

SOAR Dialogue Highlights

7/17/14

Attendees: Emily Carmody, Charlene Powell, Cecelia Colson, Liz Blass, TJ Reynolds-Emwanta, Cheryl Manuel, Joyce Allen, Linda Mandell, Daphne Drew, Liz McDermott

Introductions and Updates

- Emily Carmody, NCCEH, Raleigh- Scheduled the next SOAR Training for August 27-28, 2014 in Raleigh, and we have 21 people signed up already. Anyone interested in attending needs to complete an application.
- Charlene Powell, ECBH MCO- Three cases pending and working on another application
- Cecelia Colson and Liz Blass, Pisgah Legal Services, Asheville- Business is booming, trying to improve things with Asheville SSA, waiting on approval letters, waiting on SSDI applications
- TJ Reynolds-Emwanta, CenterPoint Human Services, Winston-Salem- Busy month, 1 case pending for a while, 4 cases recently filed and 3 new cases started in the last 4 days, doing a lot of outreach in the community and educating agencies about referrals
- Cheryl Manuel, Residential Treatment Services of Alamance- Nothing to report right now
- Joyce Allen, Disability Advocates, Raleigh- Waiting on one application, talked with Raleigh SSA to clear up communication issues
- Linda Mandell, Pitt County- Won a case in May for a young man with autism spectrum disorder
- Daphne Drew, ECBH MCO- Waiting on a decision

Announcement

Training Updates

- Continuing to have SOAR two-day caseworker trainings each quarter
- New option for training:
 - National SOAR program has developed an online SOAR training
 - 16 hour training
 - Complete SSA forms and a Medical Summary Report
 - Training can also be used as a refresher course for previously-trained caseworkers
 - NC One-Day Follow-Up Training
 - Bi-monthly in Raleigh
 - Anyone who does the online training must attend the One-Day training in order to submit SOAR applications in NC
- All training information is posted on our website: <http://www.ncceh.org/soartrainings/>

Community Partnerships: Engaging Partners to Strengthen SOAR in Your Community

Common Partnerships for SOAR programs:

SSA

- Make sure to engage the managers and frontline staff at the SSA office

- Every SSA office has staff meetings at 8 am
 - SOAR caseworkers can make presentations about SOAR for offices
 - Opportunity to create a relationship with key staff
 - Having a one-on-one contact can help you get information about your cases
 - Identify managers and then SSI/SSDI division supervisors at each office and get their contact information
 - Answer questions and make sure everyone understands the SOAR program
- Request regular meetings with SSA office in order to address issues as they come up
- Request appointments to drop off paperwork vs. using the drop box if you have issues with slow processing
- If you have issues with engaging your local SSA office, please contact Emily at NCCEH
 - Emily can reach out to the SSA office to address concerns
 - If that is not successful, Emily can contact the state SSA liaison for assistance
 - Emily can also do a presentation at SSA offices

Provider Agencies (mental health providers, medical clinics, hospitals, etc.):

- Staff turnover can affect referrals and knowledge about the program- always good to check in and do presentations on a regular basis
- Take someone else in the community with you (Executive Director of the local shelter, doctor, etc.) to “vouch” for SOAR and help to gain access to present information
- Have a prepared presentation (15-30 minutes) about SOAR that you can use at multiple agencies
- Attend agency open houses to have an opportunity to meet staff
- Follow up with doctors about the cases that they assist with
 - Send them a letter to let them know the outcome of the case and how it is impacting their patient’s life
 - Can also let the doctor know if they have had a consultative exam
 - Helps with getting a signature the next time and allows doctors to see treatment benefits of getting people of benefits
- Let agencies know about approvals to help them recoup costs by billing Medicaid for services
 - Positive reinforcement for assisting with applications
 - Great for SOAR caseworker to track this information as well to use when trying to engage other agencies and show how SOAR can help their budgets as well
- People to develop relationships with- Medical Records Staff, Receptionist/Front Desk
- Make a clear request that if you take a SOAR referral from their agency that you will need the assistance of their staff to get the doctor’s signature on the report
- Two groups to engage:
 - Administration/Executive Directors of agencies
 - Frontline staff who will interact with SOAR caseworker
 - Don’t assume that just because the Administration is on board that the frontline staff knows about SOAR

Homeless Service Providers/HUD Continuums of Care (CoC)

- Everyone falls under a CoC or Regional Committee (12 CoCs in NC): <http://www.ncceh.org/coc/>
- CoCs meet on a regular basis to discuss various aspects of the homeless service systems
- Attending CoC meetings is important
 - Provide a monthly update on SOAR so they can keep track through a dashboard report
 - Stay on top of the changes to the system and how you fit in
 - Coordinated Assessment process that will be a coordinated assessment and referral process
 - Make sure they think about where SOAR fits into these changes
 - Allows you to network with all the agencies that you work with
- Remember- SOAR is a valuable resource to your CoC
 - Income from benefits allows individuals to gain access to housing programs
 - When programs receive rent from participants it allows them to stretch their housing dollars to serve more people
 - Insurance benefits help participants gain access to services to keep housing

County and City Governments

- Provide reports to City and/or County government about how many SOAR applicants are housed and the income brought into the local economy
- Could be a great partnership to help with obtaining funding for SOAR casework and/or access to other partners

Other Partners to Keep In Mind

- Justice system- Can help you gain access to applicants while incarcerated and may lead to more records for your applications (court-ordered evaluations)
 - Jail social workers
 - Police
 - Public Defenders office
 - Mental Health/Drug Courts
 - Judges
- Financial institutions and agency payees
 - Agency payees are vital for many of our applicants and it is important to know the options in your community
 - For those who don't need a payee, credit unions can provide checking accounts at a lower rate so that benefits can be electronically deposited

Next SOAR Dialogue Call is on WEDNESDAY August 20th at 10 AM.

Register for the call by following this link: <http://www.ncceh.org/events/765/>