

QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

DEFINITION

A stakeholder-informed mental health quality assessment and improvement (QAI) plan is a plan that includes measures of consumer satisfaction, individual student outcomes (e.g., measures of behavioral or emotional health), and school-related outcomes (e.g., attendance, behavior, academic performances). Diverse groups of stakeholders -- including youth, families, school staff, and community leaders -- provide guidance on quality assessment and improvement of school mental health programming.

RATIONALE

Documenting the impacts of services through a QAI plan is critical to the success of any school mental health program. Documenting program impacts not only allows school mental health providers to understand and improve their preventive and treatment efforts, it provides funders and community stakeholders with valuable information about the effectiveness of the program. Findings from a QAI plan are necessary to improve services on an ongoing and continual basis.

The National Assembly on School-Based Health Care recommends the following five steps for schools, stakeholders and mental health providers seeking to design and implement an effective, stakeholder-informed, family directed QAI plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Identify a team of at least three stakeholders to assess the quality of mental health services and programming within your school.** Potential members could include:
 - Educator
 - Family member/Advocate
 - Guidance Counselor
 - Health Provider
 - Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) Team Leader
 - School Administrator
 - School Psychologist
 - School Social Worker
 - School-Based Community
 - Mental Health Provider
 - Student Support Team Leader

Designate one person as team leader. The team leader is responsible for getting team members to complete an assessment, coordinating a team meeting to review results, and monitoring the action plan.

2. **Have team members independently complete an assessment (e.g., [MHPET](#)) of school mental health services.**
Individuals should review their ratings and consider what they identified as strengths and weaknesses in their school's mental health programs and services after completing the assessment.
3. **As a team, review the results of the assessments and develop a consensus around which indicators to focus on during the school year.** Select one to three indicators by considering the following:
 - Which indicators were rated the highest and the lowest?

- Were there any patterns or clustering of scores?
 - In which indicators was there the most and least agreement in ratings?
 - Which indicators are in most need of improvement?
 - Which of these can you realistically affect during the school year?
 - Which indicators best fit with other school priorities?
4. **Develop an action plan that outlines at least three action steps/strategies that will help your school improve around the selected quality indicators.**
- Be specific--Identify who, what, when, and how within your plan.
 - If your selected quality indicators do not address [family](#) and/or [youth engagement](#), include action steps/strategies that will enhance family and youth involvement relative to the indicators you selected. Seek input from youth and families and be creative.
 - Consider what may prevent you from getting this important work done. Discuss as a team strategies that could help you to overcome these barriers.
 - Develop a follow-up plan including:
 - a) How to communicate about progress (e.g., monthly meetings, email communication, discussions)
 - b) Other teams and committees at the school in which to incorporate quality improvement activities.
5. **As a team, evaluate your progress regularly by:**
- Re-administering the assessment
 - Comparing your scores. Consider:
 - a) Where were there improvements or decline?
 - b) To what do you attribute the changes?
 - c) In which areas is there still need for improvement?
 - Use the evaluation data to modify the action plan.

REFERENCES

School mental health.org (n.d.) *The Ten Step Action Planning Guide for Quality Improvement in School Mental Health* Retrieved from <http://www.schoolmentalhealth.org/Resources/Clin/QAIRsrc/QAI>.

Weist et al (2007). *Advances in school-based mental health interventions*. In Evans, S.W., Weist, M.D., Serpell, Z. "Quality in School Mental Health". New York: Civic Research Institute.

RESOURCES

http://www.ideapartnership.org/documents/PrinciplesforBestPracticeInSchoolMentalHealth_The.pdf

Principles for Best Practice in School Mental Health: The School Mental Health Quality Assessment Questionnaire

http://csmh.umaryland.edu/resources.html/resource_packets/download_files/qai_2001.pdf
Quality Assessment & Improvement Resource Packet from Center for School Mental Health Assistance

<http://www.nasbhc.org/atf/cf/%7BCD9949F2-2761-42FB-BC7A-CEE165C701D9%7D/MHPET.pdf>
NASBHC Mental Health Planning and Evaluation Template (MHPET) from NASBHC