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Family Resource Network (FRN) Regional Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 11, 2024

3:00-4:30pm, MS Teams

Attendance

Present

- Robin Bohannon
- Steve Callander
- Susan Caskey
- Suzanne Crawford
- Elizabeth Crowe
- Miranda Fisher
- Jennifer Leosz
- Jackie List
- Christina Pacheco
- Mandy Perera
- Johnny Terrell
- Jorge De Santiago
- Simon Smith
- Anne Tapp
- Julie Van Domelen

Absent

- BVSD (Vacant Seat)
- Marc Cowell
- Dr. Perla Delgado
- Lexi Nolen
- Karin Stayton

Staff Present

- Georgina Becerril
- Katrina Harms
- Susana Lopez-Baker
- Joni Lynch
- Kammi Siemens
- Whitney Wilcox

Welcome and Introductions

The Family Resource Network (FRN) Regional Council meeting was called to order by Julie Van Domelen.

Approval of November 2023 FRN Regional Council Meeting Minutes

Suzanne Crawford made a motion to approve the minutes from the November meeting, which was seconded by Elizabeth Crowe. The motion passed unanimously.

FRN Updates

- **Vice Chair Recruitment:** Julie announced that she will be rotating off as Chair, with Marc moving from Vice Chair to Chair. They are currently seeking a government or school district representative from outside of the Longmont area to serve as Vice Chair. Elections will be held at the upcoming March meeting.
- **Work Plan Updates:** FRC Directors will present rental assistance trends at the Housing Summit on January 29. The Summit will be livestreamed and recorded. They will unveil the rental assistance dashboard developed by the work group at the March Regional Council meeting.

SDOH Tool Discussion: Recap, Challenges, and Proposed Framework

Julie provided a brief recap of the SDOH tool discussion. At the October Screener Summit, attendees agreed to move forward with a screener and develop a custom screening tool. However, concerns were raised about resource limitations. Considering these challenges, a less ambitious approach was proposed.

Whitney Wilcox emphasized that the goal of the meeting was to reach a consensus on adopting a shared SDOH screening framework and agreeing on next steps. She shared feedback received by organizations after the November meeting, which indicated mixed feelings about a shared screening tool:

- Many see the benefits but worry about duplication and increased workload. There were also concerns about screening for non-existent resources.
- Some teams not currently screening are interested in piloting a screening tool.

Whitney outlined a middle ground approach, given these challenges and the interest in SDOH screening:

- Commitment to screen for SDOH, regardless of the tool used.
- Endorse PRAPARE and PRAPARE Light as recommended tools for organizations not currently screening for SDOH.
- Exploring embedding screening tools in data systems like Community Connect and FindHelp.

The proposed timeline moving forward:

- By May, organizations new to SDOH screening will explore using the PRAPARE and PRAPARE light tools, with a check-in at the May meeting.
- A small team will explore embedding screening tools in data platforms.
- Starting with the May Regional Council meeting, there will be regular check-ins on SDOH screening tool progress and updates on embedding screening tools.

Small groups discussed the proposed framework's feasibility for their organizations, identifying obstacles and missing elements.

Small Group Feedback on the Proposed Framework

Groups shared their insights on the three prompts: comfort level with the framework, anticipated obstacles, and missing components.

Group 1: Two members already screen, two don't. They prefer sticking with their current screening tools. Concerns included portability, referrals and systems integration, and screening and identifying needs without available resources to refer to.

Group 2: Capacity issues were identified as a barrier. They stressed the importance of not screening for needs lacking resources.

Group 3: Some agencies would find adopting another screener challenging. There is interest from a few teams in piloting a screening tool. They emphasized needing clarity on the tool's purpose if they're not able to refer people for services (data collection only).

Group 4: Consensus emerged that adding another tool would be burdensome. They discussed embedding screener questions into existing processes. Concerns were raised about screening for unavailable resources and whether there is comprehensive knowledge across the continuum about where to refer for services. Questions also arose about the efficacy of existing platforms like Unite Us and Community Connect, and doubt about whether existing processes could adopt a uniform approach.

Group 5: Concerns were voiced about meeting identified needs, capacity constraints, and follow-up ability. They explored seeking grants or resources to support technical or administrative help. Clinica shared their targeted use of the PRAPARE tool with specific populations.

Common themes across the groups included varied starting points, the importance of clarifying the purpose of the screening (data collection vs. referral system improvement), and concerns about implementation challenges and capacity limitations. Julie asked for confirmation on the summary and invited any additional input or differing perspectives. There were none.

Julie requested a quick poll to gauge consensus on moving forward with the proposed timeline and framework. A show of hands indicated support from nine participants.

Susan Caskey requested clarification on whether the vote included getting clarity on backend processes and the rationale behind the decision. She emphasized the need to address the raised issues and having a clear resolution process.

Julie clarified that the challenge lies in the “how” rather than the “why” of the initiative. She reiterated the unanimous agreement to adopt a shared SDOH screening approach to help strengthen the referral system. The proposal aims to commit to a process to collect implementation experience, develop platforms to ease the process, and encourage agencies to consider screening if they haven’t already.

Whitney clarified that the focus has shifted from adopting a shared tool to acknowledging the existing use of various tools. The agreement includes screening for SDOH regardless of specific tool used, developing shared talking points for domains with limited resources (housing, child care), and exploring embedding tools into existing data systems (Community Connect, FindHelp).

Susan raised the need for additional discussion on the referral system before diving into screening. She suggested the LACs might be better suited to map out referral sources and program availability. Julie sought input from those currently using screening tools to understand how they manage referrals when resources aren’t available. Robin shared concerns about staff lacking knowledge of available services outside of their scope.

Julie explained the role of navigation in referring individuals to other services. While there may not always be resources immediately available, the goal is to initiate the process and provide support through navigators. Resources like FindHelp and Unite Us exist, but efforts need to be streamlined to avoid duplication in creating resource lists.

Jackie List shared her willingness to move forward, describing their organization’s use of a specific screening tool. Elizabeth Crowe interpreted the framework as a value statement, emphasizing the voluntary nature of adopting recommended tools. She also voted in favor. Christina Pacheco echoed Elizabeth’s sentiments, supporting moving forward to address this longstanding issue.

Julie acknowledged the framework isn’t as ambitious as initially hoped but represents progress.

Susan appreciated the additional conversation and wants to make sure we’re including some of the topics that have been barriers in the past.

Julie proposed adopting elements to work on from January to May. This includes supporting any agency interested in starting to use a screening tool, gathering implementation

experiences, and a technical team exploring embedding screening tools into data platforms for easier access to comprehensive service information.

Susan requested clarification on the roles of the Regional Council and LACs. While acknowledging the importance of the topic, Susan expressed concern that the operational work might take away from the Regional Council's other system-related work. Whitney clarified that the LACs had been waiting for the Regional Council's decision on next steps. With clear direction, the LACs could then work on developing a matrix to understand what tools organizations use and how they collect data. The LACs have also been working on the FindHelp platform, working to claim and update their agency information.

Additional Agency Announcements

- Robin shared a link to MyFriendBen, a website that helps families identify potential benefits based on income and family structure.
- Robin informed the council about the county and city of Boulder working on a cold weather shelter for the unhoused for the long weekend.

The meeting was adjourned.