The Mental Health Agency Research Network (MHARN): Developing a statewide network for knowledge sharing, technical assistance & collaborative research

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Et al.

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The Mental Health Agency Research Network (MHARN) is a developing network for sharing knowledge and research collaboration between the Center for Mental Health Services Research (CMHSR) to better engage with DMH staff and community agencies around the state. Its mission is to close the gap between science and service in mental health services in Massachusetts by improving implementation of evidence based practices to benefit consumers.

MHARN Objectives
- Increase awareness about evidence-based practice and programs
- Improve translation of knowledge about evidence-based practice into changes in practitioner behavior and benefits to consumers
- Improve the interface of research to DMH providers, consumers and families by conducting research in DMH/community settings

MHARN Goals
- Engage academics, DMH and agency providers, and consumers in a dialogue about research & evaluation
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- Improve organizational change strategies to translate evidence-based practices to local needs and circumstances
- Engage academics, community providers, and consumers in a dialogue about research & evaluation
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Why Develop the MHARN
- Disseminate information about evidence-based practices and DMH priority areas
- Engage academics, DMH personnel, providers, and consumers in a dialogue about research & evaluation
- Engage academics, DMH personnel, providers, and consumers in a dialogue about research & evaluation

Bidirectional Work
Research
- Active participants in collaborative research & grant-writing
Engagement
- Knowledge translation, implementing evidence-based practice, organizational change
Dissemination
- Large disseminated network of information sharing/providers/consumers

MHARN Structure
The MHARN has three tiers: a base tier of service providers receiving information about innovations in services and treatments, a middle tier of providers who participate as service and other advanced research and, at the top a small group of providers who also participate actively in higher-structured intervention studies. Movement of members through the various tiers, or levels of participation, will be fluid.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
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The MHARN provides a structure and mechanism for the Center for Mental Health Services Research (CMHSR) to better engage with DMH staff and community agencies around the state. As experience and research on evidence-based service has demonstrated that dissemination of information about research findings is not sufficient to bring about changes in practice and benefits to consumers, the MHARN will incorporate principles and practices of the emerging science of implementation research.

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