

HRSA/MCHB 2007 FEDERAL/STATE PARTNERSHIP MEETING

Building Blocks for Promising Practice Models

October 14 - 17, 2007

Promising Practices: Building Data Capacity for Transition Progress and Practices

JULIE PRESKITT: Thank you for inviting me to participate this afternoon. I hate to be last, because you've gone behind such wonderful other speakers and you're supposed to bring things together. And that's a challenge. So, anyway, I hope you'll bear with me today. I've also come to Washington and brought home a head cold. I feel like I need one of those T-shirts that says I went to Washington and all I got was a lousy head cold. I apologize.

I was asked to spend -- actually, if you would go back for just one second. I was asked to spend a bit of time this afternoon telling you about a tool that Alabama really didn't develop but modified.

And I'll share with you that in a few minutes. But I wanted to point out my partner in crime Ms. Susan Colburn, whose name is under mine. She couldn't be with us today but she's our state parent consultant and she's also involved with our youth advisory committee as well as transition activities in Alabama. And she was unable to be with us, but I told her I was going to have her name up there. So you can tell her that I did. We miss her.

Modified Form 13 or Form 13-A was actually named by Patty Hackett. You can see her on the left there. She came to Alabama to participate in a Healthy People 2010 conference a couple years back. The lady on the right, Jennifer Thomas, was our then youth consultant in the state. And this came about actually as I'd love to tell you that this was an act of lots of plan and really thinking about how to do something and do something new and innovative. But really it was one of those opportunities for what if. And what I mean by that is it was Block Grant time and we were talking about how we measure our family involvement and realized we really didn't have a way we objectively measured youth involvement. We were involving youth throughout our program and our process, but we wrote about it in the Block Grant narrative but we didn't really have anything that quantified that.

So as we sat one late afternoon, it became a what if. What if we take what we're doing for families and do the same thing for youth in terms of with the rigor with which we measure it.

And so we went to our then director of our program and said can we do this? And she said sure. And she said if you do it, now, remember you're going to have to keep doing it. So we did. And imagine our surprise that the one year that you want to do something a little different, and it involves youth and Patty Hackett is your Block Grant reviewer.

And I was nervous, needless to say, about what that might be and would she approve. And luckily she did and has encouraged us to share this so-called modified Form 13 with you. And so we appreciate that.

The tool itself is fairly explanatory. Oh, by the way, I was supposed to mention there was a bit of a technical glitch putting the manual together. So the PowerPoint that I'm using is indeed in your manual however it's under Tab 24 so maybe that's some special number, I'm not sure. But you'll find this in Tab 24.

And the tool, though, is under Tab 19. So you have two things, but we'll see how well you flip papers.

So with that being said that the tool is fairly explanatory I'd like to spend a little time talking to you about the rationale. And as I pointed out, we're all familiar with Title V Block Grant and the use of form 13. And the characteristics describing how states involve families, participation of families.

And so what we thought is why not use those same characteristics and apply them to youth. And so that was basically the rationale we don't have to reinvent a wheel, there's already something out there that talks about how well states do involving families. That's required, why not do it for our youth?

We also felt like that the tool, that I'll go into a little more detail in just a moment, but it offered an objective measure for these characteristics, because basically if you're familiar with your Block Grant, if you're the one that completes that or reviews that, the characteristics are self-rating, and there really isn't a lot of guidance for how you score yourself, a one, a two, a three. So we were searching for a way to do that for our families anyway. So this is the same thing. And it offered a more objective way to quantify exactly what levels of participation meant to us in Alabama.

Now, my next bullet talks about youth consultants or advisors or maybe even program staff completing it. And every state's different in the way you organize and where you are along the time line of involving youth.

For the two years that we've used this tool, the first year we asked our youth consultant to complete it. And so basically she did that and spent some time with us if she needed it, very independent, felt quite comfortable completing the form and saying here's your score.

However, this past year we decided to broaden it a little bit, and we hosted a conference call with some members of our youth advisory committee. We had done some prework in that we mailed out the tool. And we mailed out some help sheets, some talking point sheets, and then we hosted a conference call later on after they had enough time to do that where we facilitated a discussion. It was about a two hour discussion.

And then each youth individually completed the form and mailed it back so that we could collate it in the state office and use that for our overall score. We averaged the responses. But depending on your state it may be other program staff, because you'll see as the rating goes, depending on where you fall on the measurement scale, you may not have an active youth advisory committee yet or a paid youth consultant.

So you can use it however. And what we did, someone asked me, we spoke about this briefly on a conference call. And they said did you ask? Was it okay to include this? And we really didn't ask. We just did. We attached it to national performance measure No. 6. We were already using a similar tool for families and we attached that under national performance measure number two. So no one had gotten upset about that. We thought maybe we'll slip one more thing in.

So we did and that was the story of that.

So if I could spend a moment on the tool. Dr. Donna Peterson mentioned to us yesterday about borrowing from others. And so we certainly shared that, that we did borrow this tool. I see some colleagues back from Wisconsin. So we're to thank you as well. This tool was originally developed by the University of Wisconsin in 2001.

And it was to measure the involvement with the characteristics for family involvement and participation, and it was continuous performance measure No. 14 at the time. So shortly after that we borrowed from Wisconsin and modified the tool really just slightly

so that it would fit Alabama. And we've been using that in our Title V CSHCN program ever since to objectively measure family involvement.

But it took us several years to get to the point for youth. So really it was the reporting year for 2005 that we decided to go forward with the modification for youth.

If you have the tool in front of you, I'm going to hit some high points and I'll give you an example. As I mentioned, there are six characteristics that, potential ways that youth could be involved. And it mirrors again exactly the way family involvement's rated. But the beauty of the tool is that it offers some specific questions. So rather than you just having to nebulously think of, yeah, we kind of do that or I know this is how we might do that, it has some specific questions underneath each characteristic, and they're related specifically to the Title V program activities.

These, again, follow Form 13. But it is some very objective areas that are potential opportunities for youth to be involved.

And underneath those specific questions there are objective scoring criteria. And it is basically a scaled measurement where the total score is anywhere from zero to 18. With zero obviously being where we don't want to be with no participation. And 18 being a very lofty goal of full participation in all program activities.

But basically for each characteristic you're able to get a score. And they're mutually exclusive. So it's pretty cut and dry. Very black and white. Zero is a zero. And then a one and a two. And it's very easy to figure out where you fall on that scale.

And the nice thing about that is even though you tally them all at the end and get an overall score, it also lets you look into the six characteristics because you may be doing really well on four or five of those and one not so hot. So it's nice for determining what area do we need to beef up the way we're involving youth in our program.

And at the end we add an open ended question to facilitate some discussion, but also just to see what kind of information we would get back. I know that's not very data-appropriate that you ask a question and just wait and see what you might get back. You should have a hypothesis, but we wanted an opportunity for people to express any areas that we hadn't thought about, things that weren't covered or just to talk about what a good or bad job, hopefully not, that we were doing.

And I think I was reflecting on well what's the major, why do we want to do this? Why would a state adopt this? And I really think that it's certainly documenting progress. Obviously setting goals, but we are all on a continuum as we strive to include all the populations that we serve.

And the nice thing about a tool like this, and if you have it with you, in front of you, you can customize this if you will for your state. So your state, there's some general

characteristics, but you're able to customize those for the activities that occur in your own programs.

And you can update that each year. For example, in a minute we'll look at the tool a little bit. But you're able to list all the advisory committees and task forces that are active during the year. And that changes every year. But that way it's very specific to your state and the progress that you're making and the goals you want to set.

As I said the criteria for scoring are mutually exclusive. And it's very clear what a not met is versus a partially met and mostly met. That's really hard to do, if you -- I think we partially did that or well we maybe did that. That's why we really thank our folks from Wisconsin and a little tweaking on our part to get to that level.

And finally the idea of tracking progress over time is certainly important. As not only for goal setting purposes long-term but year to year, setting those goals for how we want to involve youth and how we can do a better job as the year goes by.

I won't belabor the point, I know we're short on time but the six characteristics are listed there. And if you had the tool, you can see that, for example, the first question relates to advisory committees and task forces so the way that you would use that is you would meet with your Block Grant advisory committee or however you do it in your state and you would make sure you have those things listed.

And then you're to determine did we involve youth in any way on this. Did we involve the committee? Did we solicit phone information? How did we involve them? Or did we not? And then the next step is, did we offer them training or did we just have them show up? Did we mentor them so they can be active participants on these committees as opposed to just taking a seat. We want them to help us. We're asking for their help. And we want them to have the tools necessary to participate. And finally did we pay for them for their time. This is an issue -- we sit in a department -- Alabama is unique, I guess in a lot of ways, unique. But one of the ways we're unique is we sit in the Department of Rehabilitation Services, so we're not under the Department of Health and not all of our sister divisions really understand as much about what we do. That's okay. But the idea that we will pay folks to participate on our advisory committees and that's really important.

So at any rate, that's just an example. And once you do that, then you can basically decide what percentage of our task forces did. If you did include youth and provide all that opportunity for training, and if not quite half of them did it, then you score a one.

If you have more than half but not all, you score two. So it's very easy to use. Again those are potential areas of involvement but you can customize based on what goes on in your state. I wanted to put a picture as well of some of the members of youth advisory committee. They're also participating in a conference we did related to Healthy People 2010 I don't know if you see her at the top and the instruction was act silly. So I don't

know -- (Laughter) I guess that's silly. Don't give me that, I might not -- it won't look so nice for a picture.

Now, I know that the Healthy and Ready to Work Center will be developing a new tool. We'll be open to using that when it's in its final version. But for the next Block Grant cycle if you'd like to do something in between or something that you can tweak for your own, you can e-mail me, I'll be glad to give you a copy. You have a hard copy in your folder. We converted this to a format that you can just enter into the blocks. I think it will be easy for you to implement if you'd like to in your states.

I'm sure I'm forgetting something that I was sure I should say but it's escaping me now. I'll blame the antihistamine. I'll be glad to entertain any questions. I'd like to thank you for inviting Alabama for participating on the panel.

(Applause

[END OF SEGMENT]