Taming A Many Headed Dragon: Building Interagency Collaboration

A State Systems Example from CT's Substance Abuse, Child Welfare and Court Systems
Presenters

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Judicial Branch, Court Operations

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Context: Addressing Parent’s Substance Abuse

• Began with a child welfare program: Project SAFE
  ▪ A program to refer substance abusing parents in the child welfare system for assessment and treatment of substance use disorder
• Became a cross systems policy and practice model
  ▪ Collaborative policy setting and operations management
  ▪ Endorsement of judges and attorneys
  ▪ Priority access to state-funded treatment
  ▪ Recovery case management services
  ▪ Evaluation component
System Partners

• Department of Children & Families
  ▪ Child protection
  ▪ Children’s mental health and substance abuse treatment

• Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services
  ▪ Adult mental health and substance abuse treatment
  ▪ Supported housing, employment, etc.
System Partners

• Judicial Branch - Court Operations, Superior Court for Juvenile Matters
  ▪ Child Protection
  ▪ Delinquency
  ▪ Family with Service Needs

• Advanced Behavioral Health, Inc. - administrative services organization providing:
  ▪ Utilization management
  ▪ Provider network administration
  ▪ Research and dissemination of best practices
  ▪ Health information technology
Other Key Partners

- Office of the Chief Public Defender, Juvenile Delinquency and Child Protection Unit
- Office of the Attorney General
- UCONN Health Center Evaluation Team
History of the Collaboration

1995  **DCF establishes Project SAFE** to reduce child abuse by linking child protection system with adult substance abuse treatment system

1999  **DMHAS joins collaboration** to broaden scope of services for families; resulted in legislation requiring DCF/DMHAS MOU

2005  **DMHAS re-deploys savings** from change in drug test policy to improve utilization through outreach and engagement,

2007  **NCSACW IDTA** to implement develop a new pilot to enhance integrated system of care for families

2008  **DCF, DMHAS, and Judicial sign MOA** formalizing collaboration, adding evaluation

2014  **AIA funding** leveraged to expand impact to substance exposed infants

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Common Mission and Goal

Mission
Improve child well-being, safety and permanency when parental substance abuse has been identified as a significant issue resulting in children being removed from their homes.

Goal
Increase cross-systems capacity to better serve families impacted by substance use disorders
Top to Bottom Commitment

• Collaboration began organically working with substance abusing parents
• Supported by key operational leaders at the policy/central office and field office levels
• Blossomed with leadership commitment in word and action
  ▪ State agency Commissioners
  ▪ Senior State agency management
  ▪ Judicial administration
• Celebrating family recovery sustains
Steps to Build Collaboration

- Agreed we had a shared problem
- Focused conversations on mutual outcomes
- Left turf issues at the door
- Brought humanity, humor and celebration to the table
- Gradually built trust and support of a unified goal
Structure of CT’s Collaboration

Policies and Practices

Shared Data and Evaluation

Staff Development

Braided Resources
Policy & Practice

• Memorandum of Agreement
  ▪ Formalized commitment
  ▪ Defined roles

• Collaborative decision-making bodies for oversight and implementation
  ▪ Policies articulate mutual solutions
  ▪ Practices are “good fit” for all partners
Braided Resources

• Began with a small pilot project (low investment, low risk) that tested and strengthened collaboration
• Developed joint contracts that specified who is pays for what and under what circumstances
• Created braided funding where each partner can keep track of how its own dollars are spent
Staff Development

• **Cross-systems training to understand:**
  - Mission, policies, practices of each agency
  - Constraints and timelines under which each agency operates
  - Shared values and interests

• **Content for workforce development:**
  - Designed by a cross-systems training workgroup
  - State of the art knowledge in each system
  - Effect positive changes to agency cultures
  - Develop common language
Staff Development

- Strategies for Collaboration with Judicial Branch
  - Obtain commitment of high level judge/s
  - Authority to sanction the effort
  - Assist the judges & lawyers
Staff Development

- To engage administrative judges - educate and inform
  - Good relationships are crucial
  - Maintain on-going communication
  - Emphasize positive impact on outcomes with no impact on timelines
  - Conduct cross training
  - Offers a resource at no cost to judicial branch
  - Court role in accountability
  - Information sharing & parent confidentiality
Data Sharing

• A data-driven process for strategic planning, program development and outcomes monitoring
• Data sharing agreement for formative, process and outcome evaluation
• Identification of agency-relevant data
• Assessment of data quality and accessibility
• Ongoing review and dissemination of data
• Applications of data:
  ▪ Identify client needs
  ▪ Inform training
  ▪ Service coordination
  ▪ Monitor impact
Cross-System Data

• DCF
  ▪ Child-centered
  ▪ Numbers and characteristics of cases
  ▪ Family reunification, child permanency and re-entry
  ▪ Family strengths/needs and safety assessments

• DMHAS
  ▪ Adult client-centered
  ▪ Number and characteristics of substance abuse treatment clients
Cross-System Data

- Judicial
  - Child-centered
  - Time to disposition and disposition status

- ABH
  - Number and characteristics of clients served by RSVP
  - Timeliness of treatment entry
  - Monthly functional assessments
  - Program participation and discharge status
## Co-occurring Problems among RSVP Clients: 2009 – 2014 (n=531)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ever arrested</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current criminal justice involvement</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of domestic violence</td>
<td>38%</td>
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<tr>
<td>History of trauma</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of mental health problems</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never married or divorced/separated/widowed</td>
<td>77%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Substance Abuse Treatment Outcomes for RSVP Clients

- 97% of OTC enrollees referred to RSVP were evaluated to need treatment
- 84% of RSVP clients enrolled in substance abuse treatment
  - 68% within 30 days
- Level of care:
  - 6% Detoxification only
  - 15% Methadone maintenance
  - 30% Outpatient
  - 28% Intensive outpatient/partial hospitalization
  - 21% Residential
- Median length of stay was 88 days
- 75% of RSVP clients had a successful discharge from treatment compared to 43% of substance abuse clients statewide
Sustainability

- Continued recognition that the old system was not serving the needs of a high risk and shared population
- Joint Financing
  - Re-purposed existing dollars
  - Developed braided funding among partners
  - Re-deployed savings
  - Leveraged competitive federal grant dollars to test and expand models
Sustainability

• Monthly and annual utilization and outcomes reports to leadership and stakeholders
• Examine economic impact of initiative
• Celebrate success with program participants and collaborators
• Continue to explore creative funding sources (e.g., Pay for Success/Social Impact Bonding)
Tips for successful collaboration

- Importance of leadership and champions
- Listen to stakeholders needs, concerns
- Be open to new ideas and approaches
- Tailor approach to partners
- Participate early and consistently
- Build on existing collaborations
- Set reasonable expectations
- SMART formula
  - Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely
Resources


• SAMHSA/HRSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions

• http://www.integration.samhsa.gov/workforce/collaboration-and-teamwork
Parting Words

“Together we embrace safety, permanency and well-being, and substance abuse recovery.

Our ultimate goal is to achieve positive results for a family that will last a lifetime.”