Technology & Outcomes: Building Capacity in County Mental Health

Ryan Quist, PhD RIVERSIDE COUNTY

Presentation Objectives

- Re-Assess Outcomes Counties Needs
 For what purposes do we need outcomes?
- Identify strategies for Counties to efficiently use limited resources to collect outcomes
 Prioritizing What Data to Collect
 Identifying Efficient Methods
 Identifying Efficient Technology Resources / Staff

 Identify a Mechanism for Developing a Statewide Agenda to Pursue Counties Needs

Starting From Where We Want to Be





Re-Assessing Counties' Outcomes Needs

For what purposes do we need outcomes?

Outcomes Must Meet Multiple Needs

Program Local Community



Program Needs for Outcomes

Program Promotion

Program Effectiveness

Selecting Treatment Strategies

Needs for Local Community

Advocacy & Education MH Benefits to Community

How MH Helps Partner Agencies & Organizations

Needs for State

Legislative Advocacy and Education MHSA Oversight Responsibilities

Identifying System Capacity



Identify Target Outcomes

Prioritizing what data to collect

BILLION DOLLAR QUESTION:

What Makes Good Outcomes?

Historically, Focus on Symptoms

- Influenced by the primary methodology for research on psychiatric medications, MH research had a heavy emphasis on measuring symptoms:
 - Reductions in depression
 - Reductions in anxiety
 - Reductions in manic episodes

 These outcomes don't always make so much sense to the general public or elected officials

Recently, in California...

- Emphasis is no longer on symptom reduction
- Outcomes focus on improvements in life function
 - Employment
 - Educational attainment
 - Successful relationships
 - Avoiding problems with law enforcement
 - Reductions in hospitalizations

So...

BILLION DOLLAR QUESTION: What Makes Good Outcomes?

<u>Understandable to the Community</u>

Example: Children's MH
In Home, At School, Out of Trouble
Example: AB2034 Homeless Program
Not Homeless, Employed, Out of Jail

What Else?

- Researchers Talk About 'Validity' of Data
- For MH outcomes, this means:
 - Accurate
 - Need Credibility
 - Need to Make the Right Conclusions & Inform Decision-Making
 - Relevant
 - Correspond with what's expected based on target population, types of interventions, consumer goals
 - Useful
 - #1 Priority: TIMELY!!!
 - Uncomplicated Results / Conclusions
 - Can be used constructively to inform decisions or improve services



Selecting Appropriate Methods Identifying Efficient Methods

RESIST!!! Methods Shouldn't Drive Outcomes

 Tempting Pattern:

 Pick methodology because of prior success
 Try to fit programs / outcomes to methodology

 MUST RESIST THIS PATTERN

 Methodology shouldn't define outcomes



Desired Outcomes SHOULD Drive Methods

After carefully identifying the most important and relevant outcomes, this should be used to design methods

Process for Designing Evaluation Plan Engage Stakeholders Describe the Program Focus the Evaluation Design Gather Credible Evidence Justify Conclusions • Ensure Use and Share Lessons Learned CDC RESOURCE

http://www.cdc.gov/eval/steps.htm

How to Establish Methods?

- ESTABLISH RANGE OF POSSIBILITIES
 - There are always multiple alternatives
 - Consider different sources
 - Consider different methods for collecting data
- SELECT FROM RANGE OF POSSIBILITIES
 - Establish available budget / resources
 - Remember: You get what you pay for
 - But, be realistic about available resources
 - Decision Criteria:
 - Maximize accuracy
 - Minimize impact on service delivery

Establish Available Budget / Resources

- Too often, the methods are identified first
- Don't forget, you get what you pay for
- There is always a range

Less Expensive
More Expensive

Conduct cost-benefit analysis

•If more is spent on methods, will the added benefit be worthwhile?

 Conversely... If communicating outcomes is important, may need to find additional budget

Minimize Impact on Service Delivery

- Research / Data folks sometimes have problems understanding implications for service delivery
- Consulting Perspective:
 - Primary Mission: Service Delivery
 - Research / Outcomes is NOT Service Delivery
 - Research / Outcomes are only useful to the MH
 System when in support of service delivery

What Should Be Used to Choose Outcome Methods?

Program Characteristics

- Target Population
- Intended Benefits
- Type of Intervention

Consumer goals

 If services and programs should be Consumer Driven, then outcomes should be defined by Consumers, as well.

Community Values

 How do MH programs benefit other agencies / organizations / community goals?

Stakeholders

• How do MH programs help to meet the goals of other agencies'?



Technology Identifying Efficient Resources / Staff

Stretching Funds

- Counties have differences in resources available for outcomes and technology
- Typical pattern is to start small and grow capacity where or when possible



Getting Started

- May need to start with only existing staff who happen to have strengths / interests in this area
- One accomplishment at a time
 - Clearly define projects and prioritize based on which would result in greatest benefit for least expense
 - County staff can work with time-limited staff to complete projects
 - Temp employees
 - Contracts with local universities

Develop Capacity

- Need to demonstrate value to programs and management
- Write additional funding into budgets for future programs
- Projects can begin to pay for themselves
- Use savings from prior successes to fund the next project(s)

Invest in Resources with Long Range Benefit

Examples:

 Instead of paying for developing one web survey, pay for web program to create custom surveys

 Long range benefit means that it is easier to create your own survey into the future

 Instead of paying for the analysis results, pay for the program that will do the analysis

 Don't need to pay for the analysis each time, because program can repeat analysis in the future

RESIST!!! 'Other Duties as Assigned'



Into the future...

Work towards hiring specialized staff / experts in outcomes and technology

Efficiency Necessitates:

- Need staff with specialized skills, training, and work experience
 - Clinical staff are typically untrained in identifying and developing technology solutions
 - Clinical staff are needed for clinical activities

Technology Resources to Consider

Staff

Technology Solutions & Software Hardware & Infrastructure

Staff: Contract vs Hire

- Contract: Avoid long-term commitment, but don't get long-term commitment
- Hire: Important to hire staff who can develop skills as technology develops
- Possible solution: Hire key role for managing contracts
 - Staff hired needs to be aware of tech advances but does not need to be an expert in each

Tips for Hiring Tech Staff

- Be involved in interviews
- Don't trust hypothetical or theoretical knowledge
- •Ask for specific past examples of experience with:
 - Working with non-technical users
 - Developing solutions independently
 - Working experience with multiple programming languages
 - Rigidity or strong preferences for just one or two programming languages can be a warning sign

Support vs. Development: Be clear what you are looking for...

• Support:

- System Support: Focus on capacity, stability, and avoiding data loss
- Hardware Support: Deploy PCs / laptops / printers / etc to programs
- User Support: Training and help-line support

• Development:

- Work with stakeholders to identify tech needs
- Identify tech solutions to meet needs
- Create tech solutions to meet needs
- Deploy technology and train staff

Data Analysis

- Can be conducted by tech staff vs may employ research or analysis job classes
- Look for prior experience with:
 - Large datasets
 - Analyzing health data
 - Relational database analysis
- Experience with analyzing MH data is, of course, most desirable

Technology Solutions & Software

 Goal: Find solutions to reduce staff time involvement

INNOVATION – NOT STAGNATION



Likely Solutions... Integrate multiple applications or data sources

Example:

Distribution Graphing **Service Data**

Likely Solutions... Automation

 Use programming to remove need for staff to respond to requests

- Easiest improvements likely related to:
 - Requesting Established Reports
 - Distribution of Reports
- Do it once Do it right

 Takes a little longer, but can avoid doing the same job over and over

Likely Solutions... Possible Early / First Project(s)

- Find a project focus with greatest potential for benefit.
 - Find an area where losing revenue
 - Identify high cost consumer populations
- Create system to automatically generate reports and distribute to staff
 - Pull data, graph data, distribute data into a format that staff can easily understand
 - Have staff use the report to improve revenue or reduce costs
- Success = the project pays for itself

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Developing a Statewide Agenda

Transforming Outcomes Requirements

SERVICE DELIVERY

- Historically:
 - Service Delivery Driven by Service Providers
- MHSA Transformation for Service Delivery:
 - Consumers should drive the system, the program, the service

MH Outcomes & Data Reporting System Needs a Transformation, As Well

Transforming Outcomes Requirements

OUTCOMES

•Historically:

- Methods driving what outcomes are collected
- Select surveys based on cost or ease of access
- •MHSA Outcomes:
 - Started with methods:
 - Key Even Tracking methodology worked for AB2034, so adopted for FSP
- Transformation:
 - Need intended outcomes to drive the methods

Administrative Reporting is a Growing Burden

- 4 to 6 different groups discussing possible data reporting requirements
- Stakeholder groups discussing implementation of various surveys
 - LOCUS & CANS & MORS & ANSA
- Data currently being collected are resulting in little benefit
 - FSP outcomes and other MHSA data reporting requires extensive resources
 - Difficult to analyze FSP data

Need a County Voice

- Need to avoid redundant requirements
- Need to ensure that effort going into data reporting results in benefit to Counties
- Need to help with the interpretation of data
 - What is meaningful?
 - What does it mean?
 - How can data be used to make improvements?

Where are we going with outcomes?

- We have challenges moving forward
 Recovery & Consumer Directed Services mean that outcomes need to take into consideration:
 - Success will look different for each consumer
 - Not everyone will want to be employed. Not everyone even thinks that being homeless is bad.

Challenges for us to resolve?

- Consumer directed treatment goals vs. community expectations
 - For example: Employment is desirable to community but may not be desirable to individual consumers
- Need to keep it simple without complex explanations
- How to meet these challenges?
 - Listen to our consumer advocates / partners

Mechanism for Counties

 CMHDA has established and authorized a new committee on Indicators, Data Evaluation, and Accountability (IDEA)

IDEA Committee Purpose:

- Develop specific recommendations regarding data reporting and outcomes for the State and MHSA, in particular
- Workgroup for working collaboratively on data analysis and methodology
- Will make analytically based recommendations for CMHDA
- Act as a link and/or advisor for CMHDA in efforts relevant policy and work with organizations such as MHPC, MHSOA, CIMH, etc
- Gather perspectives to adequately represent a collective county perspective

Monday, June 28 10a – 3p CIMH Offices



Next Meeting

IDEA Committee

THANK YOU!

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