

AFL Care Programs: Lessons Learned

Barriers, Challenges, and Solutions

Data collection is difficult with this population and specific protocols should be in place prior to implementation to address the challenges

- Collecting data can be a difficult process. Data collection can be long and cumbersome. It is important to incorporate a short set of baseline measures into the program intake progress.
- Have at least one staff person dedicated to data collection. It is preferable to have this person not be involved in the case management services as well.
- Everyone in the program should be knowledgeable of the data collection procedures and schedule.
- The data collection schedule and tools used should be clearly thought through prior to implementation since it is challenging to make major changes after the program has begun.
- It can be challenging to collect timely data while also maintaining current records and performing monthly evaluation tasks. Proper planning and resources should be put into place to help staff meet these multiple demands.
- Teen parent programs often face a challenge with obtaining true baseline data. It is important to plan for this challenge.

Recruitment and retention is an ongoing issue that needs to be addressed throughout the life of the project

- Staff and partners can struggle with the idea of recruiting for a control group since there is the belief that the intervention services offered would be beneficial to everyone. Education on good evaluation design is necessary in this situation.
- Many programs deal with high drop out rates and small sample sizes. Incentives can help encourage recruitment and retention of clients.
- Incentives should be provided to partners providing a control group.
- Recruitment efforts should be broad.

Working with young fathers and other family members is challenging. Services for these populations should be intentional.

- Create different staff positions to work with siblings and young fathers so that each has their own advocate.
- Have a specific case manager dedicated to reaching young fathers and providing them with specific and useful services.
- Parent (grandparent) programs should be thoughtful and intentional as this is a difficult population to engage.

School attendance is an ongoing challenge for many programs

- Programs should specifically focus on addressing school attendance for teen moms and dads. School attendance is critical and should not be overlooked.
- Programs can use an outreach worker to help families get their teens to school.

Services offered need to meet multiple needs of multiple clients

- Maintain a professional environment and set clear program expectations from the beginning.
- Programs should offer bi-lingual services when needed.
- Programs need to take into consideration the possible conflicting values systems that teens face between the program and the home/neighborhood. Staff need to be aware of these differences and address them appropriately.