Section 5 - Planning for a Health Service Integration Initiative ("SET" Phase)

Description

The "SET" phase supports the planning that is needed before you implement a health service integration initiative. Building on your "READY" phase, with a clear understanding of the needs and opportunities, you will consider who needs to be involved, how and when. In addition, there is significant planning required to put in place the "foundation" elements such as strategic plans, memoranda of understanding, and funding agreements.

As with most endeavours, the devil is in the details, so it is absolutely essential to invest sufficient time and resources in this planning phase.

Key Concepts

1. Getting the right people involved.

    a. Who needs to be involved in which activities?

    The various elements and planning activities of the health service integration initiative will require that different people are involved in different ways. For example, the community leadership needs to be involved in the early stage, possibly to provide approvals, but they don't need to be at every activity or meeting. In contrast, the members of the working group would be much more involved in the ongoing operation of the health service integration initiative.

2. Considering culture.

    a. Is your organization ready to work with your partners' cultures?

    This is an important yet often missed consideration in working with outside organizations. It involves asking tough questions about how you operate. Do you recognize different ways of working? Are your employees tolerant of other cultures – both ethnic and organizational? This is one area where training can be helpful; however, leadership that models tolerance and openness can be the most powerful teachers.

    b. Do your partners understand your culture?

    As important as it is for your organization to be open, it is just as crucial for partner organizations to be so. Consider how you can help them understand important cultural concepts that guide your work. A joint training session might be a valuable way to seek those areas of alignment and clarify any misconceptions before they damage any working relationships.

3. Ensuring sufficient resources.

    a. What funds would be available?

    Understanding the available funds, including what might be provided through organization in-kind donations, is critical to the planning of your health service integration initiative. Sometimes partner organizations will have access to additional funds that can be directed to

your joint work.

b. Do you have the human resources required to implement this health service integration initiative?

This has consistently been identified as an essential element in the success of previous endeavours. First is to be clear on the need for a targeted coordinator position, and whether this is a full- or part-time position. Secondly, what skills are necessary to plan and implement the health service integration initiative? Decide which organization will coordinate the human resources. And plan for delays due to hiring. They are a given.

c. What infrastructure is required to implement this health service integration initiative?

Infrastructure in this context refers to those components that are required to implement your health service integration initiative. For example, it might refer to technology, vans, special equipment, buildings, or specialized policies or processes, etc. Most health service integration initiatives will require some kind of infrastructure; one of the partners may be able to provide it and, if not, it must be considered in the budget requirements.

4. Creating the plan.

a. What do you want to do?

Creating a plan that is based on the results of your work in the "READY" phase, means that you are building a plan based on evidence and need and that your organization has the resources to participate in a health service integration initiative. Plan for the length of the initiative (typically 1-3 years) and include goals, objectives, and strategies. Where relevant, include plans for sustainability of all or parts of the health service integration initiative.

b. Who is involved in the planning?

Quite simply, each partner in the health integration initiative needs to have the right people at the right table at the right times for the right reasons. This might mean that there are a few different committees or groups formed to ensure that the work goes forward efficiently. In the "READY" phase, you created a guiding group, which has the vision and makes the big decisions. In addition, a working group might work through the ongoing and day-to-day activities. The working group would also interact with outside stakeholders in various capacities to ensure their perspectives are included.

Key Activities

1. Form a working group.

    a. Ensure representation of partners and key stakeholders.
    b. Create Terms of Reference.
    c. Establish a meeting schedule and timetable.

2. Create an engagement and communication plan.

    a. Outline who needs be involved in which activities and how.
    b. Identify communication targets and approaches.

  c. Create an engagement matrix to determine how to engage with each stakeholder.

3. Engage with partners and stakeholders.

  a. Communicate with stakeholders (e.g., community members, health professionals, provincial health colleagues, leadership, etc.) and provide updates according to the engagement plan.

4. Assess your organizational culture.

  a. Confirm that cultural competency is reflected in your organization's foundation elements (e.g., mission, policies, practices, etc.).
  b. Host organizational sessions to strengthen those areas that are weak (e.g., understanding other cultures, valuing different points of view, etc.).

5. Understand the key partners' organizational cultures.

  a. Host joint training sessions on culture where relevant.
  b. Create common approaches that connect both organizational cultures (e.g., communication products, etc.).

6. Develop a Memorandum of Understanding.

  a. Clearly explain the purpose and goals of the health service integration initiative.
  b. Describe the governance structure and roles and responsibilities.
  c. Explain the funding expectations.
  d. Clarify the timelines.

7. Understand the human resource requirements.

  a. Discuss the number and types of staff required to successfully implement the health service integration initiative.
  b. Create a job description for a full-time or part-time coordinator.
  c. Assign the partner who will provide human resources support for staff.
  d. Determine if any specialized training may be required.

8. Create a draft budget.

  a. Incorporate all stages (planning, implementation, ongoing management, and evaluation) and identify whether or not there are sustainability funding requirements.
  b. Include all human resources and plan for possible changes in staffing (e.g., costs of delays, rehiring, etc.).
  c. Include in-kind contributions from all partners.

9. Describe the infrastructure requirements of the health service integration initiative.

  a. Be clear on the technology required; is it available?
  b. Clarify whether there are capital or facilities considerations.

10. Create the funding proposal.

  a. Clearly describe:
    i. the initiative

ii. the partners
iii. the goals and objectives
iv. the target group
v. the activities
vi. the timeline
vii. the budget
viii. the costs and benefits
ix. the evaluation plan with indicators
x. the risks

b. Incorporate all information from the draft budget, and include the human resource considerations and infrastructure requirements.

11. Create the plan.

a. Outline the goals and desired outcomes of the health service integration initiative.
b. Include the key strategies that will be used to achieve the goals.
c. Describe the benefit that each partner brings to the health service integration initiative.
d. Explain the governance structure and roles and responsibilities.
e. Clearly demonstrate the value the health service integration initiative will bring to clients.
f. Explain how the community and other stakeholders will be engaged throughout the process.
g. List the key activities and resources required.
h. Create performance indicators to ensure progress is tracked.
i. Identify key risks and explain how they will be managed.
j. Discuss the sustainability implications.

Set Phase Helpful Tools

The following tools will be helpful in the "SET" phase; the planning phase which ensures you examine all the necessary elements that will move your health service integration initiative closer to successful implementation.

Creating a Health Service Integration Initiative Community Engagement Plan

Community engagement activities are an important element of your health service integration initiative. It is an effective process to determine priority areas for programming and create a more engaged and mobilized health community. It will also help assess whether your health service integration initiative is effectively responding to the needs of your community. It is important to have a plan for engaging with your community as it will likely be required as part of your health service integration initiative planning and funding.

Creating a Health Service Integration Initiative Communications Plan

A communication plan describes how you share information on your health service integration initiative and explains what information is shared with whom, by when and why. It ensures that the right information on your initiative is communicated to the right people at the right time in the right way. Whether you need to communicate day-to-day updates on your health service integration or "big news" about major changes in your organization, the best communications start with good planning.

Creating Terms of Reference for a Health Service Integration Initiative Working Group

Effective Terms of Reference describe the purpose, structure, scope, membership, roles and deliverables of a group, committee or project. They provide direction to ensure that the Working Group functions with a common understanding and expectation and avoids getting off track. In essence, it is a road map that provides direction to the Working Group about what needs to be achieved, by whom and by when.

Checking your Organization's Cultural Readiness

An organization that is planning for a health service integration initiative will face differences in culture – both within their organization and between their organization and integration partners. It is important to understand if your organization is prepared to deal with cultural differences, and is able to find ways to improve.

Hosting a Cultural Awareness Workshop for Health Service Integration Initiative Partners

The ultimate goal of your health service integration initiative is to create respectful ways to work across organizations and cultures to improve services for your people. One challenge has been to build awareness and cultural competency amongst partners. Hosting a cultural awareness workshop (or two or three) can be a valuable learning exercise for all partners. Use this tool to help you plan the content and the logistics.

Assessing Risk

A Risk Assessment is an effective process for identifying and assessing which elements could potentially and negatively affect the success of your health service integration initiative. It also allows you to examine potential risks that your organization may face when making an important decision, such as where and how to integrate programs and services. Using the tools guidelines, fill out the matrix provided to determine whether or not there are significant risks to your health service integration initiative and identify possible ways to mitigate and manage these risks.

Creating a Memorandum of Understanding

A MOU highlights the objectives and management arrangements of your health service integration initiative partnership. It also explains communication, key definitions, expectations and information sharing processes. Although not a legally binding document, it outlines key elements such as the partnership's governance structure and source of authority.

Creating a Funding Proposal

A proposal is a request for financial assistance to implement a project and must justify what you want and why. How elaborate your proposal is will depend upon the resources being requested and the size of the project. Modify the steps to reflect your health service integration initiative as you develop your next funding proposal.

Formulating Health Service Integration Initiative Strategies

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

These tools can be viewed in Section 8 starting on page 56.

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.

"Planning" Scenario Exercise

Your health centre provides health promotion activities and limited primary or acute care. For most health services, community members must travel an hour to the nearest provincial facility to access primary or acute care. The transfer between your community services and the provincial services often causes confusion and certainly isn't as smooth as it could be.

As one example, the client is taken through a full questionnaire in your community health centre and then another set of duplicative intake questions when they are admitted to the provincial facility.

As Health Director, you know you have to coordinate an improved intake process. You are tasked with pulling together and leading a project working group on improving the transfer journey for your community members.

Using the tools, what could you do to start the planning process?

If your organization is currently engaged in an integration activity such as this, how could you improve your planning process?