University of Massachusetts Medical School

eScholarship@UMMS

Implementation Science and Practice Advances Research Center Publications

Psychiatry

2009

Knowledge Exchange as Program Evaluation: The Family Networks Implementation Study as a Case Example

Joanne Nicholson University of Massachusetts Medical School

Ft al.

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/psych_cmhsr

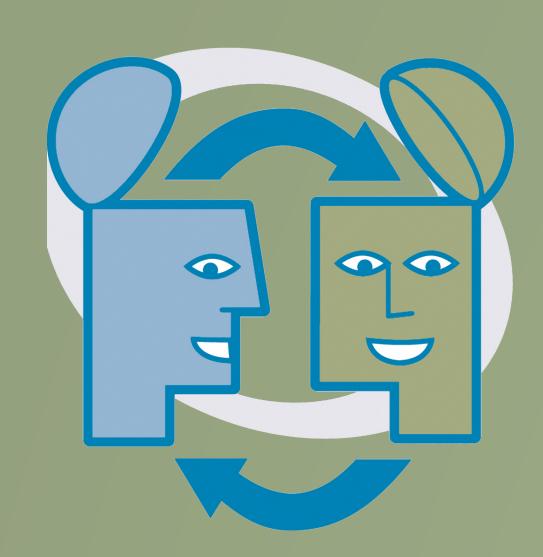
Part of the Health Services Research Commons, Mental and Social Health Commons, Psychiatry Commons, Social Welfare Commons, and the Translational Medical Research Commons

Repository Citation

Nicholson J, Adams J, Maciolek S, Biebel K. (2009). Knowledge Exchange as Program Evaluation: The Family Networks Implementation Study as a Case Example. Implementation Science and Practice Advances Research Center Publications. Retrieved from https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/psych_cmhsr/640

This material is brought to you by eScholarship@UMMS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Implementation Science and Practice Advances Research Center Publications by an authorized administrator of eScholarship@UMMS. For more information, please contact Lisa.Palmer@umassmed.edu.

TO KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE (GIBBONS, 2008)



In the conventional notion of knowledge translation investigators derive and address research questions in traditional ways, using discipline based methods. Knowledge is translated in a one-way fashion, from research to practice, or bench to bedside. According to Gibbons (2008) knowledge translation is

a process of engagement and exchange, a conversation among stakeholders that requires specific, complex skills to promote interaction at every stage of the research process.

Knowledge Translation	Knowledge Exchange
Knowledge is generated in theoretical/experimental environments, and is applied and managed, and technology is transferred.	Knowledge is generated in the context of application, i.e., research questions arise and are addressed, and findings are disseminated in context.
Research is interdisciplinary, derived from preexisting disciplines and contributing to the formation of new disciplines.	Research is transdisciplinary, using a range of theoretical perspectives and practical methods to solve problems.
Research communities are limited by traditional communication tools, which lend themselves to orderly hierarchies of communication.	Virtual communities, with unlimited possibilities for interaction, allow for many new kinds of knowledge organizations and modes of participation.
Research is characterized as an objective investigation.	The research process is a conversation.
Scientific peers provide quality control.	Research is conducted and disseminated by a wide variety of stakeholders, who apply multiple definitions of quality.

Gibbons, M. (2008). Why is knowledge translation important? Grounding the conversation. Technical Brief No. 21. The National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research. [Electronic version] retrieved March 31, 2009 from http://www.ncdrr.org/kt/products/ktintro/allinone.html.

Knowledge Exchange as Program Evaluation: The Family Networks Implementation Study as a Case Example

Joanne Nicholson, PhD, Jodi Adams, MA, Susan Maciolek, MPP, and Kathleen Biebel, PhD

THE FAMILY NETWORKS IMPLEMENTATION STUDY

Family Networks is a comprehensive system transformation initiative to redesign and integrate traditional categorical services across the Commonwealth into local service systems for children, youth, and families served by the child welfare system. The Family Networks Implementation Study (FNIS), a partnership between MA/DCF and UMMS, is a study of the process of implementing systems change, and provides a case example of knowledge exchange.

Transaction Space

Allows for open exchange of ideas across disciplinary and institutional boundaries

Boundary Work

The activities required to facilitate and manage relationships in the transaction space.

Boundary Objects

Facilitate knowledge exchange among participants.

The Study Advisory Team: A Transaction Space

Regular meetings allowed representatives from MA/DCF, family advocates, providers, and UMMS to frame research questions, provide input into data collection strategies, interpret findings, design feedback loops, and review products.

The Study Advisory Team Activities: Boundary Work

Sharing Power Leads to Trust

By implementing shared project management and promoting the active involvement of stakeholders, the SAT successfully developed trust and enhanced commitment to the research.

Sharing Knowledge and Expertise Leads to Respect

Mutual respect develops when partners share knowledge and expertise. The UMMS team shared information about research strategies, while MA/DCF partners shared information about experiences in the field, provided access to key informants, and shared experiences in previous research initiatives.

Communication Leads to Shared Understanding

Open communication facilitates the development of mutual mentoring relationships, allowing study partners and stakeholders to learn about and adapt to the time frames, priorities, contingencies, and values of each other's dynamic organizations. FNIS partners and stakeholders spent a great deal of time discussing their respective organizations' roles, responsibilities, languages, norms, and physical environments.

Shared Experiences Lead to a Learning Community

MA/DCF partners reflected on agency activities and study findings, while providing UMMS partners with the opportunity to contextualize research results. The FNIS was a collaborative, iterative process in which findings from each phase of research were used to develop subsequent phases. FNIS partners developed working relationships and provided each other with the knowledge necessary to contribute to, implement, and benefit from the research.

Concept Mapping: A Boundary Object

Concept mapping is a participatory approach to organizing the ideas of a large group that combines qualitative methods, e.g., brainstorming, with quantitative methods, e.g., multidimensional scaling and cluster analysis. Comprehensive maps are generated that visually display results. Focus groups were conducted with a purposeful sample of MA/DCF social workers and supervisors, family advocates, providers, and the SAT. Focus group participants brainstormed items related to change, sorted them into conceptual groups, and rated them for importance and feasibility. The results and feedback from participants determined study change domains, and informed further data collection procedures.

