THE FAMILY OPTIONS PROJECT
Implementing an Innovative Intervention for Parents with Mental Illnesses and Their Families

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THE PARTNERSHIP
The Family Options Project reflects a productive partnership between researchers and providers at the UMass Center for Mental Health Services, Research and Employment Options, Inc., Marlborough, MA.

THE INTERVENTION
The Family Options Intervention is an evidence-informed psychiatric rehabilitation intervention, developed and tested within the context of a community-based agency setting.

Key Intervention Concepts & Processes:
- Family-Centered
- Strengths-Based
- Family-Driver & Self-Determined
- Recovery & Resilience
- Empowerment
- Engagement & Relationship
- Availability & Access
- Liaison & Advocacy

Implementing the Family Options Intervention
The implementation process has involved:
- Collaboration with community agency providers,
- Partnerships with local and state-level universities,
- A Family Options Coordinator, a Family Options Director, & Clinical Consultant,
- Working with 26 families, i.e., 26 parents with mental illnesses, 13 partners, & 56 children.

Refinement of the intervention is an iterative process involving:
- Continuously Quality Improvement
- Feedback from collaborating agencies
- Knowledge of research findings
- Program adaptation

The Implementation Study
Involves describing the key domains of activity critical to intervention implementation, service implementation, and full operation stage.

- 30 semi-structured ethnographic interviews conducted over a 2-year period with 19 key informants, including agency Board members, staff, & club house members;
- Nine focus groups with 3 Family Options participants, including agency Board members, management team, staff, & club house member, conducted at 3 implementation stages; and
- Multiple interviews with local community providers to assess existing service needs & resource gaps.

The Outcomes Study
Involves studying the experiences and outcomes of parents and children in intervention and comparison groups (“control at intake”), using measures that are individually change tense approach.

- Qualitative & quantitative methods;
- Interventions at enrollment, 6, 9, & 12 months, and 18 months;
- Multiple data collection tools & measures & data collection issues;
- Parent & Child Outcomes:
- Well-being (e.g., ESI, BERS-2, BSI, BERS-2), parenting (e.g., CPS), peer support (e.g., MOS-SSS);

Family Options Intervention Mothers (n = 228):
- 71% of mothers report a child ever having emotional or behavioral problems
- 8% of mothers report a child ever having a psychiatric hospitalization
- 77% of mothers report a child ever having an Individualized Education Plan

Family Options Intervention Mothers’ Reports of Children’s Experiences:
- 64% of children ever having an Individualized Education Plan
- 7% of children ever having emotional or behavioral problems
- 71% of children ever having psychiatric medication in past 3 months
- 77% of children ever having a psychiatric hospitalization

Next Steps
- Enhance and solidify the Family Options intervention in a well-articulated, comprehensive manual, operating procedures document that will facilitate replication and further testing of the intervention.

Parents: 77% ever physically abused
- 45% ever having been involved with police or probation
- 77% ever being involved with police or probation
- 77% ever having emotional or behavioral problems
- 77% ever having an Individualized Education Plan

Reports of Children’s Experiences:
- 24% of children ever having emotional or behavioral problems
- 5% of children ever having a psychiatric hospitalization
- 55% of children ever being involved with police or probation

Family Options Intervention Mothers Report Past Experiences:
- 64% of children ever having an Individualized Education Plan

Creating the Organizational Capacity:
- Identifying Staff Characteristics & Skill Sets
- Finding & Hiring Staff
- Coordinating Logistics & Operations
- Creating the Organizational Capacity;
- Creating the Work Force Capacity;
- Creating the Community Capacity;
- Translating Science to Service;

Creating the Work Force Capacity:
- Training & Hiring Staff
- Educating, Training, & Coaching Staff
- Aligning to Staff Performance
- Allocating Internal Resources

Creating the Community Capacity:
- Identifying Community Resources
- Engaging & Collaborating with Community Partners
- Strengthening Relationships with Community Partners
- Recruiting Families in the Community

Translating Science to Service:
- Understanding what the Family Options Intervention looks like on a daily basis
- Identifying & Matching Families to the Family Options Intervention Model
- Shifting Paradigms from Working with Adults to Working with Families
- Developing, Facilitating, & Sustaining the Family Options Intervention by Integrating Feedback