Identifying Common Principles for a Network of Integrated Youth Services (IYS) Providers: A Modified Delphi Process

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Introduction

As networks and collaborations expand across initiatives delivering Integrated Youth Services (IYS) globally, achieving consensus on principles to guide the development and implementation of IYS has emerged as a way to achieve greater consistency and ground collaborative work. While numerous lists of principles have been developed by specific initiatives, interested stakeholders and through research, no consensus on principles for IYS exists.

Objectives

Our objective is to identify a set of consensus-based common principles from IYS Initiatives across Canada using a modified Delphi methodology.

Approach/Methods

We chose a modified Delphi approach, which is appropriate when consensus is lacking, input from all of the key stakeholders involved in a shared initiative is required, and open and transparent process is critical to buy-in. Representatives from nine IYS initiatives from across Canada were recruited to participate in the Delphi process. Existing sets of principles from all participating IYS initiatives were collected, reviewed, and catalogued. Principles identified through research (Settipiani, et. al.) and by other key stakeholders in the IYS space were also reviewed and catalogued. A comprehensive list of 26 principles was generated through analysis of all of the available lists of principles. For Round 1, a survey was develop and administered to representatives from all nine initiatives across Canada. The survey asked respondents to rate their level of agreement with each principle on a 7-point scale. A cut off of 70% consensus (rating of 6 or 7) was set a priori for inclusion of any principle in Round 2. In Round 2, respondents discussed the results of Round 1 during a facilitated meeting. This was followed by a second survey during the facilitated meeting to support consensus development on a merged list of principles. In Round 3, participants will again review and vote on a final set of consensus principles. Only Round 3 responses will be used to assess final consensus and disagreement.

Results/Policy Implications

All 26 principles that were identified and brought forward for voting in Round 1 met the 70% threshold for inclusion in Round 2. The level of agreement with all of the principles affirmed the importance of these principles to those delivering IYS in Canada. As a result, and consistent with comments offered on the Round 1 survey, the team leading the Delphi met and reviewed the principles to identify opportunities for creating a smaller, merged

list. The merged list was brought forward to Round 2 of the Delphi and voted on during the facilitated meeting involving all initiatives. The merged list of principles received unanimous support during voting as a common working set of principles for IYS initiatives in Canada, with direction from those participating to make some small modifications and bring them back for further voting in Round 3. Round 3 responses will be used to establish final consensus.

Conclusion

The set of consensus principles identified for IYS initiatives across Canada through this modified Delphi process will act as a cornerstone for further collaborative efforts to build out these much needed services across the country. This includes efforts currently underway to establish common standards across IYS initiatives in Canada.