

Insights into Evaluating Systems of Care: Lessons Learned from Phase V Sites

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Successful SOC Evaluation Teams...	Common Obstacles Faced
... attend to Evaluation Requirements while balancing system factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be paperwork delays. • Working within a larger system is often difficult. • System changes often impact enrollment and fulfillment of requirements. • Changes from initial logic model will occur.
... stay “in the loop” proactively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying in the loop is difficult, especially if the project staff and the evaluation team are not housed within the same building/agency.
... attend SOC meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending a lot of meetings is time consuming. • SOC work is not “business as usual;” evaluation and project staff are not likely to understand how they must work together in order for the project to be successful.
... act as a “critical friend”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project staff generally want to hear the “good” news, and not the “bad” news. • Program change requires that both the good and bad news are reported.
... interact & partner with families & community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with input from others is not always easy. • There will likely be many delays in every process. • This is new territory for many, so stakeholder input is limited. • Expect analysis paralysis: no one takes the initiative without consensus. • Consensus is elusive.
... recognize that they are the experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not everyone understands the importance of evaluation. • Evaluation is not a “common language,” so others need to be trained in evaluation.

Lessons Learned & Recommendations for Evaluation Teams

- Work to understand the current system and its history
- Involve Project Staff in evaluation from the beginning
 - Likewise, involve Evaluation Staff in the SOC
- Stay in constant contact with Project Staff
- Recognize that this evaluation is different
- Help project stakeholders take ownership of evaluation
- Disseminate data often, in many different formats
- Provide formative feedback to improve SOC as often as possible (empowerment evaluations are important)
- Be willing to revise evaluation based on community feedback
- Develop solid, trusting relationships with stakeholders
- Be constructive, cooperative partners
- Utilize and promote the evaluation expertise of the team
- Train (and re-train) service providers on the evaluation