

SOAR Dialogue Highlights
8/16/12

Attendees: Emily Carmody, Aundry Freeman, Linda Mandell, Jen Thompson, TJ Reynolds-Emwanta,
Jackie Bullock, Elizabeth McDermott, Tracy Miller

Introductions/Updates:

- Emily Carmody- We have submitted the annual outcomes to PRA for their annual report
- Aundry Freeman- Hired a new SOAR caseworker for Henderson County
- Linda Mandell- SOAR contact left local SSA office, Emily to follow up
- Jen Thompson- Forsyth County is working on SOAR Community Certification
- TJ Emwanta- Really busy with SOAR workgroup, putting together monthly meetings, once the LME position is hired group will use the LME website to coordinate referrals
- Jackie Bullock- Picked up a case, decision has been made but don't know what it is yet
- Elizabeth McDermott- Starting in January, a 2nd year medical student will be working with Liz to develop medical summary reports
- Tracy Miller- Getting first application together, about to turn in first report

Announcements:

- Forsyth County reached the Bronze Level in SOAR Community Certification process
 - Work group is currently working towards Silver
 - Work group is generating more conversation and energy around SOAR
 - Great place to answer questions from the community about SOAR
 - Helps the community to develop a stronger system to support SOAR
- SSA is requesting comments about their customer service and community engagement
 - Please follow this link to view the request: https://mail-attachment.googleusercontent.com/attachment/u/1/?ui=2&ik=9b648dc141&view=att&th=1392661585dbdc9f&attid=0.1&disp=inline&safe=1&zw&saduie=AG9B_P8l3gtP6WC81QE63guT73gh&sadet=1345568193747&sads=E7P2wNoapAce4ZvvQVw-4Wv9l6c
 - Emily is working with a national advocacy group to draft comments
- Please make sure to provide Emily with any feedback on DDS Examiners
 - Positive or negative comments are welcome
 - Emily will be sending the annual outcomes to DDS and would love to include that with the report
 - Current Examiners:
 - Initial- Donna Gould, Keri Green
 - Recon- Karen Mills, Carrie Henry
 - Aundry- Donna Gould is especially responsive and helpful
 - The group has found Keri Green less responsive
 - Does not return phone calls
 - Does not let you know what information she needs

- Please let Emily know if there are issues with an Examiner who is not returning phone calls over a matter of weeks so she can follow up with the DDS representative

Discussion: Engaging Individuals in the Application Process

- Emily has heard frustration from a number of SOAR caseworkers that have applicants are disappearing in the middle of the application process
- Challenges to Engagement
 - Change is scary, benefits mean change
 - Going from group living to living on your own can be a big change
 - Linda- a client who left never voiced this fear but he didn't cash checks and made a lot of particular requests about housing
 - We think he left the state
 - We checked the local jail system and don't think he is in another jail because he does not have a criminal history
 - Emily can ask the national SOAR program if there is a way to refer someone who moves from one state to another
 - TJ- had a client with a similar fear
 - She thought the shelter was her home
 - She was placed in a group home but would still come back to the shelter who would have her arrested for trespassing
 - Connected to an ACT team that helped her to slowly get used living in assisted living to get her stabilized
 - The shelter is a familiar routine and can seem safer to individuals
 - Paranoia about signing documents
 - Process requires signing a lot of government documents
 - Paranoia may be linked to mental illness or to past experiences where they were taken advantage
 - Suggestions-
 - If someone is guarded with personal history and records you can include that in the MSR
 - TJ- asking the shelter staff for more information for the report
 - Individuals who have a hard time showing up for appointments
 - TJ- some people we work with do not understand our limits on time and other appointments
 - Tracy- I'm nervous because I know some of the people who will be referred to me have issues with timeliness
 - Suggestions for working with individuals who are having a hard time with showing up for appointments
 - Aundry- letting clients set their own time for appointments
 - TJ- I use Motivational Interviewing to focus the individual on their personal goals and how the application process can get them there

- Meeting individuals out in the community where they are
 - Linda- I email the shelter when I make an appointment with an individual
 - The staff will make a hard copy of the email and put it in their mail
 - Linda- I also get people date books for people to write appointments in
- What do we do when people are not engaging in the process despite our best efforts
 - Have a conversation with them about the need for them to participate
 - You can't do it alone
 - Gauge their response to this conversation
 - Leave the door open to them if they want to do an application with you in the future
 - Let them know they can apply on their own if they want to
 - If you are on a team, ask the team for help in supporting the individual
 - Reminding them of the appointments
 - Team members discussing the application process with them
- Other suggestions for engagement
 - Explain and re-explain the process to the individual
 - Continually checking in with the individual even while the case is still at DDS
 - Let them know work is being done behind the scenes

Other Questions for the Group:

- Linda- I had a client who started an application in Wilson. He submitted a change of address, but the application did not get transferred.
 - Linda found out that there were multiple doctor visits set up for him with letters going to his old address.
 - Emily- this would be a problem with the SSA field offices
 - SSA offices are understaffed right now due to budget cuts and hiring freezes
 - Good CRs are being promoted or being moved to offices
 - Emily can contact the SSA representative to let him know the issue
 - Linda- our SOAR contact left the local SSA office
 - Emily- I will follow up with our SSA rep and get a new contact for you

Next Call: September 20, 2012 at 10 AM