Evaluating Client Satisfaction in Psychiatric Group Homes: A Participatory Stakeholder Approach

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Presented at the Canadian Evaluation Society Conference
Vancouver, June 3rd 2003.
Objectives of Presentation

- To focus on the evaluation process used to develop client satisfaction measures in foster homes (group homes)
- To describe the process from initial planning to actual evaluation
- To present the challenges faced as evaluators
- To describe where we are today
Context

- Over 800 persons with mental illness live in community based foster homes
- 3.3 million $ allocated for these homes
- Foster homes represent over 50% of subsidized housing available
- Hospital has legal responsibility for managing these homes/quality of services
- Little information available on life in foster homes (historically not viewed in positive light)
- Long term housing for this population is a priority
Purpose of the Evaluation

- To obtain first hand information about life in foster home from consumer’s perspective
  - To evaluate client satisfaction in foster homes
  - To eventually test the psychometric properties of new Foster Home Client Satisfaction Questionnaire (FHCSQ)
  - To use new questionnaire as part of on-going quality assurance
Planning the Evaluation

- 1998 process began
- Multidisciplinary team approached evaluator
- Goal was to collect useful information on life in foster home from consumer’s perspective
- Committee – first 6 months
  - Literature review
  - Review of research instruments (quality of life, satisfaction)
  - No specific client satisfaction questionnaire
- We decided to develop our own questionnaire
Process Used to Develop Questionnaire

- Qualitative process used to generate items in questionnaire
  - We started from “ground up”
- Stakeholders involved in process of developing client satisfaction questionnaire
- Focus Groups
Approach

- Participatory – goal was to involve all those who had a stake in program
- Great efforts taken to ensure that insights/concerns of stakeholders would be heard
- Multiple perspectives- from consumers to professionals
- Committee monitored process
Process: Focus Groups

- 8 focus groups conducted-
  - July-September 1999
  - 3 with consumers, 2 with families, 2 with foster home caregivers, & 1 with professionals
- 68 participants
Process: Focus Groups

- Stakeholder Committee:
  - developed questions
  - recruited participants
  - co-animated groups/note taking
  - analysed data
  - organized feedback sessions
    - to all focus group participants
  - article written
Process: Post Focus Group

- Four overall dimensions emerged from focus groups:
  - foster home environment
  - characteristics of foster home caregiver
  - community integration
  - stakeholder relationships
Process: Post Focus Group

- Development of new Foster Home Client Satisfaction Questionnaire:
  - Quantitative instrument
  - 63 items/4 point scale (very true to very false)
  - 2 open-ended questions
    - What do you like about your foster home?
    - What could be improved about your foster home?
Making the Evaluation Possible

- Applications made to fund $ evaluation

- 2001- three year funding approved
  - CIHR
  - Stakeholder committee ended work
Where We are Today

- New Foster Home Client Satisfaction Questionnaire (FHCSQ) was validated by all professionals/foster home caregivers
- Advisory Committee formed
- Administration phase:
  - June 2002-present day
  - 85/150 sample recruited & completed
Challenges for the Evaluator

- After project funded:
  - Loss of momentum
  - Participatory process ended
  - Less interest/commitment

- Recruitment of consumers difficult
  - 50% refusal rate
Challenges for the Evaluator

- Unexpected obstacles:
  - Foster home caregivers blocking
  - Consumers afraid to answer questionnaire
  - Ethical issues
  - Unintended consequences of evaluation
  - Multi disciplinary team not collaborating as much
    - Lack of time/involvement in evaluation
In Summary: Participatory Process

- Encouraged stakeholders to be involved
- Key factor in making evaluation a reality
- Crucial in development of new questionnaire
- Reduction in stakeholder participation = increased obstacles to conduct evaluation
Thank you for your attention!

Evaluation funded by Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Project #
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