A Systems Approach
to Substance Use Services in Canada

CCSA · CCLAT
Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse
Centre canadien de lutte contre l'alcoolisme et les toxicomanies

Systems Approach Workbook: A Resource for Improving Substance Use Systems and Services

OCTOBER 2012

Who should use this workbook?

- Leaders and decision makers in the substance abuse and mental health services field, such as regional directors and program managers

- Anyone interested in learning more about a system-change approach to improving substance use and mental health services and supports

Why use this workbook?

- Many people have difficulty accessing and navigating the current system

- The system is constantly evolving and is influenced by many factors

- The Tiered Model presented in *A Systems Approach to Substance Use in Canada: Recommendations for a National Treatment Strategy* provides an evidence-based framework to guide system change

- Taking a change management approach increases the efficiency and sustainability of system development

Purpose of the Workbook

A Systems Approach to Substance Use in Canada: Recommendations for a National Treatment Strategy provides a broad framework for improving substance use *services and supports*.[1] This workbook is intended to provide the tools needed to translate the high-level guidance in the report to concrete, organizational-level implementation. The *Tiered Model* presented in the Systems Approach report provides a framework to **structure** *system* development; this workbook is intended to provide support for the **process** of system development. The materials are intended as a set of adaptable guides for discussion and planning. Content is primarily targeted to organizational-level *leaders* and *decision makers* in the substance use and mental health field. However, the materials are also intended to be broadly approachable so they can be applied by a range of stakeholders at the individual program or organizational level, as well as at the regional or provincial level.

Navigating the Workbook

This workbook is designed to be presented through a custom-designed website. The components do not always flow in a linear fashion the way a book would but are designed to be accessed at whatever point they will be most useful to the reader. This format recognizes that everyone using the workbook will have different information needs and that the change process itself often is not linear. The workbook includes many interactive components that can be used to promote discussion in a group context or simply to promote individual understanding.

The **Change Management Modules** form the backbone of the workbook. These modules provide an overview of key considerations in each of four stages: background, preparation, implementation and sustainability. Following the overview, each module provides a fill-in-the-blanks section of discussion questions and a checklist that can be used in a team or group setting to guide discussion and monitor progress. Finally, each module contains a reference list with additional resources that provide more tools and information.

Topics to Consider briefs look more closely at broader topics relevant to the Systems Approach; for example, the challenge of making change within a complex system, substance use and mental health system integration, and how the Systems Approach supports quality improvement processes.

The **Planning Tools and Templates** provide hands-on resources to assist with implementation of the recommendations found in the Systems Approach report. These resources include templates for use in system mapping and collaboration, customizable communications materials, and templates for key activities in the *change management* process.

The components of the workbook are intended to complement one another. For example, the change management modules provide an overview of key leadership considerations. Additional

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[1] Please see the Glossary for an explanation of italicized terms.

guides then focus specifically on leadership and working with teams. The implementation plan template then provides an off-the-shelf tool for structuring the change process.

Taking a Change Management Approach

The Systems Approach Workbook can be used to guide change at the broad system level or at the very specific service-delivery level. Regardless of the scope of change, taking a change management approach contributes to both short-term success and long-term impact. The structure of the change management modules is based on a review of individual change management literature, organizational change management literature and change management processes that have been used in the substance use field in Canada. The approach is not intended to be definitive, but to provide a guideline that ensures key principles in change management are reflected in the implementation process. The approach is intended to be compatible with others found in the literature to ensure it remains applicable for those who choose to use a different model or already have one in place.

The workbook also uses components of *Systems Theory* to help match change and leadership approaches to system characteristics. Systems Theory is increasingly being applied to health care, recognizing that the field experiences change on an ongoing basis and not as transitions from one static state to another. Although the intention of the workbook is to illustrate how key concepts from Systems Theory can be useful, expertise in Systems Theory is not required to work with the Systems Approach recommendations.

Change Management Structure: Stages of Change

The structure of the Change Management Modules is intended to provide an approach that presents the core elements needed for sustainable, effective change in a way that is easy to follow and relevant. The modules use a stepped structure informed by Prochaska and DiClimente's Transtheoretical Stages of Change[2] to emphasize that change is a continuous process with different considerations along the way. This model is commonly used in clinical treatment for substance abuse, providing a structure that is familiar to the field. The stages of change trace client progress through pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action and maintenance. For the purposes of clarity and brevity, the Systems Approach Workbook combines the first two stages (pre-contemplation and contemplation) for a process consisting of background, preparation, implementation and sustainability stages. Each stage is introduced with an ongoing case example to help situate the reader in the process.

1. **Background:** The focus at this stage is on gathering information, developing a *rationale for change*, and building awareness and support.

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[2] The Systems Approach Workbook was also informed by a model developed by a team at BC Mental Health and Addiction Services and presented to a number of provincial representatives in the field through a series of workshops hosted by Health Canada in 2007. The model provides a more detailed breakdown of the change process and emphasizes that stages are not necessarily linear.

2. **Preparation:** The focus at this stage is on preparing a detailed *implementation plan* building on the results of work at the background stage, and generating support and leadership for the plan at all levels.

3. **Implementation:** The focus at this stage is on carrying out the implementation plan, using the Tiered Model to guide system development.

4. **Sustainability:** The focus at this stage is on evaluation, and continuing to develop and support practices introduced during the implementation plan.

Organizing the Process: Key Categories in Change Management

The Systems Approach Workbook presents five categories drawn from *change management* literature that leaders and decision makers should consider when implementing the Systems Approach recommendations: Context, Leadership, Communication, Outcomes and Benefits, and Individual Considerations. These five categories are not to be perceived as sequential or discrete, but as themes that are intertwined throughout the process of change. The emphasis within each category reflects different issues at each state of the change process. For example, although all categories are important throughout the implementation process, *context* plays a key role at the *background* stage, whereas *communication* and *individual considerations* are focal points during the *implementation* stage.

- **Context:** An analysis of context is important in determining what is in place, what is working well, and what needs to be changed or introduced. Context analysis can also be used to identify different factors that may impact the process as it unfolds.

- **Leadership:** Change is often driven by a small number of individuals. These individuals need to consider a broad range of issues throughout the process. Most importantly, in order to sustain change, these initial champions must transfer leadership to individuals and groups throughout the organization.[3]

- **Communication:** Transparent, timely and bidirectional communication throughout the organization is a fundamental component of any effective change process.

- **Outcomes and Benefits:** Change takes valuable time and resources. The value of investing in change needs to be made explicit through clearly identified benefits and outcomes.

- **Individual considerations:** All change starts and finishes at the individual level. Effective and sustainable change ensures individuals within an organization remain active participants throughout the entire change process.

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[3] Implementation may be taking place at the system, regional or service level. In the interest of brevity, "organization" is being used inclusively to refer to whichever level is most appropriate.

Additional Support

For support using the Systems Approach Workbook, please contact the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse at systems@ccsa.ca.

References[4]

A Systems Approach to Substance Use in Canada

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Change Management

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Cognitive Edge (http://www.cognitive-edge.com) is an online resource combining open-source and proprietary materials and tools on change management, leadership and systems theory.

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Implementation Science (http://www.implementationsceience.com) provides a selection of open-access, peer-reviewed articles.

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[4] The purpose of this reference list is to provide a range of options for additional information and ideas. References have been identified by both CCSA and project partners. Some of the references listed are proprietary. Inclusion in this list does not indicate CCSA endorsement. Categories are for ease of reference and are not mutually exclusive; for example, most references under Leadership are also relevant to Change Management.

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Context

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Leadership

The Ivey Business Journal (www.iveybusinessjournal.com) provides a number of full-text articles on leadership, management, organizational and other relevant issues, primarily from a private business perspective but presenting concepts that apply in the non-profit sector as well. Examples include *Transformational performance-based leadership: Addressing non-routine adaptive challenges* (Granger & Hanover, 2012) and *Developing leadership character* (Crossan, Gandz & Seijts, 2012).

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Communication

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Outcomes and Benefits

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Knowledge Exchange

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The Scientist Knowledge Translation Training website (http://www.melaniebarwick.com/training.php) provides information about Scientist Knowledge Translation Training provided by the SickKids Learning Institute. It includes a free, downloadable template that can be used to guide the development of a knowledge translation or knowledge exchange plan.

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Evaluation

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The Canadian Evaluation Society website (www.evaluationcanada.ca) contains links to a range of evaluation resources, including program evaluation standards and searchable databases for evaluation-related publications and grey literature.

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The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) website (http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/about_apropos/evaluation/resources-eng.php) provides access to a program evaluation toolkit and a guide to project evaluation, as well as information about PHAC's own data collection and evaluation initiatives.

Suggestions?

We'd like to add to this list to provide a more diverse list of resource materials. If there are any information sources that you have found particularly useful, please let us know!
Send your suggestions to [systems@ccsa.ca.](mailto:systems@ccsa.ca)

www.NTS-SNT.ca