

Wraparound Oregon System Development Report Summary January 2007

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Introduction

This report describes the findings from a process that was undertaken in November and December of 2006 to seek feedback from key stakeholders about the *system level* development that is taking place as a part of the Wraparound Oregon initiative. One of the central goals of the Wraparound Oregon project is to create a *system of care* (Stroul, 2002; Stroul & Friedman, 1986) to serve the needs of children in Multnomah County and their families. In this first stage of system development, the goal is to develop a system of care for the children with the highest levels of mental healthcare needs and their families. Building a system of care requires extensive collaboration and coordination among child- and family-serving agencies and between these agencies and other stakeholder groups in the community. The purpose of the ongoing system evaluation component of the Wraparound Oregon initiative is to assess the extent to which the necessary collaboration and coordination is occurring, and the extent to which the structures, policies, and activities that support collaboration are being systematically institutionalized.

Method

Feedback from key stakeholders was sought via a questionnaire that was circulated by email. The questionnaire requested feedback about system development in a series of topic areas grouped into six themes. The content of the topic areas and themes is based on the structure of the Community Supports for Wraparound Index (CSWI), a survey tool for gathering data about the extent to which local communities have developed the system-level conditions that are necessary to support wraparound. The CSWI is derived from research that examined the implementation context for wraparound, and outlined a series of “necessary conditions” that were required at the organization and system levels in order for wraparound to be successful (Walker, Koroloff, & Schutte, 2003). Individual items for the CSWI were refined and further developed through the work of the National Wraparound Initiative (Walker & Bruns, 2006a, 2006b).

In contrast to the CSWI, which requires respondents to select ratings for a series of items representing the topics within each theme, the feedback questionnaire that was used in the

current study asked respondents to select topic areas that they wished to comment on, and then allowed them to comment in an open-ended manner within the selected topic area.

For each topic area chosen, respondents were also asked to provide a brief description of the rationale for citing the topic area as a strength. In the next section of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to cite up to three topic areas of priority work for system development for the project over the next year to eighteen months. Respondents were asked to provide a brief description describing exactly what work, within the topic area, should be prioritized. Finally, respondents were asked to write down any important “lessons learned” that they felt should inform Wraparound Oregon’s future work.

Potential respondents were chosen from the Wraparound Oregon roster. Questionnaires were emailed to anyone who had had a role within Wraparound Oregon that had lasted for at least six months and that had included some form of participation beyond attendance at Community Management Team (CMT) meetings. In an effort to include a greater diversity of stakeholder perspectives—particularly those of community organizations that worked with ethnic/cultural/racial minorities and immigrants—several other potential participants were also chosen from among people on the Wraparound Oregon roster. In total, 31 stakeholders were invited to participate.

It should be recognized that this report disproportionately focuses on the school-age project within Wraparound Oregon, with less attention to the early childhood project. This is in part due to the fact that relatively few people—and particularly few staff—have been involved in the early childhood project for more than a few months. Future reports on system development will include more of a balance of perspectives from the two projects.

In order to ensure that the perspectives of the facilitation team (facilitators, parent partner, supervisor) were adequately represented, members of the evaluation team attended a facilitation team meeting and conducted an informal focus group using the format of the questionnaire to provide the prompts. Several members of the facilitation team also responded to the questionnaire providing written feedback on the questionnaire form.

Results

Respondents nominated a total of 56 topic areas for successes and 80 topic areas for priority work.¹ The most frequently nominated topic area of success was *adequate training, coaching, and supervision* (5B, 12 nominations), followed by *formalized decision-making structure* (1A, 10 nominations), and *plan to turn vision into reality* (2A, 8 nominations). The most frequently nominated topic area for priority work during the next year to 18 months was *ready access to supports and services* (4A, 15 nominations), followed by *sufficient, flexible funding* (3C, 9 nominations), and *appropriate participation in the partnership and developing new supports and services* (1B and 4B, 8 nominations each).

¹ The total number of nominations for priority work (80) represents an average of more than three nominated topic areas per person. Several factors contributed to this “excess” of nominations. First, several respondents nominated more than three priority topic areas, appending additional comments to the open ended section of the survey. Second, there was a tendency for some respondents to provide lengthy open-ended responses that spanned more than one topic area. Portions of these responses were re-categorized within the topic area(s) that more closely matched the content. Finally, several respondents in the facilitation team focus group provided information about priorities for work in more than three topic areas. Thus, the number of responses for successes and priorities in a given topic area cannot be translated into an absolute ranking of priorities across responding stakeholders.

A number of themes reappeared across topic areas and lessons learned. In general, respondents' comments showed much greater agreement about successes than about priorities for work. This makes sense, given that successes are based on what has already been accomplished, whereas any area could be prioritized for future work.

Within successes, the central repeating theme was that a good foundation had been laid, providing the groundwork for a transformation—in funding structures, policies, activities, and so on—that had largely yet to take place. There was a sense of cautious optimism from the comments that, while recognizing the commitment and momentum that had been built thus far, also expressed fear that the momentum would dissipate if bigger and deeper changes were not soon achieved.

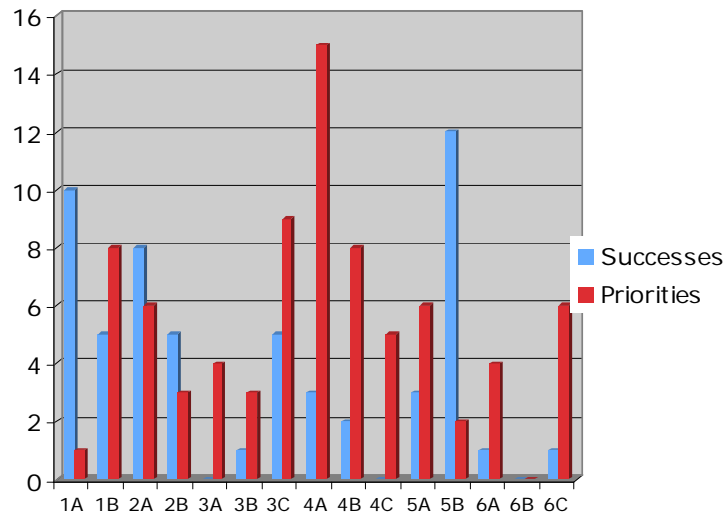
In terms of priorities, there was less apparent agreement among respondents, with many topic areas receiving at least a handful of nominations. However, there were several themes that recurred across topics with some regularity. These themes were as follows:

- A number of respondents perceived a lack of clarity and/or transparency about how important decisions about the project are being made and about how input from stakeholders is to be gathered and weighed before decisions are made. Respondents recognized that decisions during the start-up phases of the project had to be made before structures and processes had been defined. Moving to a more clearly defined process for decision making was perceived as a high priority.
- Several respondents noted that the current atmosphere within the project does not always encourage open communication, and that important voices were not being heard in discussion and decision making.
- Respondents were concerned about whether or not the school-age and early childhood projects were going to be able to create shared goals and engage in coordinated activities. Respondents perceived a need to build a shared framework across projects for moving forward in a unified and coordinated manner.
- Respondents were also concerned about the difficulty of providing the kind of support that would make it possible to carry out a high quality wraparound process. Wraparound team planning within the project takes place in an extremely complex context, within which there is uncertainty and arbitrariness about the availability, accessibility, and flexibility of needed services, supports, and resources. Additionally, there is often overlap and even competition between service plans and support plans—and crisis plans—that are created by different providers for a single child and family. Respondents placed a high priority on addressing these complexities so that “real” wraparound could be practiced.

Successes and Priorities

The table below presents the raw counts of the number of times each topic area was nominated by respondents as a success or a priority. A synthesis of comments about specific successes and priorities, as well as a summary of lessons learned, is presented in the full version of the report

Wraparound Oregon: System
Development Feedback November
2006



1 Community Partnership

1A Formalized decision making structure

1B Appropriate participation in the partnership

2 Collaborative Activity

2A Plan to turn vision into reality

2B Joint action steps taken

3 Fiscal Tracking and Policies

3A Access to information about costs

3B Shared fiscal responsibility

3C Sufficient, flexible funding

4 Access to Supports and Services

4A Ready access to supports and services

4B Developing new supports and services

4C Adequate crisis response

5 Human Resource Development and Support

5A Appropriate case loads

5B Adequate training, coaching, and supervision

6 Accountability

6A Outcome data

6B Wraparound quality data

6C Identifying and addressing grievances and barriers

For a copy of the complete report, please contact Alice Galloway at galloway@northwest.com or go on the Wraparound Oregon website at www.wraparoundoregon.org.