changes in staff attitudes...now staff see kids not as a problem but as a person with behavior problems;"**
2. **"The results have a personal impact on staff in that they think about youth differently;"**
3. **"We talk about mental health issues day-to-day since the MAYSI."**

**RESULTS**

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Findings regarding the first three research questions suggest the following recommendations:

- Develop a policy that avoids repetitive administration of the MAYSI-2.
- Use a standard set of instructions for completing the MAYSI-2 when introducing youths to the instrument.
- Use a standard set of instructions when introducing youths to the MAYSI-2 or any other screening tool.

**REFERENCES**