



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network
Chippewa Cree Tribe Technical Assistance Request #192
Summary Report

Prepared for
The Administration for Children and Families
Office of Family Assistance

Introduction and Background Information

The Chippewa Cree Tribal TANF Program operates on the Rocky Boy Reservation in northern Montana and serves a rural population. The program's goal is to "move Chippewa Cree Tribal TANF Program recipients from TANF into jobs so they can support their families."¹ In April 2010, Chippewa Cree submitted a second TA Request to the Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network (WPTA) requesting assistance with integrating wraparound case management services. Wraparound case management is a team-based case management process that provides individualized, coordinated, client-driven care, to meet the complex needs of tribal TANF clients;² it is also outcome-based and ties goals to observable or measurable success indicators.³

Once the Request was approved, WPTA hosted a conference call to further discuss Chippewa Cree's needs. WPTA invited the Center for Human Services, U.C. Davis Extension, University of California (U.C. Davis) to participate because of their involvement in the response to the tribe's initial TA Request in 2008. During the call, the WPTA team learned during the call that Chippewa Cree did not have a formal process to guide communication among their various social service agencies, and that the tribe tried several unsuccessful interventions with TANF participants, which were attributed to a lack of a comprehensive and collaborative case management framework.

Technical Assistance Plan Goal and Objectives

Based on the TA Request and subsequent conversation, WPTA developed a TA Plan with four objectives:

1. To support Chippewa Cree in establishing an official wraparound case management and intervention process for Tribal TANF participants who need services across many agencies;
2. To provide Chippewa Cree with a two day training/TA event on wraparound case management and intervention;
3. To assist Chippewa Cree in fostering collaborations across their various social services agencies so they can better serve their clients in a holistic, meaningful, and culturally appropriate manner; and
4. To encourage implementation and sustainability of wraparound case management by equipping Chippewa Cree with tools and skills to move forward on their own.

To accomplish these objectives, WPTA provided technical assistance in three phases – a Wraparound Services Training Event, a Tribal TANF Case Review Teleconference, and a Wraparound Case Management Services Webinar.

Wraparound Services Training Event

The Wraparound Services Training Event was held on April 26–27, 2011 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Stone Child College in Box Elder, Montana and was facilitated by WPTA and U.C. Davis.

¹ Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network. Final Report of Peer Technical Assistance Activity #192, Chippewa Cree Tribal Wraparound Services Training, Box Elder, Montana, April 26-27, 2011.

² Ibid.

³ Cowan, G. Chippewa Cree TANF Webinar, March 9, 2012.

The participants began by discussing the existing Chippewa Cree Tribe TANF Program model. New clients were asked to visit the Family Resource Center for an assessment to evaluate potential barriers (e.g., GED, driver's license, substance use, and life skills) to self-sufficiency. The case manager developed a plan and the client was then referred to White Hope Sky Center (if tested positive for drugs/alcohol), Tribal courts, and/or the Wellness program. After the referral, the case manager kept in contact with White Hope Sky Center and then determined the best approach for the client. Follow-up was conducted with the client approximately 30 days later (sometimes sooner), depending on the client's eligibility for services and assistance. The typical TANF process was: eligibility was determined, referral was made, the client followed through with the plan, and follow-up was conducted. If the client did not access services upon follow-up, he/she could be denied TANF services. If the client did not contact the provider, the case manager attempted to determine the client's barriers. A client could return to the program after an initial denial to try to find services.

Participants agreed that they should be aware of services provided elsewhere so that they could direct their clients to the appropriate organizations for assistance, and determined that potential partners for their wraparound services model included schools, mental health providers, cultural resources, and the community coalition. U.C. Davis provided background information on the wraparound services model and emphasized the wraparound team should consist of 4-10 professionals and close family members, with more than half being family to help prevent the client from feeling "attacked."

The participants discussed the four wraparound model implementation phases – 1) engagement and preparation; 2) plan development; 3) plan implementation, monitoring, and revision; and 4) transition – and the skills required to implement each phase. They also reviewed potential barriers to successful wraparound implementation, and the importance of creating a Memorandum of Understanding that clearly defines confidentiality, commitment, conflicts of interest, and the conditions of wraparound services.

Outcomes

The group collaborated to develop a timeline for successful implementation of Chippewa Cree Tribe TANF wraparound services within a one-month period: Week One – Identify Client/Families for Wraparound; Week Two – Meet with Families and Identify Team; Week Three – Complete Thorough Assessment, Invite Providers, and Host First Team Meeting; and Week Four – Begin Case Planning and Host Second Team Meeting.

Training participants agreed upon the following steps for a pilot Chippewa Cree Tribe TANF program wraparound case management process (with a suggested initial limited participation of five families): 1) Develop a wraparound model flow chart to illustrate the process, which may include a confidentiality agreement for non-providers to sign and a calendar; 2) Determine wraparound services participation criteria (in addition to TANF participation); 3) Select specific families to participate in wraparound services at monthly case reviews/staffing meetings; 4) Begin wraparound process by meeting with the clients/families and asking them to identify their respective wraparound team members; 5) Conduct a thorough assessment, invite service providers, and conduct the first wraparound team meeting; and 6) Conduct case planning and host the second wraparound team meeting.

Next Steps

Chippewa Cree began implementing wraparound services, but requested additional support, as some case managers were unable to attend the training event. Chippewa Cree reported one case manager successfully implemented wraparound services, but another case manager experienced some challenges; they developed two outlines of these caseworkers' experiences and sent them to WPTA and U.C. Davis for feedback and recommendations in developing future action steps. Chippewa Cree was adamant that success would depend on its case managers' ability to execute the wraparound services model. WPTA suggested a conference call with all Chippewa Cree case management staff participating and a follow-up webinar refresher on the comprehensive wraparound services process.

Tribal TANF Case Review Teleconference

The Tribal TANF Case Review Teleconference was held on November 16, 2011 to discuss the two cases submitted by Chippewa Cree and provide further guidance for supporting the families in question, as well as other families they might serve in the future. Call participants included Chippewa Cree Tribe staff Elaine Topsy, Kenneth LaFromboise, Brandon LaMere, Robin Running Bird, and Harriet Standing Rock; OFA Central Office staff Lisa Washington-Thomas, Felicia Gaither, and Janelle Jones; U.C. Davis staff Julie Gondry and Geni Cowan; and WPTA staff Patricia Strong, Kamille Beye, and Dana Eisenberg (BLH Technologies, Inc.), and Sarah Hogan (ICF International).

The first case involved a couple referred to Chippewa Cree Tribe Human Services, Child Welfare, for issues involving domestic violence, child abuse, assault and battery, and alcohol abuse. Chippewa Cree developed a wraparound services case plan for presenting problems/issues, and involved the Home Based Services Program, the White Sky Hope Center, the Adult Healing to Wellness program, Stone Child College, and the Family Resource Center in the wraparound process. After selecting their support team members, the couple successfully completed treatment programs and Nurturing Parenting classes, and one of them enrolled in college. Over a four-month time period, the tribe determined through wraparound meetings and home visits that the clients had met all their pre-determined goals and become a self-sufficient family.

In the second case, the mother re-applied for TANF benefits with four children and the father had been incarcerated. Chippewa Cree stated the husband was not in compliance because he had not attended mandatory substance abuse workshops. These wraparound services were not successful, as both individuals missed several meetings and parenting classes.

Outcomes

Based on the varying results of the two cases highlighted, the Chippewa Cree staff concluded that wraparound services work best when buy-in is achieved by all family members, and suggested ways to motivate families after reinforcement. U.C. Davis agreed and explained that a key part of case management is documenting and measuring success.

The call participants discussed possible issues that contributed to the difficulties with the second case, and U.C. Davis provided the tribe with specific steps to improve the wraparound services

process. Chippewa Cree shared that one potential team member was not allowed to join the wraparound support team because she was a TANF administrative worker. U.C. Davis emphasized that a dedicated support team is key to a family's success with wraparound services, and the tribe stated that the TANF program would now allow the administrative worker to join the team. U.C. Davis further explained that the family's support team must be composed of members that the family trusts; however, the team cannot be entirely comprised of professionals because that creates an environment that tempts the family to rely on the team for action steps rather than themselves. U.C. Davis also suggested that it would be helpful to include a Chippewa Cree elder and peace keeper as a member of the support team because his advice will be respected, as well as a professional with domestic violence counseling experience due to previous domestic violence issues within the family. The support team will then help the family decide how to make better decisions. As the support team encourages the family through this process, the family will buy in, leading to the family's success.

Wraparound Case Management Services Webinar

The WPTA Team hosted a refresher Webinar on wraparound case management services on March 9, 2012. Webinar participants included Chippewa Cree Tribe staff Elaine Topsy, Samuel Campor, Edna Ball, Colleen Baker, and Ken LaFromboise; Geni Cowan from Eagle Blue Associates; Lisa Washington-Thomas from OFA Central Office; and WPTA staff Patricia Strong, Kamille Beye, and Renée McMullen (BLH Technologies, Inc.) and Katie Caldwell (ICF International.) The webinar was designed to revisit the previous discussion about wraparound services and review methods of using those services efficiently and effectively. Ms. Geni Cowan served as the main trainer and facilitator of the Webinar. She described wraparound services as a tightly woven process that eliminates gaps in the specific and unique services that clients may require. During the training, the group focused on organizing and implementing wraparound as a formal service through Chippewa Cree's TANF program.

Ms. Cowan presented the ten wraparound service principles – family voice and choice, team-based, natural supports, collaboration, community-based, culturally competent, individualized, strengths-based, unconditional care, and outcome-based – and shared implementation practices that Chippewa Cree could use to maximize the impact of each principle on their work. Ms. Cowan also led the discussion on the case manager's role in interacting with the client/family, and reviewed the four implementation phases and associated timelines. Also presented were six themes of implementation – community partnership, collaborative action, fiscal policies and sustainability, access to needed supports and services, human resource development and support, and accountability.

Chippewa Cree shared their implementation successes to date, and attributed them to emphasizing the importance of tracking outcomes. They facilitate this process during the initial meeting by sharing their baseline findings with clients and families, and then asking two questions:

1. Where would the clients like to be in the next year or so based on their current status?
2. How can Chippewa Cree help the clients obtain the services for which they are eligible?

This discussion with the client and support system enables the tribe to track progress toward agreed upon outcomes, and also establishes client buy-in.

Outcomes

Key Webinar outcomes included Chippewa Cree Tribe staff's increased comprehension of the wraparound services process, and strategies for implementation and sustainability. The staff expressed confidence in their ability to initiate wraparound services based on the information provided.

Next Steps

Ms. Cowan stressed that it was critical for Chippewa Cree to establish community collaborations as they continue developing wraparound services. In planning, the tribe must ask, "Who do we get involved and what do we need them to do?" Wraparound service providers must agree to accept responsibility for client outcomes. Chippewa Cree should also review their current program to determine if adjustments need to be made to facilitate the wraparound process. For example, the case management job description may have to be revised to emphasize facilitation skills over interviewing skills.

To assist with implementing wraparound, Chippewa Cree will draw on their experience with collaborative assignments within their Human Services Division; they have hosted team-building exercises among foster care, TANF, child support, etc and will continue to provide additional training. They plan to develop the wraparound services flow chart (initially discussed during the onsite training) as a visual aid that includes information on their TANF and child welfare initiative programs. Chippewa Cree has also set aside funding for counseling assistance from "peacemakers" or tribal advocates.

In preparation of closing the technical assistance request, the WPTA Team hosted a debrief conference call with Chippewa Cree on September 26, 2012 to discuss their progress implementing wraparound services and learn of any new process outcomes. During the call, Mr. Kenneth LaFromboise, Case Manager for Chippewa Cree Tribe, indicated that they have implemented wraparound services since the last training which have worked well with participants when implemented properly. He shared that staff do have the flexibility to implement this approach. Chippewa Cree has experienced some staff turnover, so training new staff has been an ongoing task. They have found that incorporating elders and peacemakers into the wraparound process has been beneficial for the participants, who value their input. Chippewa Cree has also brought all of their services under one roof for an "umbrella scope," which is more convenient for everyone; it has increased accessibility, improved participant buy-in, and provided staff a better perspective about the wraparound process.