

# **MEETING ABSTRACT**

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# Adoption of strategies to improve decision support in community mental health centers

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# Objective

Assessment of specific skills acquired during training of a new practice is important in understanding adoption, but often difficult to do. This project summarizes information from a clinical skills assessment over one year post training of a program to increase treatment decision support by staff for individuals receiving mental health services.

# Method

Training and implementation on a Decision Support Toolkit (Pat Deegan & Associates) was provided and supported by a managed behavioral health care organization to interested providers. Individuals in service and staff at four community mental health centers completed a skills and practices survey where they rated how often 18 activities occurred during their clinical sessions on a Likert scale. To examine subscales, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted using the Principal Axis Factoring method for non-normally distributed data with Promax rotation to account for correlations among subscales.

# Results

Surveys were completed by 41 staff at baseline, 43 at 6 months, 40 at 12 months and 300 individuals in service at baseline, 352 at 6 months, and 347 at 12 months. Three subscales were derived: Clinical (e.g., establish goals, discuss medication instructions), Empathy (e.g., offer empathy, support individual-clinician communication), and Information (e.g., provide information, educate families on mental health). Confirmatory factor analysis yielded chi-square p-value = 0.09 indicating a

good fit. Staff ratings for Empathy were significantly higher at 12 months v. baseline (p = 0.008) and on average were higher than individual report (p = 0.004). The same pattern was seen for Information (p = 0.007), but on average staff ratings were lower than reported by individuals (p < 0.0001). Clinical skills were not expected to change and did not. Discrepancies between staff and individual reports will be further investigated.

### **Statement**

Assessment of specific skills acquired during training can be monitored and compared to report from those receiving services to confirm adoption of a new practice and discover needed improvements.

# **Funding**

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