Systems Approach Workbook

Systems Approach Glossary

This glossary provides clarification for terms with which readers may not be familiar that are derived from the report, *A Systems Approach to Substance Use in Canada*. The explanations have been drafted with a focus on relevance to the context in which they are being used, rather than as a reflection of expert technical specificity. The glossary is intended to develop as new terminology is incorporated or as the need for additional clarification is identified. Please contact systems@ccsa.ca with any questions or suggestions.

Contents

www.NTS-SNT.ca

Change Fatigue

Change fatigue refers to a state where individuals within an organization have been through change processes recently or often enough to incite resistance or lack of response to additional change. There is no pre-defined "safe" level of change before fatigue sets in. The level will vary based on the nature of the changes and the change processes used, as well as on organizational and individual characteristics.

Change Management

Change management refers to taking a structured approach to moving from one state or set of behaviours to another, generally applied in an organizational context. Change management emphasizes viewing change as a process with steps and key considerations along the way, resulting in greater engagement and sustainability than the traditional "flicking a switch" approach.

Communication Strategy

A communications strategy is a comprehensive plan to promote a common vision or goal with internal and external stakeholders. There are many approaches to developing a communications strategy; however, consistent elements include identifying a target audience, key messages, timelines, mechanisms and objectives.

Communities of Practice

According to Wenger (2006), Communities of Practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

Complex System

A complex system exists when cause and effect relationships between components are not always clear. The impact of a change to one part of the system can therefore have unanticipated consequences, requiring an approach to change that recognizes and accounts for system complexity.

Continuous Quality Improvement

Continuous quality improvement broadly refers to structured, ongoing efforts to improve organizational processes and outcomes.

Core Principles

The Systems Approach report was developed according to nine core principles. These principles are also intended to guide system development toward improving the services and supports for harmful substance use in Canada.

1. The full range of risks and harms associated with substance use must be recognized.
2. A co-ordinated multisectoral approach is required to address the risks and harms.
3. Practices must be informed by evidence.
4. Systems must be based on need.
5. Services and supports must be informed by gender- and diversity-based analysis.
6. Services and supports must be person-centred.
7. Families and other loved ones are integral.

8. Services and supports must focus on both risk and readiness.

9. Systems are accountable for providing effective services and supports.

Data Collection

Data collection refers to the structured gathering of information for the purpose of measuring and monitoring. Data collection can focus on indicators that track project toward goals, program fidelity, or other information sources of interest to the project team, evaluation, or funders.

Determinants of Health

Health is not simply defined by the presence or absence of illness. A determinants of health approach, as promoted by the World Health Organization, recognizes that health is determined by the social, economic, and physical environment as well as individual characteristics and behaviours.

Evidence

The Systems Approach report recognizes that there are many types and "levels" of evidence, including academic research, culturally based knowledge, and the direct experience of people who use or have used substances.

Gender and Cultural Diversity

Gender and cultural diversity recognizes the differences among people, and examines the varying perspectives of Aboriginal, Inuit, and Métis people, as well as individuals of differing age, sexual orientation, colour, race, ethnicity, ability/disability, and socioeconomic status. CCSA's publication *Bringing Gender and Diversity Analysis to our Work* provides a checklist that can be used to ensure that a context analysis includes considerations of sex, gender, and diversity: http://www.nationalframework-cadrenational.ca/images/uploads/SexDiversityChecklist.pdf.

Guiding Concepts

The Systems Approach report identifies eight *guiding concepts* on which the Tiered Model is based, and that should be considered and reflected across the service continuum that the Tiered Model presents:

1. *No Wrong Door:* An individuals seeking treatment can access the full continuum by entry at any level and be linked to those services and supports that fit his or her needs.

2. *Availability and Accessibility:* Services and supports are available and accessible within a reasonable distance and travel time.

3. *Matching:* Services and supports are matched to an individual's needs and strengths.

4. *Choice and Eligibility:* An individual may select among options should there be more than one available that meets his or her needs.

5. *Flexibility:* An individual should be moved upward or downward through tiers as needed.

6. *Responsiveness:* Effective treatment should ultimately help an individual to move to lower tiers as their needs change.

7. *Collaboration:* There should be collaboration between all levels of services and supports to ensure quality treatment and facilitate the individual's journey through the tiers

8. *Co-ordination:* There should be easy sharing of information among systems.

Implementation Plan

An implementation plan is simply a plan that sets out all of the steps and activities involved in putting ideas into action. The plan might be in narrative, diagrammatic or table form. The level of detail should be sufficient to ensure that all steps, roles, timelines and necessary resources in the process are identified.

Implementation Team

An implementation team refers to a group of people tasked with putting a change or project into action. There are a number of different models used to develop implementation teams. The Systems Approach materials suggest that an implementation team be made up of representatives from the various roles or perspectives involved in the change and they should provide leadership and a liaison for multi-directional communication to those they represent.

Indicators

Indicators refer to concrete, measurable items used to indicate progress toward project outcomes or activities. For example, if a project outcome is "better addressing the needs of women with substance use problems" indicators measured may include the number of women who access available programs, the number of women who complete available programs and the degree of satisfaction on a rating scale expressed by women during and after program participation.

Knowledge Exchange

There are many definitions for knowledge exchange, and many terms used to refer to knowledge exchange or related processes (e.g., knowledge transfer, knowledge translation and knowledge mobilization). The Canadian Health Services Research Foundation provides the following definition:

> Knowledge exchange is collaborative problem-solving between researchers and decision-makers that happens through linkage and exchange. Effective knowledge exchange involves interaction between decision-makers and researchers and results in mutual learning through the process of planning, producing, disseminating, and applying existing or new research in decision-making.

Leadership

Leadership is applied broadly in the Systems Approach materials to apply to any individual or group that is in a position to implement change at the organizational or system level.

Logic Model

Logic models are tools for planning, explanation and evaluation. A logic model provides a diagrammatic representation or schematic of a program. Although there is no universal standard or terminology, models are generally illustrated in chart form with arrows connecting boxes to show the flow between components. Featured components generally include objectives or goals, outcomes, activities, and outputs or deliverables.

Operationalization

Operationalization refers to the process of defining concepts or goals in such a way that they are concretely measurable. For example, "program participation" may be operationalized as "the number of clients who complete assessment and attend a minimum of two scheduled program sessions."

Rationale for Change

A rationale for change is simply a clear, thorough explanation of why change is being considered or undertaken. There is no standardized format; the rationale should be tailored to address the needs and characteristics of the individual, group or organization for which it is developed, as well as the change itself.

Senior Decision Maker

Senior decision maker refers to an individual in a position to make administrative or funding decisions at the level required to move the proposed change ahead. These individuals might be at the organizational or system level, depending on the scope of change proposed and the administrative structure.

Services and Supports

Services and supports is a term used in the Systems Approach report to refer to a broad spectrum of responses, provided by healthcare, public health, social service, justice or other sectors, to address substance use problems or to reduce the risks and harms associated with these problems.

Shared Care

Shared care is an approach to both system function and service provision in which there are formal collaborations between different players in the health and social service sectors. A shared care model goes beyond informal collaboration in that it involves shared responsibility, shared information and shared involvement in planning and decision making. Shared care is consistent with the integrated continuum of services promoted in the Systems Approach.

Strengths-based Messaging and Approaches

Strengths-based refers generally to approaches based on the recognition and development of existing individual or organizational successes, strengths or assets. These approaches can be contrasted with deficit-based approaches based on identifying gaps or shortcomings and creating new capacity to address them.

Substance Use Problems

Substance use problems include problems associated with substance use of varying acuity, chronicity and complexity that may be primarily physical; psychological, emotional or behavioural; social; spiritual; familial; or legal. The use of the term is not limited to substance abuse or dependence as defined by diagnostic classification systems such as the DSM-IV.

Support Team

Support team is used in the Systems Approach materials to refer to any type of team not exclusively consisting of leadership that is established to support the change process. The type, structure and operation of the team will vary depending on the organizational context and the characteristics of the change.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis involves listing the relevant "Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats" associated with a given initiative. This analysis is intended to inform the planning process by proactively identifying potential challenges, barriers or threats and developing strategies to prevent their occurrence or mitigate for their impact.

System

A system is broadly defined as a set of interconnected components and relationships with patterns of behaviour and interactions. In the context of the Systems Approach materials, systems refer to the organizational, regional, provincial/territorial, national and multi-sectoral bodies involved in the administration of substance use services and supports. The structure of the system will vary by jurisdictional characteristics such as location of ministerial responsibility for substance use service administration and degree of integration with other health or social services.

System Map

A system map provides a visual representation of a system's component parts, structure and operation. An example most people are familiar with is a map of a public transit system, with stations, routes and different transit types illustrated on a city map. With regards to substance use services, a system map would identify key roles, functions and the client pathway. Developing and comparing ideal and actual system maps is a common approach to identifying gaps or duplication in system function.

Systems Approach

Refers to the 2008 report *A Systems Approach to Substance Use in Canada: Recommendations for a National Treatment Strategy*. Taking a "Systems Approach," in the context of this workbook, means taking an approach to substance use that is working toward an integrated, collaborative continuum of services and supports that aligns with the recommendations made in the Systems Approach report, its core principles and guiding concepts. One of the key components of the Systems Approach is a shift in focus away from specialized services toward enhanced community-based and other non-specialized capacity to address substance use.

Systems Theory

Systems theory looks at the set of interconnected components, relationships, behaviours and interactions within systems. Systems theory within the Systems Approach context recognizes that organizations in the health and social service fields are both systems in themselves and operate as components of broader systems. Change within a systems context must therefore take into account both the context of and impacts on the system.

Tiered Model of Services and Supports

The Tiered Model is the framework for thinking about the service continuum proposed in the Systems Approach report. The tiers in the model were originally conceptualized as logical groupings of services and supports distributed according to acuity, chronicity and complexity of the risks and harms that they addressed. Lower tier services are broadly available and generally offered at the community level (e.g., health promotion and prevention initiatives or brief interventions). Higher tier services are resource-intensive and fall primarily within the specialized treatment sector (e.g., day treatment or residential facilities). The tiers can also reflect population groupings according to relative levels of risk and harm rather than grouping of services.

www.NTS-SNT.ca