

JUVENILE JUSTICE INTEGRATED TREATMENT NETWORKS CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Presented by Jennifer S. Mankey, MPA

NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

What makes a network run and be successful is a structure and process for collaboration, a common vision with guiding principles, information sharing, collaborative decision-making, collaborative implementation and capacity and capability building.

BARRIERS TO NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

The barriers to developing a network impede these essential elements for network development. Many of these barriers are political and are in the realm of power and control. One of the largest barriers for network development is the mistrust between systems and across sectors. This mistrust can arise from the different vocabularies in the different system such as the different languages between correction and mental health as well as from the contradictory statutory, legislative, federal, state and local initiatives in each system. Each system has evolved with its own goals and objectives and has different visions, different funding streams, different disciplines and different philosophies.

Unfortunately many collaborations are already happening with very little getting done and without true collaboration. These collaborative efforts undermine the efforts of creating possible more effective efforts. Why would you want to do a network or join another collaboration? Many times there is a lot of make work versus real work in collaboratives that are not working well.

Also, unfamiliarity with target population of the collaborative effort stalls network development. In our case we had many people who had never seen a drug abusing juvenile offender and therefore they questioned why they should be at the table. There might be unfamiliarity with other systems, no history of shared initiatives or just a sense of being overwhelmed and not having the time to sit down at the table with other agencies.

THE WORK OF THE NETWORK

Collaboration is not the goal; it is the means to the goal. The work needs to be strategic and be inclusive so entire collaborative wisdom can be incorporated. It needs to be innovative and centered on youth and family, not systems. If the collaboration process is happening, it will result in systems change, services integration, coordination and sector response, inter-department capability and improved outcomes.

STRUCTURE OF THE NETWORK

Kevin Kelly, editor of Wired Magazine, defines network as “structured relationships.” The question then is what structures the relationship and what are the elements? There needs to be rules that structure the relationship, a recognition of roles and a definition of what or who you are.

We at the Denver Juvenile Justice Integrated Treatment Network see ourselves as more than the sum of what everybody is contributing and more as a brand new entity. However, this perspective varies across the membership with some seeing us as a point of confluence among systems and others seeing us more as a new organization and entity that has truly changed the way of doing business.

Dr. Robert Terry from the Terry Group in Minnesota identified the following required elements for the framework of an organization. These elements include a shared mission, meaning, existence, structure and power. The mission is your purpose, the meaning is what takes you to work every day, existence is the why and the resources to make it operate, structure is the organizational chart, processes, procedures, policies, rules and laws, and the power is the energy, motivation, morale, control, spirit and the decision-making.

PHASES OF NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

Networks phases of development can simply be described by two phrases, “Yes, But” and “Yes, and.” A theater group that does management and organization training called Chicken Lips says that the worst word in a collaboration is “but” because it cuts off communication. When we get into a confluence where people are still holding on to who they are, there is a lot of

“yes, but” and that negates a yes. It is only when that becomes “yes, and” through constant feedback loops where people are feeding who they are, what they are and their expertise and their weaknesses and strengths to create a new approaches does network development proceed.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership is critical to collaborative/network building. Leadership also is more important initially than later on. The emphasis is on leadership versus management. According to Dr. Robert Terry, the only leadership question you have to ask is “what is really going on?” A leader is able to ask that question and thereby begin the problem-solving process.

For the Denver Juvenile Justice Integrated Treatment Network, the local coordinating committee was the leadership entity and it was the positional leadership piece of Denver network and continues to be so. Some of the specific leadership tasks for this group of key public administrative representatives includes addressing policies and procedures in their own systems and then collaboratively problem-solving across systems, broadening their funding base, identifying the target population and keeping their eye on the environmental issues that might affect the network.

Leadership also emerged from all levels in the network, from administrative, service system and family levels in the Denver network. They represented many different models of leadership. Some leaders were position dependent and some people dependent. It was critical, however, that leadership was there to help lead changes in their own systems by stepping outside of the boundaries of their own systems. For example the probation officer might be asked to do things they have not done before such as contacting the parents when the child is not in school.

Leadership also is important in promoting the network vision and mission outside of the network as well as inside. The leaders have a function in motivating and guiding their own system on what is happening in the network. The 35 or 40 people at a local coordinating committee are representing thousands of people back in their own systems.

SYSTEM CHANGE

The change that the network is directed toward includes both changes in how business is done and how agencies relate to other system changes. Some of these changes include becoming client consumer focused, addressing the gaps and barriers in the continuum of care, contributing and changing language, accepting other service philosophies, maintaining a clear understanding of other systems and services, and accepting responsibility to change what is not working. This sounds so simple but it is very difficult in practice. Agencies become very interdependent on other systems and agencies and services. And if it is done right, agencies will also become interdependent with the family and the youth.

About the Presenter

Jennifer S. Mankey, MPA, is the Project Director of the Juvenile Justice Integrated Treatment Network, Denver Juvenile Court, Colorado. Ms. Mankey has worked to integrate and expand the comprehensiveness of treatment services for Denver's substance abusing juvenile offenders. She has twenty-seven years of experience in private and public sector juvenile and adult offender programs.

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