



Therapeutic Behavioral Services Accountability Structure Report to the Department of Mental Health

Purpose: The goal of the Therapeutic Behavioral Services (TBS) Accountability Structure is to identify and develop a statewide practice and performance improvement structure. This structure will include outcome and utilization measures and a continuous quality improvement process that will allow the California State Department of Mental Health (CDMH) to effectively ensure that TBS are accessible, effective, and sustained for the Emily Q class members as outlined in the Court-approved TBS Plan.

The accountability structure, to be implemented by CDMH, will be accomplished through annual reports submitted by the county Mental Health Plans (MHPs). This new report utilizes a quality improvement process based on principles and accountability activities that focus on practice and service coordination, rather than compliance and disallowances. The report is designed to increase Emily Q class access to appropriate TBS services. This approach requires an interagency review of relevant data in response to four questions, utilizing a standard report format.

—Nine Point Plan, Appendix C

Directions: Please provide a brief summary of the answers to the following four questions as discussed in your local learning conversation (both Level I and Level II counties). Per the Nine Point Plan, it is the Mental Health Director's responsibility to submit the completed form. Please save this form to your computer then submit, along with a list of attendees, to TBS@dmh.ca.gov.

County MHP: Alameda

Date of Meeting: December 18, 2009

MHP Contact (name, phone, e-mail): Sara Wood-Kraft, Ph.D. TBS Coordinator 510-667-7545, SWood_Kraft@acbhcs.org

Was this a Stakeholder or Decision-Maker meeting? Stakeholder Meeting

Attendees:

Elizabeth Cruz, Family Preservation Unit, Juvenile Justice

Lisa Lopez, Probation Officer, Juvenile Justice

CeCe Mendoza, Willow Rock Adolescent Center

Heather Rogers, Probation Officer, Juvenile Justice

Fitimah Hadley, Collaborative Court

Ruth Rubalcava, Oakland Unified School District

Sara Wood-Kraft, TBS Coordinator, Alameda County

1. Are the children and youth in the county who are Emily Q class members and who would benefit from TBS, getting TBS?

In this stakeholder meeting with representatives from Juvenile Justice, Probation, and Education, the discussion focused on youth in contact with these systems. It was the group consensus that there are youth who may be eligible for TBS who are not getting TBS.

Main points of the Question 1 discussion:

- **Language differences may make it difficult to explain TBS or to make the referral, even when services may be available in that language (example: Vietnamese).**
- **Cultural differences may make services like TBS unacceptable – families may experience TBS services in the home as intrusive; there may be concerns about what TBS coaches will see in the home, or concerns about illegal activities or undocumented family members.**
- **Probation Officers and Court representatives may not be familiar with TBS and the TBS referral process. Past experiences with TBS referrals may have made the process seem too restrictive or too complicated or may have made the criteria for class membership seem too challenging.**
- **Several county agencies may have had turnover since TBS training was conducted; so rather than advocating for TBS referral they may be ‘pooling their ignorance’ and not making appropriate referrals.**
- **Some parents and families involved with the Juvenile Justice system do not want their children to be in the home; they are discouraged and do not have faith that TBS could make things better for their children and families.**
- **Some parents and families do not want any further involvement with the Courts or any connection with programs recommended by the Courts.**
- **Some families are offered too many services and are unable to identify the ones that would best serve their needs (example: in-home individual therapy and family therapy along with TBS).**
- **There has been historic confusion about whether youth receiving Day Treatment services would also be eligible for TBS.**
- **There have been information, language, administrative, and eligibility barriers; wait lists, funding, and court requirements have not been barriers (although as service is increasing there may be more challenges).**
- **Because of the above barriers, Mental Health Providers may not have pushed for TBS referral when it might have been appropriate.**
- **Additional challenges specific to youth in Juvenile Hall included:**
 - **Cutoff of Medi-Cal benefits while in Hall (and thus no TBS eligibility)**
 - **Lack of therapist to bridge transition between Hall and home**
 - **Poorly managed Medi-Cal transitions between group home and other Medi-Cal eligible situations**
 - **Service gap between facilities**
 - **Lack of collaboration between agencies (Social Service, Probation and Mental Health)**

2. Are the children and youth who get TBS experiencing the intended benefits?

The children and youth who get TBS generally experience the intended benefits. This group offered many examples of successful TBS interventions which “reduced bad behavior tremendously” (decreased aggression, decreased police involvement, increased parental capacity for managing aggressive and assaultive behaviors, increased youth capacity for self-regulation). Examples of benefits also included increased interagency coordination between Juvenile Hall and Willow Rock (Alameda County’s adolescent psychiatric facility) and other situations involving coordinated management of self-injurious behaviors and emergency and safety plans.

Exceptions cited by one Probation Officer were youth who were considered “recidivist’ and who were seen as “criminals” with behaviors that were not amenable to modification through therapeutic and behavioral understanding.

Thus, TBS was seen as a very good prevention measure for youth not yet “hardened,” and there was a recognition that enhanced TBS outreach and education might lead to considerably more youth benefitting from the services.

3. What alternatives to TBS are being provided in the county?

Alameda County is currently focused more on TBS expansion than on TBS alternatives. Two examples of alternatives listed by the group were the In-Home Stabilization Program offered by Fred Finch Youth Center, which takes place after school and at home, and the Multi-Systemic Therapy services offered for families through the Juvenile Justice Center – very effective but not including one-on-one work with youth.

4. What can be done to improve the use of TBS and/or alternative behavioral support services in the county?

Suggestions from the group for improving TBS were as follows:

- Continue outreach to inform various agencies/systems about TBS and TBS eligibility.
- Extend the assessment period for longer than 30 days for youth moving between systems.
- Develop similar programs to serve youth without Medi-Cal eligibility.
- Continue outreach to Mental Health Providers to increase understanding of TBS referrals.
- Develop better interagency bridges to manage services to youth in transition, so that mental health providers and TBS could follow youth during these transitions.

Additional Comments:

- Three stakeholder invitees were unable to attend this meeting; representatives from Parent Partners, Social Services, and an additional Probation Officer.
- TBS Local Conversation Stakeholder Meetings in 2010 will include additional representatives from Education and from Social Services as well as Parent Partners and more mental health providers.