

Bridging the Cultures of Behavioral Healthcare and Primary Healthcare
Travis County Community Healthcare Clinics/Austin Travis County MHMR

Discussion Outline/Notes

I. Establishing Goals / Criteria

- Establishing the goals for behavioral health services within the primary care clinics of the Travis County Community Healthcare Clinics (TCHC) settings was fundamental. The stated goal for the integrated behavioral health services is:

“The goal of integrated behavioral health services is to assist clients to achieve both improved physical health functioning and behavioral health functioning by concurrently addressing their expressed needs.”

II. Co-Management of Care

- The primary care provider (PCP) is ultimately responsible for the client’s care. The introduction of integrated behavioral health services created the opportunity for sharing the assessment, diagnosis and behavioral health care treatment with a behavioral health consultant and/or the psychiatric consultant if needed.
- A common language – Having behavioral health services in the clinics created the need for a “common language” for discussing and addressing the care of clients. Developing this language was facilitated by adoption of common tools for screening client needs. Some of these tools included:
 1. PHQ-9 – The Patient Health Questionnaire is used to screen for the presence and severity of a person’s symptoms of depression.
 2. CAGE-AID – Used to screen for drug/alcohol abuse/dependence
 3. MDQ – Mood Disorders Questionnaire is to screen for possible symptoms of bipolar disorder.
 4. Leahy Anxiety Checklist
- Health Disparities Collaborative – Inclusion of the behavioral health staff in the establishment of these Collaborative efforts to address chronic health conditions (depression, diabetes, etc.) assisted in more affective co-management and care delivery. Additionally it fosters a multidisciplinary approach to care delivery and management.

III. Education and Training

- At genesis of IBH services in the clinics training was provided to all provider staff on screening, assessment, diagnosis and treatment of behavioral health conditions. PCP’s were assisted with medication training by psychiatry.
- Behavioral health staff has received on-going training and learning opportunities regarding the possible effects of physical health conditions on a person’s psychological functioning. This is a process that is on-going with the behavioral health staff.
- The two consulting psychiatrists that are part of the behavioral health team provide on-going formal and informal training on medications, diagnoses and behavioral functioning.