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SIM-plementation: Applying the Sequential Intercept Model to Local Planning and Action

Leveraging Health and Criminal Justice Partnerships in Local Action Plans

People with mental or substance use disorders and involved in the justice system are often caught in the gaps between treatment services and criminal justice institutions. As communities work to improve their behavioral health services and increase diversion from the justice system into treatment, strong relationships and communication between health and criminal justice partners are critical.

Tips for Building Partnerships...

- Support strong leadership from someone able to pull diverse partners together.
- Establish roles and clarify expectations around what each partner can contribute.
- Recognize differences in terminology and support learning of each partners' perspective.
- Form a coalition to facilitate regular communication and planning.
- Recognize that professionals across disciplines feel the same pressure to address issues.
- If a history of collaboration exists, build on past collaborations.

"[Across disciplines,] we have to take the time to truly understand each other's systems and why things are done a certain way. To stand in each other's shoes helps to understand and plan for what happens next."

Kelly Colopy, Director of Health & Human Services, Long Beach, California

Key Partners to Involve...

- Law enforcement (sheriff's departments and police departments; including CIT representatives)
- Jail administrators or jail representatives (include staff of in-house programs for substance use or mental illness)
- Contracted jail mental health providers
- Health Department representatives
- County or city management representatives
- Managed Care Organization representatives
- Community-based mental health or substance use treatment providers
- Leads from psychiatric hospitals or psychiatric units of local hospitals
- Judicial officials, particularly those who preside over relevant specialty court
- Social workers or providers linked with Public Defenders or Prosecutors' offices
- Probation & parole (include staff of any specialized caseload programs)
- Community-based peer programs

Partnering to... Develop & Fund Interventions

Ways to foster and further develop partnership:

- Look for opportunities for stakeholders across disciplines to work on common issues together (e.g., SIM mapping; Stepping Up Initiative).
- Establish HIPAA-complaint information-sharing systems for use across disciplines.
- Leverage interdisciplinary coalitions to apply for funding or technical assistance.
- Conduct regularly on-going cross-training between health providers and criminal justice agency staff.
- Fund positions that bridge the gaps between behavioral health services and criminal justice systems (e.g., behavioral health professionals to administer assessments in jails and facilitate warm hand-offs).

"Once the word got out of the work we were doing, we started to get calls and referrals from people in the community who were interested in the work we were doing. There was a lot of interest in helping or saying 'this is so badly needed.' The public enthusiasm has helped tremendously."

Kevin C. Bond, Sheriff, Pettis County, Missouri