



## A System of Care



A system of care is a comprehensive spectrum of mental health and other necessary services which are organized

into a coordinated network to meet the multiple and changing needs of children and adolescents with severe emotional disturbances and their families. It not only includes the program and service components, but also encompasses mechanisms, arrangements, structures, or processes to insure that the services are provided in a coordinated, cohesive manner. Thus, the system of care is greater than the continuum, containing components and provisions for service coordination and integration.

## Core Values

- ✓ The system of care should be child centered and family focused, with the needs of the child and family dictating the types and mix of services provided.
- ✓ The system of care should be community based, with the locus of services as well as management and decision-making responsibility resting at the community level.
- ✓ The system of care should be culturally competent, with agencies, programs and services that are responsive to the cultural, racial and ethnic differences of the populations they serve.

## Guiding Principles

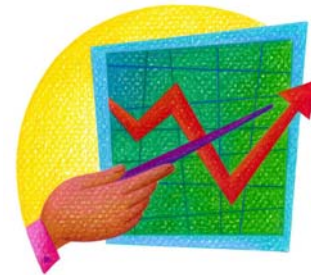
- ◆ Family focused
- ◆ Culturally competent
- ◆ Interagency
- ◆ Community-based
- ◆ Accessible
- ◆ Collaborative/coordinated
- ◆ Individualized
- ◆ Least restrictive



## Major Goals

- To develop and provide a full array of community-based services for children with serious emotional disturbances and their families.
- To reduce reliance on restrictive treatment environments and out-of-home placements.
- To increase interagency coordination in planning, developing and delivering services.
- To provide flexible, individualized services that are tailored to meet the unique needs of each family.
- To contain costs and demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of systems of care for children and adolescents with emotional disturbances.

## Data Trends Across Systems of Care



Youth served by this model:

- ⇒ Appear less likely to receive services in restrictive service environments such as hospitals and residential treatment centers, and, when they are admitted to these settings, they appear to remain for a shorter period of time.
- ⇒ Appear less likely to be placed out of their homes and, when they are in out-of-home placements, appear less likely to be placed in treatment settings outside of their own counties (parishes) and states.
- ⇒ Appear to demonstrate improvements in functioning, including symptom reduction, reduction in negative behaviors, and improved overall functioning.
- ⇒ Appear to have fewer contacts with law enforcement, fewer episodes of incarcerations, and fewer days spent in juvenile detention facilities.
- ⇒ Appear to receive culturally competent services that are adapted to meet their unique cultural needs.
- ⇒ Parents of children receiving services in systems of care appear to be more satisfied with the services and with the support they receive.
- ⇒ Costs of providing systems of care appear to be less than for traditional service delivery patterns, which rely more heavily on expensive treatment environments. Additionally, resources in systems of care shift so that a greater proportion is spent on non-residential services.

## Background for Systems of Care

Public Law 94-142, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), was passed to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free and appropriate public education. IDEA mandated procedures to ensure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, were educated with children who are disabled. IDEA has helped many children with disabilities to succeed in local schools and communities. However, children with a serious emotional disturbance, identified as the most difficult population of children to serve within the school setting, had no appropriate service system within their home and community environments to offer support.

Since 1984, the federal government has supported the development of more accessible and appropriate delivery systems for children and adolescents with a serious emotional disturbance and their families. One such effort was the Child Adolescent Service System Program (CASSP). This program offered grants to states to design a system of care for children and adolescents who are experiencing a serious emotional disturbance and their families.

## Louisiana's Reclaiming Our Youth Program (R.O.Y.)

Reclaiming Our Youth (R.O.Y.) is a collaborative effort of ten local agencies, where adolescents between the ages of 11 to 21 in the Greater New Orleans area receive free, comprehensive substance abuse treatment.

There has been a need for a coordinated effort to support youth in New Orleans. R.O.Y. provides support, advocacy, education, and substance abuse treatment to help youths overcome or avoid the effects of substance abuse. Getting help is easy! Go online to [www.royprogram.com](http://www.royprogram.com) for access to information and a referral. Fax the referral to the number on the form. Once the referral form is faxed, a Youth Advocate will contact you for an appointment within 72 hours. Or call 504-269-2673 where you will be asked a short series of questions to determine what your needs are and to set an appointment with a ROY Advocate.

Collaboration makes R.O.Y. strong! Service providers include Youth Initiative, Odyssey House, Covenant House, New Orleans Legal Assistance Corporation, Ruach, In Process, Inc, Child and Family Services (JPHSA), Safehouse Youth Services, the Council of Alcohol and Drug Abuse (CADA) and VIA Link.

### Material for this newsletter was derived from the following sources:

Stroul, Beth A. and Robert M. Friedman, R.M. (1986) *A System of Care for Children and Youth with Severe Emotional Disturbances*. (Revised Edition). Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Child Development Center, CASSP Technical Assistance Center.

SAMHSA's National Mental Health Information Center. (1999) *Annual Report to Congress on the Evaluation of the Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services for Children and Their Families Program*.

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