November 3, 2003

Hello again to participants in the ‘National Wraparound Initiative’

Once again, a couple of months have gone by between notes out to all the advisory group members. But we have some good news to announce and some progress to report, so it seems like a good time for a report-out.

Good news

The good news is that the scope of work described and discussed in Portland as the ‘National Wraparound Initiative’ has received significant financial support! This support comes from two sources:

First, the Maryland Mental Hygiene Administration and University of Maryland were awarded a $100,000 grant from the Center for Medicaid Services (CMS, formerly HCFA) to conduct feasibility studies and develop an infrastructure to administer a Medicaid waiver out of the psychiatric residential treatment center (PRTC) level of care. The ‘infrastructure development’ part of our proposal essentially described a process by which standards for a high-quality Wraparound process (at the team, organizational, and state system levels) would be defined. In the grant, we even described how this would be done – through a consensus process involving national experts. Thus, a portion of this grant award will go toward the National Wraparound Initiative to support our work!

Second, Maryland’s Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) has identified a number of youth populations with whom it wishes to attempt to implement Wraparound to keep these kids at home and out of trouble. However, many of us in Maryland have seen well-intentioned “Wraparound” programs fail to live up to the principles of the practice model. Because of its desire to ensure a high-quality Wraparound process is implemented, DJS and University of Maryland submitted a grant for $73,000 to the Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP), part of which will support the scope of work of the National Wraparound Initiative. This request was approved just this week. Among other activities, the grant will support the National Initiative, products from which can then be tailored to support providers in Maryland.

Between the two awards, we appear to have adequate funds to support the bulk of the National Wraparound Initiative’s proposed $142,000 first-year budget. Funds that have been obtained will provide:

- Salary support for Janet Walker and Eric Bruns to coordinate the scope of work
- Support for a Research Assistant for one year
- Resources to set up and maintain a project website that will be used to:
  - post materials and enable discussion;
  - enable a “Delphi process” for getting feedback about practices, strategies, standards, etc., from advisory group members; and
  - keep participants up to date;
• Honoraria for family members and participants who take on significant components of the scope of work
• Travel for members of a small coordinating committee to gather regularly to compile, organize, and prepare materials for the large group to review
• Travel for members of the national advisory group who need funds to gather at a “second annual Wraparound forum,” sometime next year!

If you would like to see the latest version of the full National Wraparound Initiative plan (which we will post on the website as soon as it is up), just let me know (ebruns@psych.umaryland.edu) and I will send it to you via email or snail mail.

Progress

So, now we have garnered some resources to support the project. It is now time to get to work creating materials to aid those who wish to better understand Wraparound and how to implement the process with fidelity at multiple levels. Actually, there has already been some good progress, which I report below.

Perhaps the most important work (since the meeting in Portland) has been to break the job of describing Wraparound into digestible pieces. As a result, the coordinating committee (Trina Osher, John VanDenBerg, Pat Miles, Jim Rast, Eric Bruns, Janet Walker, Nancy Koroloff) has identified the following preliminary “chunks” of work to be done:

1. **Compile terms** relevant to Wraparound. These would include both terms specific to Wraparound, such as ‘Wraparound team’ as well as concepts important to Wraparound, such as ‘community-based.’ We would then come up with potential definitions for each term for presentation to and feedback from the advisory group.

2. **Describe the rationale** for Wraparound, based on theory, research, and family member and practitioner observations. Then we will attempt to describe the rationale for each of the Wraparound principles and/or each of the steps in the Wraparound process.

3. **Describe typical steps** in the Wraparound process, based on a review of common exemplary practice models being used in the field.

4. **Define potential minimum standards for the practice model**, to be met in the course of completing each step in a Wraparound process. These would be presented to the advisory group for feedback and rating of the importance of each “Standard.”

5. **Compile practice options** for meeting each standard. These would be compiled from existing training manuals and protocols out there in the world of Wraparound (with due credit to their innovators), and also would be presented to the national group for rating of their potential effectiveness in practice.

6. **Define potential minimum standards for organizational- and system-level supports.** These would be generated from sources such as the framework of necessary conditions presented in Portland, as well as existing manuals and protocols.

7. **Compile strategies for meeting necessary supports standards**, such as how to create appropriate financing and reimbursement mechanisms or how to facilitate the creation of needed interagency agreements. (This will be an interesting challenge.)
From such foundational activities, all of which will require assistance from the national advisory group members, we can move on to creating the products we hope will aid trainers, administrators, providers, and families.

In addition to this plan for moving forward, the National Initiative also has produced its first product – a special issue of *Focal Point*, the Portland Research and Training Center’s national bulletin on family support and children's mental health. The special issue highlights the topic of maintaining quality in Wraparound, references our National Initiative, and features articles written by Initiative participants, including Pat Miles, Mary Jo Meyers, John VanDenBerg, Jim Rast, Theresa Rea, Julie Becker, and others. Check it out at [www.rtc.pdx.edu](http://www.rtc.pdx.edu), if you haven’t already received a copy.

**Short-term steps**

At this point, the small coordinating group is working in earnest to complete some of the preliminary “chunks” of work described above. This group will be getting together again (with a couple additional participants) soon to try to complete some of these preliminary steps. In addition, the project coordinators now have resources to get the Initiative’s website set up, so participants in the Initiative can more easily communicate, review materials, etc.

Finally, completing a major literature review across disciplines to complete the step of describing the rationale for Wraparound is taking up a good deal of time! But it is an exciting process and will be important to future attempts to fund, implement, and research the Wraparound process. If you have ideas on sources of material for this scope of work, or would like to participate in it, please let Eric or Janet know.

So for now, please feel free to contact us if you have questions about where all this is going, or have thoughts about our proposed methods or products. We hope to have a website up soon that will be integral to the project, and you can expect that we will soon be contacting you to get your input on the above proposed components. If we actually adhere to the plan as it stands now, these will include, in order:

1. Definitions
2. Pieces of supporting rationale
3. Steps in the process
4. Practice Standards
5. Practice options

OK, that’s it! Thanks for reading all this, and thanks for being a part of this exciting process.

Eric and Janet

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