

Towards a new measure of integration to support integrated youth services

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Introduction

Foundry is an integrated youth services organization in British Columbia, Canada, providing services for physical health, mental health, substance use, social supports, and family/caregiver and youth peer support. Since its inception in 2015, integrated care has been a goal for reforming youth health, including mental health, a goal shared by researchers, decision-makers, policy-makers, service providers and philanthropists. However, how best to operationalize “integration” and measure success has yet to be explored.

Objectives

The objectives of this presentation are to highlight the progress made and lessons learned through efforts to improve integration across a primary integrated youth service called Foundry in British Columbia, Canada. Specifically, we will describe the process of “integration dialogues” with diverse communities and how they have informed the development of a new measure to capture centre-level integration in six main areas: organizational, functional, clinical, service, normative, systemic, and community integration.

Approach/Methods

Based on the Fulop typology of integration, we used integration dialogues to prepare centres for intentional integration prior to opening. With operating centres, we used the dialogues to support our understanding of the facilitators and challenges to integration, leading to actionable steps to further integration. After each dialogue, data are collected and summarized using thematic analysis. Using these data, we engaged in an iterative process to develop a new measure to help guide conversations in future integration dialogues and to support centres to understand their performance in each area outlined by the Fulop Typology. Methods were guided by Rasch Measurement Theory. After several rounds of expert review, items were kept if they were fit for purpose and clear. The final version is called the Foundry Integration Measures (FIM). Next steps for implementation of the FIM will be discussed.

Results/Policy Implications

Integration dialogues are now standard practice when working with a Foundry community and centre. Our project has resulted in a standardized process to conduct the dialogues and a new 52-item measure to capture success. The FIM shows strong face and structural validity. In addition to these results, we will present results on clinical utility, construct validity, and reliability at IAYMH.

Conclusion

Integration is a core outcome of success measured and practiced at Foundry. To build a world class model of integrated youth, Foundry recognizes the importance of designing and implementing integration dialogues across the network and measuring the success of this work. Through this work, integration dialogues and measurement have fostered strong, interdisciplinary, multi-sectoral collaborations and partnerships among IYS youth, families, policy makers, decision makers, health providers, the public, and communities interested in advancing IYS in BC. Future work to understand the impact of strong integration on health outcomes and experiences is critical to build capacity for auctioning evidence on integration and integrated youth services.

