

SOAR Dialogue Phone Call

March 15, 2012

(Attendance: Emily Carmody, Aundry Freeman, John Mycklebust, Jacquetta Bullock, Katherine Pullicino, Moli Jones, Diedtress Jackson, Elizabeth McDermot, TJ Reynolds Emwanta, Dianna Polland, Dorothy Rogers, Kathryn Winston)

- I. Introductions and Community Updates -
 - a. Emily Carmody, NCCEH, Raleigh- We are in the process of working on an IPRS billing code for SOAR casework. The billing code will revolve around SOAR Caseworker Certification with only Certified Caseworkers being able to bill for activities.
 - b. Aundry Freeman, Pisgah Legal, Asheville- No updates at this time
 - c. Jackie Bullock, Vance County- No updates
 - d. John Mycklebust, Housing for New Hope, Durham- I'm working on a difficult case with another application to follow.
 - e. Moli Jones, Freedom House, Roxboro- I've attended a couple of the SOAR webinars that have been really helpful.
 - f. Dianna Polland, Pisgah Legal Services, Hendersonville- I had a breakthrough with finding a physician to treat my uninsured applicants and do psychiatric evaluations.
 - g. Liz McDermott, LATCH, Durham- No updates
 - h. Dorothy Rogers, WNCAP- No updates
 - i. Kathryn Winston, Wilmington- School of Social Work in Wilmington is going to place a social work intern with Kathryn to help with caseload. Also, two wins for March.

- II. Announcements:
 - a. Quarterly reports will be done in the beginning of April
 - i. Please send in ALL OUTCOMES to Emily to be included in reports
 - ii. We would like all outcomes through the month of March
 - b. SOAR Training
 - i. In the process of scheduling training for eastern part of state
 - ii. Working with Eastpointe to schedule training for end of May
 - c. Medical Summary Report Scorecard
 - i. In process of finalizing Scorecard for Medical Summary review
 - ii. Tool to be used during the Caseworker Certification process
 - iii. Standardizing Certification process
 - iv. Tool will be available for caseworkers through our website
 1. Use to see if your reports are following the SOAR model
 2. Ideas of how to strengthen and improve your reports
 - v. Tool to be posted on www.ncceh.org website
 - d. No phone call for April
 - i. Emily will be out of the office from April 18-May 4th for her wedding
 - ii. If you have an emergency, please still call the NCCEH office and speak to Nancy or Denise

iii. Next call will be in May

III. Ethical Questions/General Questions/Check In:

- a. Jackie Bullock- Spoke to a woman whose case was filed last year through an attorney
 - i. Initial Application was denied but have not filed for an appeal yet
 - ii. She is interested in moving the case from the attorney to work with me
 - iii. Emily-
 - 1. If she appointed the attorney as the 1696, she can always let the SSA office know that she wants the attorney removed as her Representative.
 - 2. I suggest touching base with the applicant and the attorney to see what is going on with the case before changing the Representative.
 - 3. The attorney may still be eligible for payment due to work already done on the case.

IV. SOAR and Housing

- a. HEARTH and changes to homeless systems
 - i. Reauthorization of McKinney-Vento funding
 - 1. ESG grants
 - 2. CoC funded programs
 - a. Shelter Plus Care
 - b. PSH Projects
 - c. Transitional Housing
 - ii. Signed into law in 2009
 - iii. Changes the way communities will be evaluated
 - 1. Community held accountable for entire system's outcomes (not just the performance of one agency)
 - a. How many new people are homeless?
 - b. How many people are exiting and returning to the system?
 - c. Average length of stay in the system
 - d. Exits to permanent housing
 - 2. Ultimate goal of the policy is that if someone becomes homeless, they are back into stable housing within 30 days
 - iv. Funding is provided through a competition
 - 1. Older system- focused on number accessing services
 - 2. Newer system- focusing on outcomes of system
 - a. Reduced length of stay
 - b. Exits to permanent housing
 - v. Shift in focus from shelter to permanent housing
- b. SOAR will play a key role in the systems shift
 - i. SOAR will help with reducing length of stay for disabled individuals in the homeless service system

- ii. SOAR can play a part in helping those in the system now
 - iii. SOAR can also play a role by helping those who are imminently homeless get benefits to prevent homelessness
 - c. Questions about HEARTH and SOAR's role
 - i. Dorothy- When is HEARTH being implemented?
 - 1. Emily- HEARTH Regulations are coming out in pieces
 - a. HUD has released regulations for a new definition of homelessness
 - b. HUD released new ESG regulations this winter
 - i. Entitlement communities and states are in the process of redesigning their programs
 - ii. Big first stage of changes
 - c. CoC regulations have not been released
 - ii. Dorothy- Should this happen by 2012?
 - 1. Emily- we are not sure when the regulations will be released
 - 2. Emily- many communities are working now so that they will be ready whenever they are released
 - iii. If you want to read more about HEARTH, go to the National Alliance to End Homelessness' website
 - 1. www.endhomelessness.org
 - 2. Has lots of toolkits and summaries of the policy and changes on their website
- d. Want to make sure that SOAR caseworkers are ready to focus on housing
 - i. Based on outcome data- we are unsure that SOAR is actually linking people to housing
 - ii. Benefits alone will not end a person's homelessness
 - iii. Benefits can be used as a tool for linking someone to stable housing
 - iv. Outcome data is sparse:
 - 1. Only 53% of Initial Application outcomes report housing data
 - 2. Only 36% of Reconsideration Application outcomes report housing data
 - 3. Only 53% of Appeal outcomes report housing data
 - v. Question: Is this a reporting issue or an issue of connecting people to housing after getting their applications approved?
 - 1. John- I have had difficulties with a couple of clients
 - a. One applicant was assigned to a provider
 - i. The provider dropped the ball on connecting to housing
 - ii. With the approval of my supervisor, I pulled out of the case because we felt like I was enabling agency to not do their job
 - iii. Sent a letter to the provider, payee, SSA, and applicant
 - iv. Applicant was in emergency housing that he needed to transfer out of

1. Moved back into the shelter on an “extended bed”
2. Shelter clinic is going to try to help the person find housing but he is missing appointments with the clinic
- v. He has benefits since December 15th
- b. Emily- Have other people faced similar issues with relying on a MH or SA provider?
 - i. John- It was a SA provider
 1. A mismatch of services and need
 2. Does not need SA
 3. Has lower IQ and needs help with following step
 - ii. Jackie- I have not had to rely on MH or SA providers
 - iii. John- I didn’t want to go too far across the boundary of doing case management that they need to do
 1. Emily- It is a dilemma because you don’t want to overstep your bounds but you are watching someone fall back into the homeless system
 2. John- Yes, and he was doing well in housing
 - iv. Dorothy- I have not experienced that but I have seen a lack of housing that is available with clients, especially with criminal backgrounds
 1. Vouchers tend to come in waves
 2. We can’t take on the full job in helping locate housing
 3. Pull in other community resources to look for housing
 - a. Western Highlands LME Housing Specialist
 - i. Has vouchers
 - ii. Has list of landlords and programs
 - v. Emily- Dorothy brings up a good point that there are more people in the community who know about housing
 1. Let them know what you are doing and how you can help someone get into housing
 2. For individuals with MH/SA/DD issues, LME Housing Specialists would be a good resource
 - vi. Emily- Have you talked to the Housing Specialist at the LME?
 1. John- Yes, we have talked with them

- vii. Moli- I wanted to make sure I understood the question. Did you refer someone back to Durham Center Access for housing?
1. John- DCA referred him to services for MH and SA
 2. Moli- Was it Community Support Team?
 - a. In my agency CST teams assist with housing
 - b. However, housing services are not normal for them
 - c. Not sure who in the MH/SA system they would be referred to
 - d. Sounds like he fell through the cracks
 3. John- Service provider looked into one option for housing
 - a. They put him up for a vote in 2 Oxford Houses
 - b. He was turned down twice
 - c. Rejection hit him hard
 - d. Was going to groups and doing well before
 - e. Now he does not want to engage with the service provider anymore
 - f. Feels they do not care about him
 4. Moli- I am just wondering who would be doing housing services for an outpatient client.
 - a. In my community the only person who would do that is a case manager
 - b. In order to be connected to a case manager they need to qualify for a CST team
 5. Emily- This brings up a point that for a long time in NC MH/SA/DD service providers have not looked as housing as a part of their job description
 - a. Changes happening in the state
 - i. DOJ investigation into NC due to lack of independent living
 - ii. Found to be in violation of Olmstead decision
 - b. State now being tasked to provide independent housing and services

needed to maintain housing for individuals with disabilities

6. Moli- I can see if it is an outpatient service provider that they would not have the resources to look for housing for someone
 7. Emily- That is the problem we need to address
 - a. Cultivating more housing resources for the community
 - b. Can bring up concerns with the LME about this applicant falling through the cracks
 - c. Systematically, you need to connect SOAR applicants to housing for the system to get the full benefits of SOAR
2. Some systems are using a model known as a “Care Review”
- a. Some LMEs and systems are using this to gather key people with access to resources around one table to work with an individual to address their housing and service needs
 - b. You can also develop a similar model to this by gathering your own “table” of resources to refer people to and help to gain access to housing
 - c. An important question to think about is: Who else could you get to be at your “table?”
- vi. Question: What are some other resources you use to help connect applicants to housing?
1. Moli- Primary resources
 - a. Vocational Rehab
 - b. Indian Affairs- agency in my community
 - c. Christian Health Center- provide housing vouchers
 - i. Financial contributions
 - d. At our agency, we go beyond our scope of services to locate housing because there is no one else to do it
 - i. CST clients qualify for housing services
 - ii. Regular outpatient clients not provided housing services
 2. TJ- My team works on taking care of this
 - a. Housing Authority
 - i. Public housing/subsidized housing
 - ii. Section 8 Vouchers
 - b. Homeless Council/CoC Meetings
 - i. Get housing vouchers
 - ii. Have a number of resources
 - c. Shelter-

- i. Gets Shelter plus Care vouchers
 - ii. Can do utility deposits
 - d. Salvation Army-
 - i. Helps with deposits
 - ii. Past utility bills
- 3. Aundry-
 - a. Asheville Housing Authority
 - b. Shelter Plus Care
 - c. Homeward Bound puts individuals into apartments
 - d. Emily- Buncombe County has done great work in realigning their system
 - i. Reduced chronic homeless population by 75% in past four years
- 4. TJ-
 - a. In Winston-Salem , Lutheran Family Services
 - b. Temporary housing but can become permanent
 - c. Have special set aside for people with TBI
 - d. May be a resource in Durham as well
- vii. Emily- It is important to know where housing agencies gather
 - 1. Ten Year Plans to End Homelessness/ Homeless Service Councils
 - a. In a number of communities in our state
 - b. Go to their meetings and let them know what you are doing SOAR
 - c. Great place to hear updates about changes in system
 - 2. Continuum of Care (CoC) Meetings
 - a. This is the group that applies for HUD McKinney Vento money for homeless housing resources
 - b. Ask if they will set aside some of the vouchers they are awarded for SOAR clients
- viii. Housing Barriers faced by Applicants
 - 1. Criminal Backgrounds
 - a. If the criminal background is related to their disabling condition, you can request a reasonable accommodation for that individual.
 - b. Americans with Disability Act- the landlord is then supposed to exempt that criminal history from the application process.
 - c. To find out more information you can look at this resource: <http://www.nchfa.com/forms/Forms/ReasonableAccommodati on.pdf>
 - d. You can also contact Legal Aid in your areal to see if they can assist
 - 2. Credit History

- a. Can also request a Reasonable Accommodation if Credit History issues relate back to their disabling conditions
 - b. To find out more information you can look at this resource: <http://www.nchfa.com/forms/Forms/ReasonableAccommodation.pdf>
 - c. You can also contact Legal Aid in your areal to see if they can assist
- 3. Deposit and Move-In Money
 - a. Working with systems to secure these monies for SOAR applicants
 - b. What resources are available in your community?
 - c. How can you secure access for your SOAR clients?
 - d. Jackie-
 - i. Unless they qualify for Shelter Plus Care, no services in 5 county area
 - ii. Many do not qualify due to credit history
 - iii. Emily-
 - 1. Individuals do not have to have good credit history to get Shelter Plus Care Vouchers
 - 2. May be a rule layered on the program by the agency who administers the vouchers
 - e. Resources for deposits:
 - i. Department of Social Services
 - ii. Nonprofits/Churches
 - 1. Many are doing prevention services
 - 2. Speak to them about helping people get back into housing
 - iii. Dorothy- Our agency provides these services through a discretionary fund
 - 1. Not through HOPWA
 - 2. Other ASOs (AIDS Service Organizations) could provide similar services
- e. This is another level of advocacy and education for SOAR Caseworkers
 - i. Find housing agencies and speaking to them about what SOAR can do for them
 - ii. If you find yourself getting people approved, but not able to place in housing
 - 1. Address issue at the community level
 - 2. Mental Health providers- speak to the LME
 - a. If individuals are not housed, they will be more expensive
 - b. Homeless individuals use crisis services more frequently which are more expensive
 - 3. Let CoCs know that this is an issue
 - a. CoCs will be held accountable for housing outcomes

- b. They have an interest in improving the linkage between SOAR and housing

4. Ten Year Plans

- a. Many plan coordinators are looking to add SOAR caseworkers in their community
- b. Let them know the issues that you are having to address before additional positions are brought on

- iii. Please let Emily know if you are having issues with linking people to housing

V. Next Phone Call, Thursday, May 17th, 10-11 am

- a. We will not be having a call in April
- b. If you have ideas for topics, please email Emily at emily@ncceh.org
- c. Register for the next call by following this link: <http://ncceh.org/en/cev/566>