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The Road to Sustainability Is Paved with Broad Stakeholder Involvement, Collaboration and Data-Driven Decision Making

A Workbook



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FAMILIES

For Children's Mental Health

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About the Workbook

Developed by the National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health whose mission it is to:

- Provide advocacy at the national level for the rights of children and youth with emotional, behavioral, and mental health challenges and their families;
- Provide leadership and technical assistance to a nation-wide network of family-run organizations; and to
- Collaborate with family-run and other child serving organizations to transform mental health care in America.

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The Road to Sustainability Is Paved with Broad Stakeholder Involvement, Collaboration and Data-Driven Decision Making

Introduction

In the spring of 2011, the National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health presented a series of interactive webinars for family and youth-run organizations engaged in planning for sustainability. The focus of this series was the relationship between broad stakeholder involvement, collaboration and coalition building and the need for specific data to increase their success in sustaining their organizations and activities. This workbook is designed to share the information from the webinar series and includes:

- The importance of broad stakeholder involvement and tools to identify the community members to be engaged;
- Building partnerships through collaboration and coalitions;
- The development of intended outcomes and collection and analyzing of data to evaluate progress toward your goals; and
- Self-assessment and sustainability planning tools.

Program evaluation is the systematic collection of information about a program or initiative that enables stakeholders to gain better understanding of the program, its effectiveness, and make good decisions about future programming. The data collected from an evaluation can help prove or disprove assumptions, and identify areas that need focus. We can learn whether outcomes have been achieved (or not), improvements that need to be made in the program, and the cost of providing the services related to the intended outcomes.

Objective of the Workbook

This workbook is designed to guide an organization’s internal workgroup to strategically use data in sustainability planning. It is suggested workgroup members review this document by themselves and then work through these tools together. Be sure to gather or include data on intended outcomes so that you are beginning with data driven decisions. This may include such things as gathering information on the demographics of families and reviewing any data on consumer satisfaction previously collected.

Chapter 1 - Broad Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholders are individuals, groups or organizations that can affect, are affected by or can block efforts to implement system of care values and principles and make data-driven decisions.

Champions are those in the community who become passionate about the work, have significant influence and are willing to use their influence to help you achieve your outcomes.

Helpful Pointer

The right group of stakeholders can contribute to sustainability, policy change, capacity development, and create “champions”.

Levels of Stakeholder Involvement

Not all stakeholders will want or be able to participate at the same level. It is important therefore to define the levels of involvement that are available. Some will want to:

- **Inform** and be informed of the efforts of the initiative.
- **Consult** and be kept informed, provide input, and receive feedback.
- Be **involved** directly in the work and have the ability to review and comment and receive feedback on how their input was incorporated.
- **Collaborate**, that is to incorporate ideas and have the opportunity to be involved in decision making (secondary stakeholders).
- Be **empowered** to participate in full decision making in the initiative (families, youth and other primary stakeholders).

Primary Stakeholders

Primary stakeholders are individuals or groups of people who will be affected by the initiative and/or personally care about the effort and its success. For example, primary stakeholders are family and youth who are receiving or might receive services and support from the program being evaluated and therefore will be affected by any recommendations from the evaluation. These primary stakeholders should be involved in the development of intended outcomes of the initiative that will relate to their interests.

Secondary Stakeholders

Secondary stakeholders are those individuals or groups who have the power (formal – authorized through appointment, election or decision maker or informal – leaders who are respected in the community) to affect the decisions being considered or who can block the implementation recommendations that result from outcome data. For example, secondary stakeholders are individuals or groups such as a county government that make policy or write administrative policies and procedures related to the initiative.

Stakeholder Analysis

This is a process that can be used to identify everyone (person, group, agency, institution, etc.) that are either impacted by or may impact the initiative such as a system of care community or a family-run organization. In addition, this analysis will assess the perceived influence and attitude of each individual or group relative to the initiative and family involvement.

Creating a Stakeholder Map

This is a process to identify everyone (person, group, agency, institution, etc.) that is either impacted by or may impact family involvement in the system of care community and to assess their influences and attitudes relative to family-driven care.

Step 1: Team Members Work Individually to Complete the Stakeholder Analysis Worksheet.

Each individual involved in identifying stakeholders will use this worksheet to develop a list of those in your community who are affected by, can affect the implementation or can block the initiative.

National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health

Stakeholder Analysis Worksheet

This is a process to identify everyone (person, group, agency, institution, etc.) that is either impacted by or may impact family involvement in the system of care community and to assess their influences and attitudes relative to family involvement.

Stakeholder Name / Attitude Towards Family Driven and why? / Influence on Family Driven and Why?

On the worksheet (above) estimate each stakeholder’s **attitude toward family driven care** with:

- + for positive **attitude**,
- 0 for a neutral or indifferent **attitude**, and
- - for a negative **attitude**.

Next, estimate each stakeholder’s relative **influence** (power, policy, authority, finances, etc.) on implementation of family driven care with:

- **H** for high level of **influence**
- **M** for medium level of **influence**
- **L** for little **influence**.

Step 2: Team Members Compare and Consolidate Their Lists.

And, then team members share and compare their individual analysis with each other. Specifically, determine the stakeholder in terms of their perceived attitude and influence scores. Expect that team members will have different points of view on some stakeholders. This is natural as individuals have differing relationships with people being identified. This process will require transparent dialogue and perhaps some compromise.

Using markers, write one stakeholder (individual or group) per post-it note clearly and as large as possible with their influence and attitude scores.

Step 3: On Poster Board Create an Icon in the Center to Represent Family-Driven in Your Community.

Create a Stakeholder Map similar to the example in the workbook. Arrange the stakeholders post-it notes on a poster board around the icon in an order that makes sense to the team. For example, put the post-it of a stakeholder with high influence and a positive attitude about the organization/issue closest to the icon indicating that these stakeholders would be the most likely to join your cause or issues.

When this is laid out to the team's satisfaction, secure any loose post-its with additional tape.

STEP 4: Critically Examine the Stakeholder Map.

You may have already identified and discussed the kinds of influences and attitudes most easily seen and discussed: finances, authority, policy, and rules. Now re-examine more critically and ask hard questions:

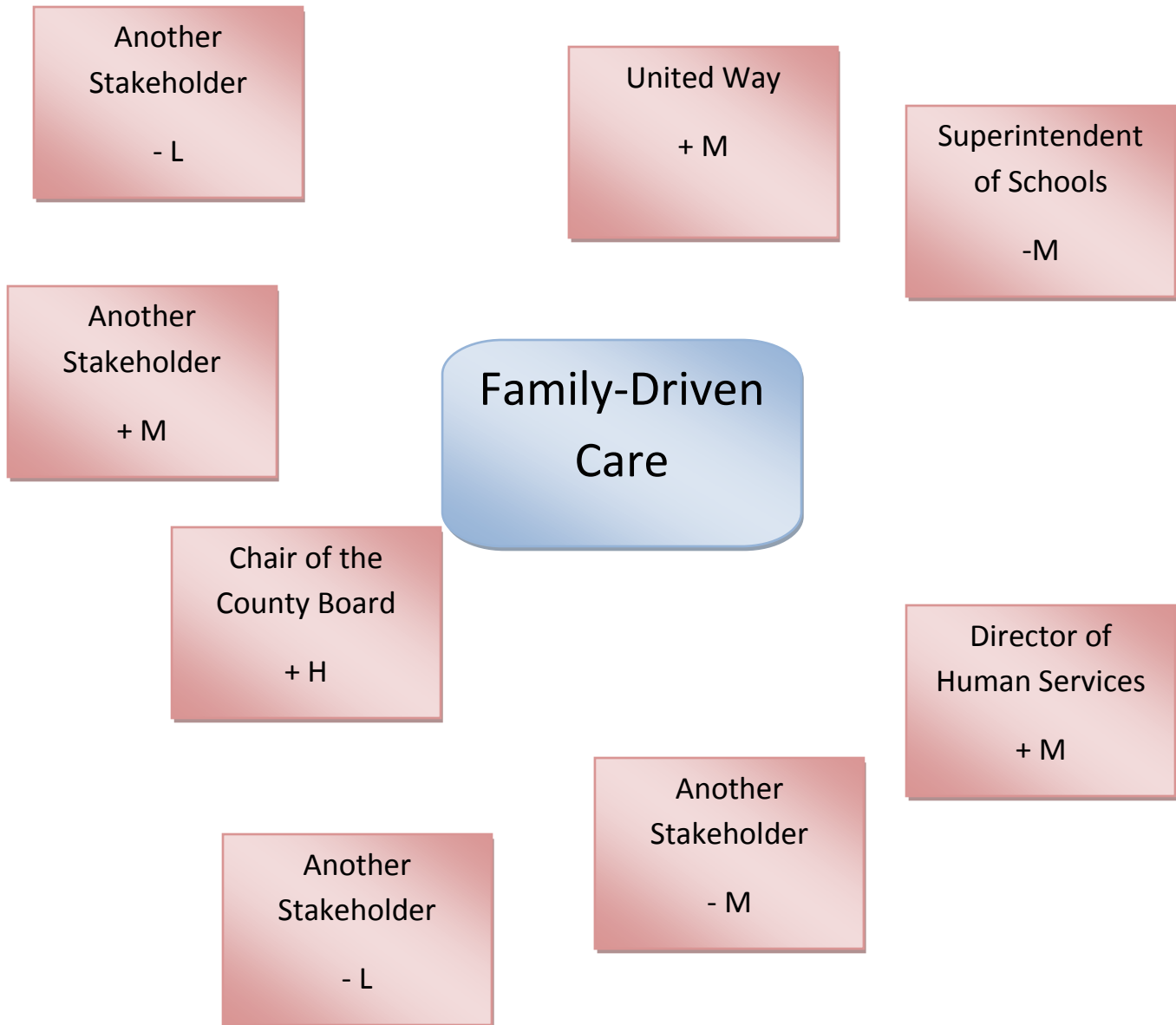
- Where does race play a role?
- Where does class play a role?
- Do geographical location or first language influence relationships between stakeholders?

Using the color markers, indicate discoveries and concerns of these additional influences and attitudes.

Example of a Stakeholder Map on Family Driven Care

The large circle in the middle describes either the issue or the organization in which this stakeholder map is being drawn for. The squares represent stakeholders such as the Director of Human Services with a - or + sign indicating their perceived attitude toward the issue or organization. Those with the most positive attitude (+) and highest influence (H) would be placed closer to the circle and those with a neutral or negative attitude and medium to low influence would be further from the circle.

For this exercise, post-it notes are often used for the stakeholders as they can then be easily moved around based on the discussions that your group has about your stakeholders.



When you are engaging potential stakeholders always begin with those whom you have assessed to have both a positive attitude and a high level of influence. These people should be the easiest to engage and help you move forward.

Chapter 2 – Building Partnerships, Collaboration and Coalition Building

In these days of limited funding it is even more important to work in collaboration with other partners and coalitions. Collaboration involves transparent communication, building relationships and trust, participation in decision-making, inclusion and clarification of assumptions.

Transparent Communications

In transparent communication a shared vision is constructed through willingness to say the things that are hard to say and hear the things that are hard to hear. In building partnerships and coalitions you must agree upon communication strategies and listening, ask open-ended questions, acknowledge what has been said and, frame the perspectives in terms of what is important to each person.

The point of transparent dialogue is to clarify boundaries (goals, values, purposes, roles, and non-negotiables), identify needs, brainstorm ways to meet those needs in a principled way, mutually define and commit to rules of engagement, offer and disseminate accurate information and cultivate and nurture relationships that support transformation and sustainability.

Impact of Collaboration

The impact of true collaboration can be transformative in and of itself. Organization staff will come to know their counterparts in other agencies and will be friendlier with one another, allowing them to work with one another in a more respectful way. Agencies will work together to change or adapt to a situation rather than place blame. The focus of service delivery from the individual service provider to the system as a whole will shift. There will be less service fragmentation, better responses to specialized care through more appropriate service options, enhanced access to services, and improved ability to consider the needs of the “whole child and the whole family” within the context of their community.

Barriers to Collaboration

While the intention to collaborate may be high for some groups and individuals there may be barriers. It is important to recognize these potential barriers and develop strategies to overcome them:

- Some partners may have limited knowledge of the issues at hand.
- Partners may not be familiar with the language being used.
- Organizations may have different missions, values, beliefs and, rituals and their constituencies may have their own expectations of the work to be done.
- When there are changes in elected or appointed positions the political climate may change and the priorities of new leaders may change making the work of the collaborative effort challenging.

- You must understand that individuals and organizations will also have their own self-interest in mind.
- Recognize any history between partners and possible “turf” issues.
- Finally, in transformation work there may be fear of change even though individuals and organizations see the need to change.

It is important here to note the significance of past history between individuals and/or organization. A team at the University of South Florida (USF) completed a five-year study to examine conflict in systems of care. A needs assessment was conducted to identify:

- Major sources of conflict in new and more established systems of care,
- Impact of conflict on collaboration, and
- Ways in which local systems of care sites handle conflict.

This USF team learned that the largest barrier in systems of care is past history and there is growing evidence that in some cases systems of care may not reach their full potential – or may even eventually founder – due to conflicts that have not been adequately acknowledged or addressed. What is going wrong? Are conflicts not being recognized? Do people lack the skills to resolve their differences? Surprisingly, there has been little attention paid to the role of conflict in developing and maintaining effective systems of care. It is possible that in our enthusiasm for cooperation, we are overlooking or downplaying key differences and setting ourselves up for future failure.

Building Partnerships

You need to be strategic when building partnerships. Mutual respect, team building, leadership development, and skill building are essential to the process. Communication methods should be understood and agreed upon by all parties and information sharing must be broad and inclusive. It is important to recognize that in building partnerships there may be conflict and you should determine at the beginning of the partnership development how you will address and resolve conflicts that arise.

The Impact of Coalition Building

Team up to make a difference! Sharing data with other groups to influence and/or create social change is powerful. Coalitions will strengthen relationships and form a united front for projecting and reinforcing messages can increase your organization’s visibility as a resource on children’s mental health and enhance your organization’s leadership position. Coalitions can influence perceptions, beliefs and attitudes that may change social norms and truly make a difference in the lives of children and families in your community.

Communicating Your Success

Telling the story of your success is crucial to increasing your supporters and securing new resources and funding. The notion that organizations are pooling their resources to move issues forward by working together will appeal to those in the community who are most likely to support your organization. Make sure you let everyone know that you didn't do it alone!

Chapter 3 - Data, Data, Data, Data, Data, Data.....and More Data

Data-driven Decision Making

Data are bits of information that have been systematically collected. We know that the way to make good decisions is to base them on information gathered relevant to the question at hand.

In its most basic form, data-driven decision making is about collecting appropriate data, analyzing that data in a meaningful fashion, getting the data into the hands of the people who need it, using the data to increase program efficiencies and, communicating data-driven decisions to key stakeholders.

Data adds credibility to your conclusions. If you are trying to sustain advocacy efforts you ought to know who the families are in your community, what their needs, goals and concerns are and what is changing in the community such as poverty rates, unemployment or homelessness.

Through evaluation and data collecting you can determine:

- Whether outcomes that have been achieved (or not).
- Improvements that need to be made in the program.
- The cost to provide the services in relation to the intended outcomes.
- Progress against established milestones.
- Interim measures of success.
- Data that relates to the contributions of the program and information to persuade the sustainability of advocacy efforts.

Development of Intended Outcomes

As you consider the outcomes you wish to measure you will want to determine what works and what doesn't work with your population. Study the evidence of the success of various interventions that produce positive outcomes and determine the strengths and weaknesses of each. Consider past participants feedback and how good outcomes and how quality can be enhanced. Make sure you consider what is NOT an outcome in order to use your resources as efficiently as possible. For example, an outcome is not the number of youth who participate in a program. The question is "how did their participation in the program improve their success?"

Helpful Pointer

Presentation of outcomes is the key to sustainability.

Helpful Pointer

Consider the difference between:

Telling a Legislator that families you know are unable to access services.

OR

Telling a Legislator that 80% of the 3,000 families you polled stated that they were unable to access services.

Following Are Examples of Intended Outcome Statements:

- Change in circumstances: *Children are safely reunited with their families of origin from foster care.*
- Change in behavior: *School attendance increases.*
- Change in functioning: *Fewer arguments at dinner.*

Collecting Data on Your Intended Outcomes

It is important to work closely with the evaluation and infrastructure staff on the development of intended/preferred outcomes and the methods of data collection to be used. By being inclusive in this effort you are very likely to get data collection included in a broader systematic collection of the data. For example, the system of care communities are charged with doing a local evaluation that will collect data for the analysis of intended outcomes. Involvement in this effort can assist a group, organization, coalition in more easily gathering the data that will related to sustainability.

Regardless, it is very important to engage people with technical expertise in evaluation and data collection. These experts will be able to help you frame the evaluation to get the data you need for sustainability. Some more informal methods are: brief polls by email, listservs or telephone; focus groups to clarify issues, gain deeper understanding of perceptions, test new ideas or get feedback on services; Story Banks that document family stories of challenges and successes. Learn what the needs are of the families you work with or represent.

Documenting Progress

As the data collection proceeds it is important to analyze data at regular intervals to determine how your work is progressing. You may want to document shifts in social norms, strengthened organizational capacity, strengthened alliances and/or a strengthened base of support.

- For example, collecting data on advocacy efforts to provide a basis for sustainability. We think of advocacy as a wide range of activities conducted to influence decision makers at all levels and/or publically supporting or recommending a particular cause or policy or pleading a case on someone else's behalf. There are a number of different advocacy approaches such as community or grassroots organizing, coalition building, public education, and legislative advocacy. It is essential to sustainability to determine if advocacy efforts are working as intended, to measure progress against established milestones, and to demonstrate interim measures of success.
- Advocacy evaluation design must reflect the progress in interim measures to tell Advocates if the goal is two yards or two hundred miles away. Evaluation design should include informal indicators representative of success that can also be converted into measurable statements.

Explore Publically Available Data

There is lots of data available on the internet. Start with a web engine such as Google and look for sites ending with “.gov” or “.edu”. When looking for data on the web consider who runs the site and who pays for the site to know if there is a bias in the information. Create a reference list to ease future explorations and have available for others to start their research. And remember that just because it’s on the Internet doesn’t necessarily mean it’s true!

Some useful websites are:

- www.census.gov
- www.kidcount.org
- www.nimh.nih.gov
- www.samhsa.gov
- www.cmhi-library.org

Chapter 4 – Sustainability Planning

Sustainability planning helps achieve clarity of direction, effectiveness, and predictability. It helps to reduce the impact of surprises and “bumps in the road”, and to build a strong foundation for the future. Sustainability planning must begin early by integrating it as part of your logic model and strategic plan include a broad group of community stakeholders to ensure “buy in”.

Sustainability is the capacity to maintain and even improve the stability, effectiveness and longevity of targeted efforts through the eight key elements of sustainability:

- Vision
- Results orientation
- Strategic financing orientation
- Broad based community support
- Key champions
- Adaptability to changing conditions
- Strong internal systems
- Sustainability plan

Factors affecting sustainability include the local commitment to the work, the existence of ongoing administrative leadership, interagency partnerships, and the inclusion of key stakeholders at all levels, and the state of the economy.

There are 3 steps in Sustainability Planning:

- Forming a Sustainability Planning Group
- Self Assessment
- Sustainability Planning process

Sustainability planning requires time, patience, presence, active participation, and the willingness to communicate openly, be decisive, and keep others well informed. Effective sustainability strategies have broad stakeholder involvement, strong family and your participation and effective interagency relationships and partnerships. It requires consistent administrative leadership, careful analysis of evaluation data, and exploration of financing strategies.

The following chart outlines how to accomplish sustainability planning:

Adapted from materials of The Finance Project

Module	Task(s)
Organize the sustainability planning effort	<i>Create sustainability work group to guide the process</i>
The Self-Assessment (where are we now?)	<i>Complete Sustainability Self-Assessment</i>
Define sustainability and determine priorities	<p><i>Develop Logic Model to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Clarify sustainability goals</i> • <i>Identify measures to track progress</i>
Resource and funding analysis	<p><i>Clarify Financing for What?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What types of services?</i> • <i>How many children/families?</i> • <i>What level of quality?</i>
	<i>Estimate Fiscal Needs: How much will it cost?</i>
	<i>Map Current Spending: What resources do you currently have?</i>
	<i>Analyze Gaps: What's the gap between how much you have and how much you need?</i>
	<p><i>Develop Financing Strategies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Present financing options</i> • <i>Evaluate options</i> • <i>Develop recommendations</i>
Building Community Support	<p><i>Identify Priorities such as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Community engagement</i> • <i>Strategic communications</i> • <i>Leadership development</i> • <i>Governance and management</i>
	<i>Design Strategies</i>
Putting It All Together	<i>Write the Plan</i>

Step 1 – Form a Sustainability Work Group

This work group is formed to guide the sustainability planning process. The work group should be composed of a range of stakeholders who:



- Have historical knowledge of the organization/initiative;
- Are at the “ground level”, that is people who are charged with implementing activities and possessing insight into community needs and the feasibility of various options;
- Keep up to date regarding the local environment and preferences related to politics, policies, and resources;
- Have the power to adopt and implement the sustainability plan;
- Represent diverse aspects of the environment in which the organization operates, both community and system (Diverse representation would include youth, family members, mental health providers, schools, county/public mental health professionals, evaluation staff, etc., who have knowledge about your organization and community);
- Represent “internal” stakeholders (such as members of governance and advisory groups, people involved in the management of the Partnership, and staff that carry out the activities of this initiative) and “external” stakeholders (such as leaders of community organizations, researchers, budget and development personnel, policy makers, public agency administrators, funders, business and community leaders and potential partners that are working toward similar goals).

Tasks of Work Group

Oversee the development of the Sustainability Plan including:

- Facilitate the Self Assessment process
- Integrate the results of the Self Assessment into the sustainability plan
- Develop a logic model to clarify sustainability goals
- Develop measures to monitor the progress of the sustainability plan
- Monitor the progress of sustainability goals

Step 2 – Self Assessment

Sustainability Self-Assessment is a process that can be used by communities to identify their current stage of development regarding sustainability planning and what barriers they must overcome to sustain their system of care.

When doing a self-assessment it is important to consider sustainability objectives, key indicators of success and barriers to achievement. **Sustainability Objectives** may include the continuing such things as a vision and philosophy, services, practices and approaches, training/workforce development, family and youth involvement, infrastructure, social marketing, and partnerships. This self-assessment will help you determine what you want to sustain in order to move into sustainability planning. **Key indicators of success** are the achievement of intended outcomes. **Barriers to achievement** should be identified and strategies to address these barriers developed.

Step 3: Defining Sustainability and Determining Priorities

Develop Logic Model to:

- Clarify sustainability goals
- Identify measures to track progress

Step 4: Resource and Funding Analysis

Once you know what you want to sustain it is time to engage in the resource and financing analysis. A sustainability plan is developed through a process.

- **What are the resources we will need to sustain our objectives?**
Sustainability is about more than money. Often systems change such as the development of a workforce that is competent in evidence based practices or wraparound would not necessarily need finances to be sustained. The initial investment in training and a train the trainer approach may be sufficient to maintain the skill base of the workers in the community. So, as you begin your sustainability planning think about existing resources as part of your effort.
- **How much does it cost?**
The first step is to clarify what it will cost to sustain the objectives you have chosen. Review your objectives to sustain the selected services, supports and/or training and determine the number of children, youth and families you intend to serve. Seek agreement on the level of quality you want to achieve in your sustaining efforts. At this point you need to estimate what the fiscal needs will be.
- **How will we finance it?**
Next, you will need to create a **map of current spending** to determine what financial resources you currently have. After that is completed you will want to **analyze the gaps** between how much you have and how much you need.
- **Develop financing recommendations**
The sustainability work group should review and evaluate all current financing options. Then, with broad stakeholder input **develop financing recommendations**.

- **Design funding strategies**

From the list of recommendations the work group should create long-term financing mechanisms. These may include efforts: to increase the ability to use Medicaid financing; obtain new or increased funds from state Mental Health and other child serving systems; blending or braiding funds across systems; and redeploing funds from currently supported services. An example would be to use funds allocated for residential care to develop and maintain community based services.

Step 5 - Building Community Support

In Chapter 2 we described in detail the importance of building partnerships and collaboration. As we know sustainability planning must begin early by integrating it as part of your logic model and strategic plan and including a broad group of community stakeholders to ensure “buy in”. Community understanding and engagement is critical to your success and strategic and intentional communication activities will ensure that this will occur.

Step 6 – Putting It All Together

With all of the information and decisions, made the work group should put the sustainability plan into writing. The document should be concise, easy to read and in language that will be understood by all stakeholders and funders. It is important to document your intent and method for monitoring progress towards your goals.

Funding Strategies

Through the work of Beth Stroul and Robert Friedman and others there is some consensus on the most effective funding strategies. The primary successful strategy has been to increase the use multiple Medicaid strategies to expand covered populations and home and community based services. This has been accomplished in a number of states by the adding of new services to the state Medicaid plan; the use of waivers and the rehabilitation option and revised definitions of currently Medicaid funded services. It is possible to cover an extensive array of services and supports in State Medicaid Plans in addition to traditional services.

States have been successful in increasing Medicaid funding with match by using state or local funds from both Mental Health and other Child Serving Systems, and private funding. This is why community stakeholder, state and local officials are so important to sustainability. You should create the partnerships that will move decision makers to broaden their view of Medicaid.

Underutilized or Emerging Strategies

Again through studies we have learned that there are underutilized and emerging funding strategies. For example, redeploying funds from higher cost to lower cost services has not been widely employed. Careful planning and evaluation may prove that not only are community based services more effective but the funding will be less creating the ability to serve more children, youth and families with redeployed funds.

While we have been talking about obtaining, braiding, or blending funds with other child-serving systems for years there is little evidence that this strategy has been used extensively. Where this strategy has been attempted and in effect there has been much success in using existing funds for new and dynamic services and supports.

Many funding sources could be used to blend or braid funds such as:

- Child Welfare,
- Early Childhood,
- Mental Health,
- Youth Bureau,
- Local Tax Levy,
- Health, and
- Juvenile Justice.

Summary: Remember These Few Points

- Start your sustainability planning early and outline a rigorous schedule to constantly review and update. Use the Self-Assessment tool and the Sustainability Planning Process in this workbook, in preparation to formally develop your plan.
- Remember that broad stakeholder involvement, building partnerships and coalitions, collaboration and the presentation of outcomes are the keys to sustainability.
- Identify your stakeholders and be inclusive. Is everyone at the table? Who else do we need to engage? Use the Stakeholder Map in this workbook to ensure you have been thorough in your analysis. Plan a strategy for engaging stakeholders and constantly review and add new people and organizations.
- Collaboration, building partnerships and coalition building will increase your chances of successfully sustaining your work. Engage in transparent communication, agree on a shared vision, clarify goals, and boundaries. Identify potential barriers to collaboration and agree on a strategy to resolve these.
- Make data-driven decisions. Determine what information you need and collect it uniformly.

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