The Family Options Project: Implementing an Innovative Intervention for Parents with Mental Illnesses and Their Families

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THE FAMILY OPTIONS PROJECT
Implementing an Innovative Intervention for Parents with Mental Illnesses and Their Families

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THE PARTNERSHIP
The Family Options Project reflects a productive partnership between researchers and providers of the UMASS Center for Mental Health Services Research and Employment Options, Inc., Marlborough, MA.

THE INTERVENTION
The Family Options Intervention is an evidence-informed psychiatric rehabilitation intervention, developed and tested within the context of a community-based agency setting.

The Implementation Study
Involves describing the key domains of activity crucial to intervention installation, initial implementation, and full operation stages.

- 300 open-ended ethnographic interviews conducted over a 2-year period with 15 key informants, including agency Board members, staff, & club house members;
- Nine focus groups with 52 Family Options evaluators including agency Board members, management team, staff, & club house members, conducted at 3 implementation stages; and
- Multiple interviews with local community providers to assess existing service & resource gaps.

The Outcomes Study
Involves studying the experiences and outcomes of parents and children in intervention and comparison groups ("before at start"), using maximum individualized change score approach.

- Qualitative & quantitative methods;
- Interviews at enrollment, 3, 6, & 12 months; and
- Multiple interviews with leaders of each community agency provider.

The Implementation Study: Preliminary findings suggest four key domains of interest to support the Family Options Intervention:

- Creating the Organizational Capacity;
- Creating the Work Force Capacity;
- Creating the Community Capacity; and
- Translating Science to Service.

Creating the Organizational Capacity:
- Stewardship
- Community-Driven & Self-Determined
- Recovery & Resilience
- Empowerment
- Family Outcomes
- Liaison & Advocacy

Creating the Work Force Capacity:
- Recruitment & Hiring Staff
- Educating, Training & Coaching Staff
- Developing & Managing Staff Performance
- Identifying Staff Characteristics & Skill Sets

Creating the Community Capacity:
- Identifying Community Resources
- Engaging & Collaborating with Community Partners
- Strengthening Relationships with Community Partners

Family Options Intervention Mothers Report Past Experiences:

- 47% ever tried to harm self
- 45% ever attempted suicide
- 55% ever witnessed family violence
- 56% ever raped
- 77% ever accessed mental health services & resource gaps.

Creating the Community Capacity: and
- Creating the Work Force Capacity:
- Identifying Supervisor Characteristics & Skill Sets
- Identifying Staff Characteristics & Skill Sets
- Allocating Internal Resources
- Attending to Staff Performance
- Coordinating Communication & Meetings
- Coordinating Logistics & Operations

Next Steps
- Enhance and solidify the Family Options intervention in a well-articulated, comprehensive standard operating procedures document that will facilitate replication and further testing of the intervention.
- Continue to collect and analyze data through 2007 and, potentially, into 2008.
- Disseminate research findings.

Family Options Intervention Mothers (n = 22):

- 76% ever been in the hospital
- 77% ever had a psychiatric hospitalization
- 77% ever physically abused
- 48% of mothers report a child taking psychiatric medication in past 3 months
- 71% of mothers report a child ever having emotional or behavioral problems
- 77% ever had a psychiatric hospitalization

Family Options Intervention Mothers Report:

- First mental health problems at an average age of 17.5 years
- 48% of mothers report a child ever having an Individualized Education Plan
- 43% of mothers report a child ever having been involved with police or probation
- 77% ever been involved with police or probation
- 40% of mothers report a child ever having been involved with police or probation
- 55% report an average of 2.6 children living in the home

Family Options Intervention Mothers Report:

- 71% of mothers report a child ever having experienced or behavioral problems
- 77% of mothers report a child ever having accessed mental health services & resource gaps.

Implementing the Family Options Intervention
Implementation & Refinement
The implementation process has involved:
- Collaboration with community agency provider;
- Developing the model;
- 2 Family Coaches, a Family Options Director, & Clinical Consultant;
- 100 open-ended, ethnographic interviews; and
- 100 open-ended, ethnographic interviews.

Refinement of the intervention is an iterative process involving:
- Continuous Quality Improvement;
- Feedback from collaborating agencies; and
- Program adaptation.