

## Formulating Health Service Integration Initiative Strategies

### Description:

This tool helps to review a situation in need of improvement and develop a strategy that will focus on making positive improvements and lead to a positive outcome.

### How it can be used:

Without a clear prioritized strategy, closing the gap between your current situation and your preferred situation can be difficult. This tool provides problem-solving and decision-making steps to explore a situation, prioritize possibilities and then look at sample strategies that can move things forward.

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### Problem-Solving and Decision-Making

Developing strategies requires problem-solving and decision-making. Following are important steps that are tied to strategy formulation and implementation activities. Share these with participants to use a common process and remain focused.

1. Define the problem (with input from yourself and others).
2. Look at potential causes for the problem.
3. Identify alternatives to resolve the problem.
4. Select an approach to resolve the problem.
5. Plan the implementation of the best solution (This is your Implementation Plan).
6. Monitor implementation of the plan.
7. Verify that the problem has been resolved.

### Determining Priorities

The group may identify a significant number of issues which could use strategies and supportive action to make improvements. A good approach, especially when starting up, is to not spread your efforts too thin. It is best to determine priorities, focus on the important ones, and do a good job. The following priority-setting criteria can be used to determine priorities for strategy.

#### High Priority

- It is required by legislation or a contractual obligation.
- It will result in a cost reduction and is consistent with organizational direction.
- It is identified by survey as a priority and will increase staff or client satisfaction.
- It is required for safety and protection of people and property.

#### Medium Priority

- It is required to ensure general management and control of resources and services.
- It will reduce costs in future years.
- It is required to inform as a result of accountability.
- It is required to assist with planning, coordination or modification of programs and services.

#### Low Priority

- It is not a critical support to client service.
- It benefits only a limited number of staff or clients.

- It is primarily promotional in nature.
- Demand has or will decline.

### **Steps to Developing Strategies**

When a group comes together to develop strategies for health services integration activities it often has no common vision, mission, values, or goals in place. The group is often not formulating strategy for an organization, but is more concerned with initiatives or projects to deal with common issues of concern. On the assumption the group has discussed its purpose and terms of reference, shared cultural and other information, and has a memorandum of understanding, the key steps for developing strategy are:

1. Prior to the first strategy formulation session, the group stakeholders should gather relevant information necessary to support decision-making.
2. Review the current situation by discussing what is going on and sharing the relevant information on the delivery of health services as it may relate to potential integration activities.
3. As part of this review, look at related opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses for the delivery of health services.
4. Analyze the current situation information and identify areas for improvement.
5. Describe and develop, where possible, a common vision of the preferred situation or how things could look with the implementation of successful health service integration initiatives (outcomes).
6. Determine and analyze the differences or issues between the current situation and the preferred situation.
7. Prioritize the issues and determine either the top third of the issues or a number agreed upon by the group to develop strategies for.
8. Discuss each of the issues, identify the improvements required, and develop measurable strategies that will be implemented to make improvements happen.

### **Sample Strategies**

1. Develop and become part of a key stakeholder group assessing the current health services environment. Discuss what needs to be improved and the roles and responsibilities of partners in the group. Sign an agreement with partners by: (insert date).
2. Develop protocols and policy to improve communications between First Nations organizations, the regional health authority, and provincial and federal governments and complete a manual to support the arrangements by: (insert date).
3. Improve routine coordination between various health systems (e.g., discharge planning protocols) by having a task group develop a report on specific areas for improvement by (insert date).
4. Establish a task group to identify and reduce differences in processes that will allow for separate systems which can operate with similar although separate processes for the admission or intake area by (insert date).
5. Establish a task group to review the allocation of roles with a view to improving continuity of care and eliminating duplications in practices, and providing a report with recommendations by: (insert date).
6. Determine the feasibility of combining two or more systems in a joint governance structure for a shared services arrangement and report on the findings by: (insert date).
7. Develop an agreed upon process for dealing with disagreements or ambiguities between systems and the eligibility of services on a case-by-case basis by: (insert date).