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THE FAMILY OPTIONS PROJECT

Implementing an Innovative Intervention for Parents with Mental Illnesses and Their Families

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THE PARTNERSHIP

The Family Options Project reflects a productive partnership between researchers and providers at the UMMS Center for Mental Health Services Research and Employment Options, Inc., Marlborough, MA.

THE INTERVENTION

The Family Options Intervention is an evidence-informed psychiatric rehabilitation intervention, developed and tested within the context of a community-based agency setting.

Key Intervention Concepts & Processes:

- Family-Centered
- Strengths-Based
- Family-Driven & Self-Determined
- Recovery & Resilience
- Engagement & Relationship Building
- Empowerment
- Availability & Access
- Liaison & Advocacy

Implementing the Family Options Intervention

Implementation & Refinement

The implementation process has involved:

- collaboration with community agency providers;
- integration of adult & child services; and
- 3 Family Coaches, a Family Options Director, & Clinical Consultant, who partner with 26 families, i.e., 26 parents with mental illnesses, 13 partners, & 56 children

Refinement of the intervention is an iterative process involving:

- feedback from collaborating agencies;
- Continuous Quality Improvement;
- feedback of research findings; and
- program adaptation

The Implementation Study

Involves describing the key domains of activity crucial to intervention installation, initial implementation, and full operation stages.

- ▶ 100 open-ended, ethnographic interviews conducted over a 2-year period with 19 key informants, including agency Board members, staff, & club house members;
- ▶ Nine focus groups with 3 distinct Family Options stakeholder groups including agency Board members, management team, staff, & club house member, conducted at 3 implementation stages; and
- ▶ Multiple interviews with local community providers to assess existing services & resource gaps.

The Outcomes Study

Involves studying the experiences and outcomes of parents and children in intervention and comparison groups ("services as usual"), using maximum individualized change score approach.

- ▶ Qualitative & quantitative methods;
- ▶ Interviews at enrollment, 3, 6, 9 & 12 months; and
- ▶ include standardized measures & open-ended interview items.
- ▶ Parent & Child Outcomes:
 - Well-being (e.g., BSI, BERS-2)
 - Functioning (e.g., SF-8)
 - Supports & Resources (e.g., MOS-SSS)
- ▶ Family Outcomes:
 - Empowerment (e.g., FES)
 - Supports & Resources (e.g., FRS, FSS)

Family Options Intervention Mothers Report Past Experiences:

- ▶ 45% ever forced to have sex
- ▶ 45% ever homeless
- ▶ 55% ever witnessed family violence
- ▶ 64% ever stalked
- ▶ 77% ever emotionally abused
- ▶ 77% ever physically abused

Family Options Intervention Mothers' Reports of Children's Experiences:

- ▶ 24% of mothers report a child ever being involved with police or probation
- ▶ 43% of mothers report a child ever having a psychiatric hospitalization
- ▶ 48% of mothers report a child taking psychiatric medication in past 3 months
- ▶ 71% of mothers report a child ever having emotional or behavioral problems
- ▶ 81% of mothers report a child ever having an Individualized Education Plan

Family Options Intervention Mothers (n = 22):

Data at enrollment paint a picture of the multiple, complex challenges faced by families participating in the intervention.

Mothers:

- ▶ average age is 37.4 years
- ▶ 77% are White
- ▶ 41% are married or living with a partner
- ▶ 23% are employed
- ▶ average education completed is 13 years
- ▶ report an average of 2.6 children living in the home

Family Options Intervention Mothers Report:

- ▶ first mental health problems at an average age of 17.5 years
- ▶ their primary diagnosis:
 - 46% Major Affective Disorder
 - 41% Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
 - 9% Generalized Anxiety Disorder
 - 4% Psychotic Disorder
- ▶ 76% ever had a psychiatric hospitalization

Next Steps

- ▶ Enhance and solidify the Family Options intervention in a well-articulated, comprehensive standard operating procedures document that will facilitate replication and further testing of the intervention.
- ▶ Continue to collect and analyze data through 2007 and, potentially, into 2008.
- ▶ Disseminate research findings.

The Implementation Study: Preliminary findings suggest four key domains of interest to support the Family Options Intervention:

- ▶ Creating the Organizational Capacity;
- ▶ Creating the Work Force Capacity;
- ▶ Creating the Community Capacity; and
- ▶ Translating Science to Service.

Creating the Organizational Capacity:

- ▶ Coordinating Logistics & Operations
- ▶ Coordinating Communication & Meetings
- ▶ Standardizing Methods of Operation
- ▶ Attending to Staff Performance
- ▶ Allocating Internal Resources

Creating the Work Force Capacity:

- ▶ Finding & Hiring Staff
- ▶ Educating, Training, & Coaching Staff
- ▶ Considering Background & Experiences of Staff
- ▶ Identifying Staff Characteristics & Skill Sets
- ▶ Identifying Supervisor Characteristics & Skill Sets

Creating the Community Capacity:

- ▶ Identifying Community Resources
- ▶ Identifying & Pursuing Opportunities for Sustainability with Community Partners
- ▶ Engaging & Collaborating with Community Partners
- ▶ Strengthening Relationships with Community Partners
- ▶ Recruiting Families in the Community

Translating Science to Service:

- ▶ Understanding what the Family Options Intervention looks like on a daily basis
- ▶ Identifying Families' Needs, principles of working with Families,
- ▶ Orienting Providers & Consumers to FO Intervention Model
- ▶ Shifting Paradigm from Working with Adults to Working with Families
- ▶ Developing, Clarifying, & Modifying the Family Options Intervention by Integrating Feedback

