Trouble-Shooting: Questions

For wraparound supervisors:

These are individuals who are hired or will be hired to provide hands-on oversight, direction and coaching to staff members who work directly with families by using the wraparound process.

Question:

I try to correct my staff but I often hear that since I've only supervised wraparound and never done it, I don't understand. What tips do you have?

Answer:

Some supervisors find that taking responsibility to function as the wraparound facilitator for a single family can be very helpful. Others place themselves in a co-facilitator role with staff. Still others spend time in the field and get a sense for the practice in that way. What is important is that you have a sense of the overall wraparound process, significant knowledge of component steps of

wraparound, and knowledge of the way your system operates. The advantage that you bring to the discussion is that you have enough distance to be able to see the entire process without getting caught up in the detail. Finally, use multiple data sources in providing feedback to staff, including your personal observations, family and team feedback, and outcome and fiscal data.

Question:

Our project has flexible funds available but we haven't developed any policies around the use of those funds. For some of our wraparound teams, the main strategy seem to be "have our flexible funds pay" for whatever is needed. How do I manage this?

Answer:

It is not unusual for new wraparound projects to become focused on flexible funds as the solution to challenges. Effective flexible fund management should ensure this resource will be used in a manner that promotes accountability while ensuring that the spirit of flexibility is maintained. Develop simple rules that can be shared with all wraparound team members including families, professional partners and community representatives. Make sure your rules reinforce the initial goals for your project.

Question:

Wraparound is such a complex process; how do I hold my staff accountable for quality implementation of the wraparound process?

Answer:

Because wraparound happens in communities and not offices, supervisors find that they need to spend "field time" with staff to ensure that the process is being implemented correctly and with quality. This includes not only attending team meetings but also accompanying staff to individual meetings with families

and other team members during the engagement phase of wraparound. Some supervisors will augment this field work through use of surveys (either telephone, in-person, or written) from family and other team members. Supervisors should also consider active monitoring of teams' progress toward achieving team goals or meeting family needs, and use these data in supervision. Finally, these practices should be correlated with individual outcomes for young people and families enrolled in wraparound (e.g., meeting needs, reducing problem behaviors, functioning better in school, home, or the community) to ensure that one informs the other.

Question:

Many of the families we have enrolled in wraparound need more than wraparound meetings facilitated by my staff. Yet many of our partners tend to think that "let wraparound do it all," is the answer. How do I help them get past this idea that wraparound is the service?

Answer:

While supervisors need to be focused on quality implementation of the wraparound process, you should also focus on the range, mix and type of services and interventions that are being provided to families between team meetings. It's a good idea to keep track of these services and construct a report that comprehensively describes services used in wraparound. Some sites will organize this description of services by life domain while others will sort by service definition or setting (home, school, community). Use this report to coach your staff and inform your boss about the mix of services being used and to provide support for further developing the service array.

Question:

Our project has a community team that provides oversight to our work even though my agency has the contract to implement wraparound. That community team often gives me feedback that I think conflicts with the spirit of wraparound. What can I do about this?

Answer:

What wraparound means within a given community is something that evolves as people gain insight and experience. Often our cross-system oversight groups are convened after one workshop about wraparound – or less. It is often helpful to get community oversight entities to commit to deepening their knowledge about wraparound through workshops, research and in-depth discussions. Members of the group may even be engaged in the process of interviewing families and staff about their experiences. At the very least, they should be exposed to in-depth descriptions of such family and staff experiences.

Question:

In our community, everyone came together to start wraparound but now that we're up and funded it seems that I'm the only person responsible for implementation. What should I do as a supervisor?

Answer:

It is often helpful for supervisors of wraparound projects to convene a group of supervisors from other systems to review implementation and continue to manage system barriers. Just because you've funded wraparound in your community doesn't mean that all policies are now compatible with wraparound. Gathering a group of supervisors to monitor and troubleshoot not only wraparound implementation but also cross-system participation in wraparound plans can be a very helpful way to keep others engaged.

For wraparound managers:

These are individuals who provide management oversight to wraparound projects. These might be employees of service organizations, typically nonprofit, who have a wraparound project included in their department. Wraparound supervisors will typically report to managers directly, and they in turn report to administrators.

Question:

If we have limited resources to commit to monitoring and accountability where should we start? What are the bare essentials?

Answer:

How you prioritize your focus in the general area of accountability will vary based on local conditions. Each project should develop capacity to monitor satisfaction, outcome, fiscal and process indicators. Where you start and what you prioritize, however, is entirely dependent on local conditions. If you are worried about the quality of wraparound eroding, then start with process indicators. If you have concerns about your ability to achieve the original outcomes set forth in your wraparound project, or have a need to demonstrate such outcomes to ensure sustainability, you may start with monitoring outcomes like placement. The point is to work to put all four components in place within a reasonable amount of time.

Question:

Do we really need players from all sectors of our community system at the community partnership group?

Answer:

A number of communities have fostered wraparound with a single-system approach. Some of these projects have been relatively successful and have created important alternatives for young people and families. On the other hand, some

of these single-system wraparound projects have struggled over time. Some of these struggles are the result of a lack of clear understanding about the nature of wraparound. Often, there are multiple-system initiatives that look like wraparound but operate under a different name. In other systems, there are projects that use the name "wraparound" but don't follow wraparound practices. Establishing community partnership and collective ownership is an important step in bringing coherence and consistency to wraparound within a given community. It can lead to greater sustainability for wraparound projects while also fostering greater cohesiveness among system players. Effective managers start where they must but continue to work for system coherence and integration around wraparound.

Question:

We have done "less formal" or "small W" wraparound as a single provider for years. Now it is time to step up and make it more formal and a bigger deal. Where should we start to be sure we do this stage of our development "right"?

Answer:

Many provider organizations or departments find that the wraparound process feels familiar because they have tried to do work that is compatible with the philosophy for a long time. In formalizing your implementation, a good place to start is by working with other leaders to establish cross-system ownership of your wraparound initiative. This will help lead to a cross-system, community understanding of your newly formalized efforts. In doing this, ensure that your organization is open to input from community partners and that your staff are prepared to learn new techniques, approaches and assumptions.

Question:

Flexibility and individualization are important concepts in wraparound and other services. How do we best manage the liability concerns and risks that come with developing this type of resource set in a community system?

Answer:

All leaders in wraparound should abide by "responsible risk taking." That means that you need to ensure that your staff are equipped with a sound approach to introducing issues of risk within wraparound teams and planning for mitigation of those risks. Some managers also create an oversight process that allows them to review unusual actions in wraparound plans. This oversight process may include a clinical review through a single agency or a cross-system review that brings a variety of perspectives. If you do elect to create a review process, you should establish the rule that this group may not simply change plans but instead should dialogue with individual teams to make suggestions for effective risk management.

Question:

We have a contract to provide wraparound facilitation but we are also able to bill Medicaid for some of those duties. Shouldn't I try to maximize my Medicaid billing to ensure sustainability?

Answer:

Many wraparound projects are implemented using a mix of contract dollars with billable sources. Using Medicaid to fund your wraparound project can be a good fiscal policy as long as using those billable definitions doesn't change your definition of wraparound. Managers should work with their project to find the right blend of dollars to ensure quality implementation, even if that means that billable rates are somewhat lower. Remember the point is not to bill a lot, but instead to use resources strategically to ensure quality family services and supports and achievement of program goals.

Question:

Can one supervisor effectively supervise staff doing wraparound at the same time that they supervise staff doing another project?

Answer:

Some projects are able to create dedicated supervisors for wraparound, while others are just don't have the resources. There is a learning curve for newly assigned wraparound supervisors, and it is important that you dedicate enough time and resources to allow the supervisor to learn about wraparound. Investing in site visits to other projects, finding training opportunities (either live or via webinars) and identifying networking opportunities are all important investments.

For wraparound administrators:

These are individuals who take on administrative and executive tasks associated with the wraparound project. These activities may include hosting the wraparound implementation staff or administering contracts that are passed through to implementation groups. These individuals may work for private non-profit or public sector organizations.

Question:

How do administrators help make sure that families get what they need from wraparound?

Answer:

People often focus on wraparound as a process for getting to "out of the box" solutions for families. There is an emphasis on creating, molding, or finding just the right resource for individual families rather than selecting strategies from a prescribed menu of services and resources. Wraparound administrators learn that the trick seems to be more about getting the right decision made, rather than getting the right service or contract in place.

Individualization is fostered by ensuring that wraparound policies and procedures lead to wraparound teams accessing what's needed. Administrators should focus on empowering individual teams with the ability to make decisions and giving teams the authority to follow through. Effective wraparound administrators focus on this team empowerment model rather than creating policies and procedures focused solely on consistent replication of a service.

Question:

We are trying to choose what to measure to inform our implementation effort. Possible areas to measure include costs, satisfaction of those served, whether the process we use lives up to our expectations, and whether what we are doing is really changing lives for families. Do we really need to measure something in all four of these areas to effectively maintain accountability for our effort?

Answer:

Accountability is about developing structures and processes that help you identify your information needs, how you will get the information, how it will be analyzed, who the information will be presented to, and how that information will be used to make decisions about the life of the system of care you are developing.

This work often falls into four categories:

- Costs
- Satisfaction
- Process adherence
- Impact/outcome

It is not unusual for communities to develop accountability mechanisms for one or two of these areas, work on that for a while, and then move on to add in another focus area. The process of developing a full set of indicators can take a significant amount of time. Working toward a multi-tiered set of accountability measures is important and will require effort and resource commitments over time. This investment will support your effort to refine and improve your wraparound project based on locally developed and managed indicators sets that are relevant to the priorities you have chosen for your implementation.

Question:

Wraparound has several staff roles including facilitator, parent partner, youth partner, and supervisor. Do these positions always need to be in place for all projects in order for us to call what we do "wraparound"? We are operating on a tight budget and are not likely to have all of the funds necessary for all of these positions.

Answer:

Many sites struggle with ensuring the right mix of staff for implementation of wraparound. Minimally, you must have someone take on the role of facilitation of the wraparound process including meeting, team, and plan facilitation. Other roles are important and may be added later or can be built in through partnerships with other organizations. For example, some wraparound projects hire facilitators and pair each one with a peer support partner from other, existing, local initiatives.

Question:

What is the right balance between costs for doing wraparound, costs for needed support and services, and really flexible dollars for one-time, one-family expenses? How do we know if we allocated our resources correctly to support this work?

Answer:

The right ratio is largely dependent on local conditions. If you are in a community that has developed a significant and broad-based partnership group, you may find that your need for flexible one-time dollars is less than for other communities because you can access in-kind options. Staff costs associated with the implementation of wraparound are also largely dependent on local conditions and the workload you've established for your wraparound staff. If they are expected

to do a great deal of paperwork or various other duties, you will need to spend a relatively larger share of funds for staff. Most projects begin by gathering information from a variety of other practitioners and starting with some sort of ratio. As the project matures, try to foster open discussions with partners and providers to try to establish the right amount and blend of funding to effectively implement wraparound. This information can be gathered retrospectively as more families are served and should inform future financial decisions.

Question:

What should we do when the partnership feels unequal? For example, one system spends more money on our wraparound effort than the others and they seem to feel like they have a bigger stake and more power in the decisions we make. Is this okay?

Answer:

Wraparound investment is likely to vary from system to system and from time to time. In some states, wraparound is funded through a redirection of child welfare dollars while other states may see primary funding come from other systems such as mental health or juvenile justice. Managing this imbalanced investment requires strategic action. Some communities have established methods for decision making that are fair, open and transparent, while others have acknowledged the greater investment by giving those with a bigger stake a bigger vote. Some administrators find it helpful to acknowledge the more subtle investments made by those who don't come to the table with a big checkbook. Again, as with most things in wraparound implementation you must build on what you have and continue to work towards improvement over time, including movement toward greater system integration.

Question:

How do we keep wraparound from being just another program in our system? How do we keep it alive as a change mechanism for the broader system?

Answer:

Many sites struggle with ensuring the right mix of staff for implementation of wraparound. Minimally, you must have someone take on the role of facilitation of the wraparound process including meeting, team, and plan facilitation. Other roles are important and may be added later or can be built in through partnerships with other organizations. For example, some wraparound projects hire facilitators and pair each one with a peer support partner from other, existing, local initiatives.

For wraparound funders:

These are individuals who make executive leadership and fiscal decisions related to developing and implementing wraparound within communities.

Question:

What outcomes should we track in our wraparound initiative?

Answer:

Communities have tried many strategies to sort out this issue. The most important consideration is how to ensure that there are outcomes that you jointly own and track and report. Methods for picking which ones you will prioritize can include:

- Reviewing all indicators from all participants systems and selecting a subset that all systems track some information about.
- Having each system identify one indicator that they are most concerned about

and then treating the composite group as the starter set of indicators for the project.

» Developing a set of unique indicators that reflect the leadership perception of important things to track and monitor.

The important thing is to start tracking, monitoring, and analyzing outcome information from early in the project and to use this information for subsequent improvement efforts.

Question:

In our effort to build a collaborative body we have gathered people from different levels in their organizations. It does not always feel right for a direct line supervisor to carry the same weight as an executive director of one of our funders. What can we do about this without alienating representatives who are invested in improving care for youth and families in our community?

Answer:

Community partnership and collaborative bodies sound like ideas rooted in an egalitarian and cooperative tradition. While these ideals are a good thing, we need to be cautious about assuming that everyone at the collaborative table brings the same thing.

One option is to think about "tiering" participation in the community collaborative. This approach would match people from similar levels to work together to identify and resolve challenges in wraparound implementation that affect their level of the organization. This is a way to garner ideas and solutions from across the organizational levels while creating a role for multiple levels of input. Structures within collaborative bodies can include sub groups that are:

» Task-focused; for example, workforce development, outcome management, and others; or

» Role focused; for example, executive level, supervisor level, or family representatives.

Healthy collaboratives find ways to use the talents of representatives in a way that is appropriate and respectful to their roles and expertise.

Question:

How do we encourage providers in our community system to work together rather than compete for dollars and expertise?

Answer:

First of all, competition among providers can be healthy for system improvement. Competing to be the most flexible and responsive provider in the eyes of families is very different than competing to have the biggest budget. Leadership messages and decisions reinforce and shape opinions and perceptions of what is important. Create opportunities for healthy competition by incentivizing the things that you value. If working together is one of those, then creating incentives for working together, rewarding it when it happens, and funding joint efforts are all strategies that can be effective at improving collaborative action at the provider level.

Question:

What is the right "mix" of formal services and flexible funds to ensure that we have the right help available to families as we do wraparound?

Answer:

There is no known formula for figuring out this mix. It will depend on several factors including the type and volume of services currently available in your system and the depth of need and challenge faced by families. In order to keep the right balance in mind it is necessary

to track expenditures and service usage patterns by individual family. This can be done by creating a process that builds an individual budget by family and wraparound team. This information can then be aggregated at the funding level. Funders should analyze this data, consider its connection to inputs and outcomes, and then make informed decisions about where to make fiscal commitments. Monitoring flexible expenditures may point to the need to make other investments. For example, a plethora of flexible expenditures clustered in one type of activity may lead to a decision to create a new service type or contract in the community system. This kind of process and analysis will lead to an improved "mix"` of formal and flexible resources.

Question:

Lots of wraparound projects seem to pool funds. We will not be doing that in our community. Does this mean we should not do wraparound?

Answer:

"Pooled" funds are often a symbol of multiple funders' commitment to wraparound. The lack of ability to pool funds does not mean that you should abandon your wraparound efforts. If you will not be "pooling" funds, just be sure to pay attention to increasing your abilities to:

» Share specific, accurate, and up-to-date budget information;

» Share dollars across systems for important investments in flexible responses for families and youth; and

» •Share, publicly and repeatedly, your commitment to collaboratively manage and improve care for youth and families.

These are the underlying functions that are addressed in pooling funds.

Question:

Starting a new project means new training for project staff and community members. How do we make sure we get the best possible training for our community?

Answer:

There are many places to search for a training resource that matches your community's needs. Scan your environment, find out who is doing wraparound, and find out who trained them. Check at the state level, the county level, and the provider level for organizations that have implemented wraparound. Interview them to ascertain their approach to training. A mix of outsider/expert (to get the latest and the best from the broader field) and local experienced staff and leaders (to get the practical on the ground picture) creates the most effective balance.

It is also important to develop a plan for ensuring that you reach all of the right audiences with the right information at the right time. Wraparound managers need different information than families enrolled in wraparound. Additionally, training should be seen as an ongoing, iterative process that adapts over time to local conditions. This is likely to mean that you will need more than one trainer or training resource over time.