

Section 7 - Evaluating a Health Service Integration Initiative (“RESULTS” Phase)

Description

The “RESULTS” phase is where you assess your health service integration initiative journey. Your evaluation will tell you what was successful and what posed challenges, the lessons that were learned and the changes that happened as a result of your health service integration initiative. An important element of the “RESULTS” phase is how it can help transition from an initiative into a sustainable and integrated process.

Key Concepts

1. Monitor the process.

- a. What should you monitor throughout the health service integration initiative?

The value of monitoring your progress cannot be overstated. It helps you assess if the work is progressing as planned and provides clear and unbiased results. Monitor against the performance indicators that you’ve identified in your plan. You want to monitor both the process and the early outcomes.

- b. What processes would help you monitor?

It’s important to have a consistent approach to monitor your health service integration initiative. Create a template to track the results. Align it with other reporting schedules if possible to make it easier for staff. Include updates on progress in meetings.

- c. How do you identify issues and adjust?

If monitoring processes are successful, issues will be identified earlier and may result in less damage. It also helps in making mid-term adjustments. Create an atmosphere where people feel comfortable bringing issues forward and where solutions are sought collectively. Partners should decide in advance how issues and adjustments will be addressed, including at which point concerns are brought forward to the guiding group.

2. Report to stakeholders.

- a. What information should you be reporting?

Based on your communication plan, stakeholders should receive the type of information that reflects their particular concern or investment in the health service integration initiative. Essentially, you will share progress and outcomes, including your successes and lessons learned. Share the key changes that have come about as a result of your work.

- b. To whom do you report and when?

While every health service integration initiative is different, there are some fundamental stakeholders to whom you would report.

- Your leadership group – of your organization, of your community
- Your community

- Your funder(s)

It is also good practice to keep all staff in the loop, especially when your health service integration initiative involves change.

3. Planning for sustainability.

- a. How do you build in sustainability?

Provided the health service integration initiative was successful and partners wish to continue, it is important to entrench the new processes into your organization. Over the time of your health service integration initiative, keep track of issues that came up and how they were resolved. In addition, consider whether any of the activities need to be scaled up for larger implementation.

Key Activities

1. Establish a process for monitoring your health service integration initiative.

- a. Be clear on who is responsible for monitoring and tracking.
- b. Create a template so data and results are tracked consistently.
- c. Set up a reporting schedule so results are collected regularly.
- d. Include a “reporting on results” segment in meetings.

2. Make adjustments as required.

- a. Follow the process for making changes to the plan as noted in the Terms of Reference or other guiding document.

3. Manage differences between partners.

- a. Clarify the real issue and the individual perspectives.
- b. Review the Terms of Reference for guidance.
- c. Review the original health service integration initiative goals.
- d. Collectively seek a solution.
- e. Seek a neutral mediator if necessary to help find common ground.

4. Evaluate process and outcomes against indicators.

- a. Assess the performance of the health service integration initiative against the indicators as listed in the plan.
- b. Consider the process of the health service integration initiative as well as early and longer-term outcomes.

5. Report to stakeholders on your health service integration initiative.

- a. Create a report outlining the results of your health service integration initiative. Include an executive summary that can be used for briefings.
- b. Seek some success stories that can be used to demonstrate positive results.
- c. Share your results with your organization. Consider doing joint presentations and celebrations with your key partners.

6. Move forward with sustainability measures.

- a. Using the lessons learned from the initial health service integration initiative, entrench the key and successful processes into your health organization.
- b. Present your work at meetings and conferences to help spread the health system improvement.
- c. Use this success to pave the way for future integration initiatives.

This is the final step in the process of working on a health service integration initiative. Embarking on this may seem like a very daunting task. The process requires you to go beyond how things are; to look at what is possible; and then to create the change necessary to make it happen.

The good news is that it is possible. Many others with vision have worked hard to create an accessible continuum of care for clients and a more culturally competent health care system.

You may have already begun. If so, congratulations and keep up the good work as you improve services for your communities!

If you are considering beginning, then learning from others will be most valuable as you navigate through from the experiences of “now”, to the envisioned “future”.

Use the range of tools from this Toolbox to help; whether you are considering the possibilities of a health service integration initiative, on the brink of starting or already well on the path.

Results Phase Helpful Tools

The following tools will be helpful in the “RESULTS” phase; the evaluation phase where you monitor your progress, adjust where necessary, and assess the overall success of your health service integration initiative. It is also where you share what you’ve learned over the course of your initiative and plan for sustainability.

Monitoring a Health Service Integration Initiative

Monitoring and evaluation of progress will help you determine if your health service integration initiative is: achieving its goals and strategies; improving health services and making best use of resources; providing effective reports and communications; meeting funding obligations; and determining if any adjustments are necessary.

Identifying and Dealing with Adjustments to your Health Service Integration Initiative

Just as you go for regular check-ups for your health, you need to regularly assess the health of your health service integration initiative. This will help you determine if all is going according to plan or if any adjustments are needed. Use this tool to guide you through a “healthcheck” of your health service integration initiative.

Reporting on a Health Service Integration Initiative Review

Reports on health services integration initiatives assist in meeting accountability requirements, measuring progress, identifying possible corrective action, and supporting general communications. Basic steps can be followed to make sure you prepare and gather the relevant information and then package the content into a format that will be easy to read and meaningful to your readers. The report can be customized to meet your specific needs.

These tools can be viewed in Section 8 starting on page 90.

What Would You Do?

The following exercise provides a scenario in which you have the opportunity to check your knowledge in this area and undertake a practical exercise that could lead to improvements in health services for your community.

“Evaluating” Scenario Exercise

You are pleased that over the past three years, your health centre has successfully planned for and implemented an initiative with the closest acute care facility. This initiative ensures shared and joint planning for the services which your community members access from the acute care facility. For example, clients are now able to have many family members visit at the same time, and where appropriate, bring in traditional foods.

It is time to report back to the stakeholders on the initiative. You are not sure who you should communicate with and what format you should use. You want to promote the good work that the working group has achieved and share the successes, while also providing the lessons learned through the process.

As Health Director, you are responsible for leading the reporting process.

Using the tools, what could you do to ensure you lead a comprehensive and effective reporting process?

If your organization is currently engaged in an integration activity, how could you improve your reporting processes?