

SOAR Dialogue Highlights

10/17/13

Attendees: Emily Carmody, Aundry Freeman, Cecelia Colson, Pamalia Davis, TJ Reynolds- Ewanta, Charlene Powell, Tracy Miller, Joyce Allen, Elizabeth McDermott

Introductions and Updates

- Emily Carmody, NCCEH, Raleigh- Excited for the November In-person SOAR Caseworker meeting
- Aundry Freeman/Cecelia Colson- Pisgah Legal is a navigator agency for the Affordable Care Act, Aundry's case load will go down in the next couple of months as she helps with those efforts
- Pamalia Davis, Housing for New Hope- with the Assertive Engagement team, having some difficulty with referrals from the jail diversion program after individuals are discharged from jail
- TJ Reynolds-Ewanta, CenterPoint Human Services MCO- Looking forward to the meeting in November
- Charlene Powell, ECBH MCO- first case denied and appealing
- Tracy Miller, Cumberland County - waiting on pending cases
- Joyce Allen, Alliance of Disability Advocates - 1 pending case at this time
- Liz McDermott, LATCH - a few approvals came through this month

Announcements

- Fall Newsletter coming out soon. Highlights include:
 - Affordable Care Act information
 - Updates to SOAR training and requirements with the new online SOAR training
- In-person SOAR Caseworker meeting, November 19th from 10 AM-4 PM, in Winston-Salem and sponsored by CenterPoint Human Services MCO
 - DDS will be participating in the meeting
 - Register today: <http://www.ncceh.org/events/685/>

Developing Relationships with Local Jail Systems

(Presentations by Tracy Miller and TJ Reynolds-Ewanta)

- Individuals with mental health issues who are homeless often cycle in and out of local jail systems
 - SOAR can help to break that cycle by getting people connected to housing and services
 - Breaking this cycle can allow for individuals to be in jail less and use less community money
- Annual report survey showed that both Tracy and TJ have a relationship with their local jail systems and they will present today:
 - How did the partnership come about?
 - What tips do you have for engaging your local jail system?
 - How does this partnership help you with SOAR? How does it help the jail?
- Tracy Miller:

- Relationship with jail came easily through an existing mental health partnership with the jail and law enforcement through the CIT program
- CIT allowed me to meet people who work in jail and they got to know me
- Also have a lead homeless officer in the county that is a great contact
 - She can check to see about warrants
 - Dig a little deeper in background checks than what I can find online
- Emily- CIT is a national program that helps to train law enforcement officials about mental health (<http://www.citinternational.org/>)
- Tips for engaging with officers:
 - Have to be able to find the officers who care about mental illness, some are very passionate about it
 - Other officers don't seem to care about mental health issues
 - Use relationships that have already been developed to build upon
- TJ Reynolds-Emwanta:
 - MCO has a Law Enforcement and Jail Liaison
 - Establishes relationship with local jails
 - She has access to go into jails, identifies those who are diagnosed with mental illness, serves on the mental health court board, and facilitates the CIT program
 - She has access to the jails that is similar to jail employees and can see consumers at their cell
 - Liaison has allowed us to have a great relationship to build on
 - Previous to working with the MCO:
 - Had a hard time being able to schedule professional visit clients in jail
 - Jail time was a barrier to completing applications
 - My first SOAR client with this position was with a person who was involved with the mental health court
 - Went to the jail with the liaison and breezed through
 - Going forward, I wrote a letter to explain what I was doing with SOAR
 - Have not had any issues with scheduling professional visits since then
 - Officers can identify someone who may be in need of services and let the liaison know who needs help
 - Easier to do applications while someone in jail because you don't spend time tracking them down
 - Barriers:
 - Pre-Release Agreements
 - SSA Policy states that you can file applications prior to discharge from an institution
 - Stated in POMS (Program Operations Manual System)
 - <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lnx/0500520900>
 - Working with the local SSA office to apply for benefits for people who are being held until benefits are in place

- At first office did not want to apply
 - Ended up working out for client
 - Still don't have prerelease agreement between SSA and jail but SSA will take a letter from a judge explaining a situation and allow someone to apply before discharge
- Make sure you have a conversation with your local SSA office about taking referrals from jails and working with people in institutions
 - Make sure you know the policies of SSA when you have a meeting with your local office
 - Take documentation from judge or jail documenting what is going on with the case- when the expected release date is
- Relationship that was developed with liaison helped me to make connections with the jail
- Get to know each jail, they are all different
- Forsyth's Mental Health Court:
 - Established 2-3 year ago in Forsyth County
 - Works with individuals with severe mental illness
 - Helps individuals get connected to services and treatment to prevent future charges and break the cycle of frequent jail time
 - Can be in court for 9 months, time doesn't start until they are released from jail
 - Report to court bi-monthly and weekly check-ins about treatment
 - Mental health providers also have to submit reports to court and treatment team meetings are held before court
 - We can use this process to help support making their appointments for SOAR
 - Court works with people who aren't following plans and can issue sanctions like community service rather than giving them a new charge
 - Still evaluating the limits of which charges the Mental Health Court can work with
 - Have funding secured for the next several years
 - To learn more, check out the GAINS Center: http://gainscenter.samhsa.gov/topical_resources/jail.asp
- Do other MCOs have jail liaisons?
 - Cumberland County has a jail liaison
 - Buncombe County- Pisgah Legal has a relationship with the jail diversion program and RHA Behavioral Health provide services in the jail
- Engagement:
 - Look for who already has relationships in your community (CIT programs, Jail Liaisons, etc.)
 - Building trust by showing up when you say you will and following through
- Does anyone get treatment Records from jail?

- TJ- As the jail has learned more about SOAR, they have started documenting more information that shows functioning issues
- Every jail is a little different in how they provide mental health or health services
 - Some have services provided by jail staff
 - Others use local providers
 - Some contract with larger providers who handle services in multiple jails/prisons
 - Get to know who provides services in your jail and how to request treatment records
- Tips for Growing SOAR in your Local Jail System:
 - Buy-in for jail systems is that people get connected to appropriate housing and services rather than ending up in jail
 - Takes up staff time to deal with these individuals
 - Staff not trained to treat mental health
 - Advocating for funding in the community
 - Easier to get cost per day in jail than other systems (i.e. hospitals)
 - Could do a survey of previous SOAR applicants to see how much jail time before and after approved applications to calculate potential savings to the community

No SOAR Dialogue Calls for November and December
In-Person SOAR Caseworker Meeting on November 19th
10 AM- 4 PM, Winston-Salem
Sponsored by CenterPoint Human Services
You can register for the meeting by visiting NCCEH's website:
<http://www.ncceh.org/events/685/>