

## **SOAR Dialogue Highlights**

### **4/21/16**

Attendees: Emily Carmody, Natasha Posey, Dolores Huffman, Sandra Johnson, Erica Hall

#### **Introductions**

- Emily Carmody, NCCEH, Raleigh- Scheduling next SOAR training in June
- Natasha Posey, Southlight, Raleigh- Working with first two clients
- Dolores Huffman, Partners Behavioral Health, Morganton- received first approval last week
- Sandra Johnson, Pisgah Legal Services, Asheville- working on first medical summary report
- Erica Hall, Duke LATCH Program, Durham- Completed first 3 assessments this week

#### **Announcements**

- Next SOAR training will most likely be in June in the eastern part of the state
  - If you know someone who is interested in attending, please have them email Emily at [emily@ncceh.org](mailto:emily@ncceh.org)
- SSA Commissioner presenting on homelessness and SSA benefits next Thursday (4/28) in Hampton, VA
  - Great to have the Commissioner focusing on homelessness!
  - If the meeting is a success, then the Commissioner will hold more of these around the country.
  - Please email Emily at [emily@ncceh.org](mailto:emily@ncceh.org) if you are planning to attend.

#### **SOAR Community Certification and Work Groups**

Many communities around the state find it helpful to have SOAR work groups to gather SOAR-trained caseworkers and key stakeholders together on a regular basis. Work groups allow the community to address barriers and create solutions to support SOAR cases. NCCEH created the [SOAR Community Certification](#) process to assist communities in establishing SOAR work groups.

Benefits of SOAR Work Groups:

- Helps to have everyone around the table to hear about issues in the community
  - Assists in getting ideas for challenges to address
  - Assists new caseworkers in identifying current barriers and solutions
- Allows SOAR caseworkers to support each other in their work and sharing innovations
- Assists in sharing community resources
  - Able to look for new ways to partner with each other
  - Hear about other stakeholders like payees, attorneys, and providers to partner with
- Improves applicant engagement and the community referral process
- Creates a better relationship with SSA
  - Have a group that can make coordinated requests to SSA field offices
  - Allows the SSA field office to have one group to coordinate with

- Great to request meetings or invite SSA to work group meetings to make sure each SOAR caseworker is familiar with the right processes

#### Challenges with SOAR Work Groups:

- Have to make sure all SOAR-trained caseworkers know about the meetings
- Getting people to show up on a regular basis and finding a time that works for most
- Needing to meet more often to move projects forward
- Making sure the meeting is integrated into other community efforts to end homelessness
- Sharing the leadership so that all the tasks do not fall on one person and the group does not disband if that person leaves

#### Overview of SOAR Community Certification

- NCCEH staff reviewed the [SOAR Community Certification](#) document
- History-
  - SOAR Community Certification is based on steps outlined by the national SOAR program to help communities establish local SOAR programs
  - NCCEH created the Certification process to help communities take a step-by-step approach to establishing programs
- Certification has 3 separate levels that build on each other
  - Bronze Level- focusses on increasing community knowledge about SOAR and getting key stakeholders onboard with the SOAR program
  - Silver Level- focusses on developing key relationships and identifying community-specific needs
  - Gold Level- focusses on developing a sustainable local system to support SOAR cases
- Any communities who are interested in SOAR Community Certification should email Emily at [emily@ncceh.org](mailto:emily@ncceh.org)

#### Examples SOAR Work Group Projects:

- SSA 101 Meetings in Durham
  - SOAR Work Group hosts regular meetings with community providers to go over the basics of SSA and SSI/SSDI benefits
    - Allows the group to share information and dispel myths
    - The group hears concerns from providers as well
- Payee Engagement (Durham and Wake)
  - Payee agencies visit meetings to explain their services and develop relationships
- Notifying about Food Stamp Regulations (Durham)
  - Food Stamp benefits effect all SOAR applicants
  - Using the group to educate and address concerns about changes to the program

**Next SOAR Dialogue Call will be on May 19, 2016 at 10 AM. Please register for the call here:**

**<http://www.ncceh.org/events/981/>**