

Linking Communication Protocol Worksheet
September 2010

General Purposes

The overall function served by linking communication protocols is to develop a feedback process for creating a hospitable policy, funding, and operational environment for new initiatives or systems changes

The specific purposes of linking communication protocols are to:

- Communicate progress and celebrate success throughout the system
- Report systemic barriers that are preventing or hindering implementation and
 - Should be resolved by one of the groups
 - Need to be moved 'up the line' to the group that can best address the barrier
- Report on actions taken related to past issues
- Revisit past decisions and agreements periodically to ensure that solutions are still functional

In promoting system alignment, you may be developing a 'chain' of protocols from the practice level to the state level or you may be developing protocols between and among partners in a collaborative group. Depending on a number of factors (e.g. how new the relationships are, how cohesive the groups are, how much a common purpose is shared), it may take one or several meetings to work out the first draft of the protocols. After the protocols have been tried out a couple of times, the process should be evaluated for satisfaction and functionality and then adjusted. Below are some questions that can be helpful in guiding the discussion.

Guiding Questions for Developing Linking Communication Protocols

Names of Groups to be linked:

Rationale for creating linking communication protocols (e.g. overall purpose):

What types of issues/items need to be communicated to and from each group?

From: (group A)

To: (group B)

From: (group B)

To: (group A)

What types of issues do not need to be communicated?

How often will you schedule feedback sessions/events to review issues (e.g. monthly, every 2 months)?
Why that interval?

How **and** who will gather, review, and prioritize issues?

Who is charged with providing information to the other group(s) (e.g. which person or role)? ...in what
format (verbally in person, in writing, email)?

Preparatory work to initiate the protocol and process for final agreement creation.

Target Date to initiate:

Example:

**Linking Communication Protocol for a Multi-Site Implementation of a New Practice Model
Practice Level to State Team to Practice Level**

Practice Level Communication Team:

A practice-level communication team has been formed consisting of one front-line practitioner from each of the three implementing agencies and their respective supervisors plus the external coach. This team will meet once a month in person, with the exception of agency X who will join by web cam. The practitioner and supervisor from each implementing site will raise issues in the group meeting that they consider to be systemic and should be fed to the state level team. These issues should include issues related to training, coaching, data access and use, administrative policies, state regulations. They should not include any issues that are related to a specific individual or quality indicators at an individual agency. Discussion at the meeting might result in a decision that a particular issue is not systemic and should be referred back to the agency for resolution

Expected outcomes related to the meeting:

- *Identify at least one common policy or program guideline that is facilitating the work and needs to be communicated and continued.*
- *Identify and then prioritize policies, program guidelines, or resource issues that are presenting systemic barriers (e.g. impacting all or most agencies) to effectively implementing the model of care.*
- *For each barrier, the practice level communications team will endeavor to make at least one recommendation for resolution*
- *Facilitators, barriers, and recommendations will be documented in writing and emailed to the Chair of the State Level Communication Team*
- *The Chair of the Practice Level Communication Team will present the issues to the State Team at the State Team's next regularly scheduled monthly meeting.*

State Level Communication Team:

The State Level Communication Team is the state management team. Practice level feedback is welcome and viewed as a necessary component of creating an aligned and functional system. The State Level Team Chair will receive and distribute all emails from the Practice Level Team to all State Team members prior to the monthly meeting. The State Level Team will reserve 30 minutes at each meeting for discussion with the Practice Level Chair and other invited practice level individuals in order to discuss and review issues.

Resolution may or may not be able to occur at that meeting. If more work, information, or study is needed the State Level Team will communicate its plan for dealing with the issue in a timely manner via email to the Chair of the Practice Level Communications Team prior to the next monthly meeting.

The State Level Team will review and reflect on all issues raised and will report the status of each issue every 6 months at the State Management Team meeting. Data will include # of issues raised during the last six months and the status of each.

Summary data will include:

- *Percent of issues still under consideration,*
- *Percent of issues resolved to facilitate the work,*
- *Percent of issues that were not able to be resolved (e.g. requires legislative or other regulatory action beyond the group's control) at this time,*
- *Percent of issues referred on and person accountable for follow-up.*

The data summary will be the topic of a meeting and three representatives of the Practice Level Communications team will be invited to attend that meeting.

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