

Creating Systems Change: Implementing Cross-Sector Initiatives within the Justice System to Support Ontarians with Mental Health and Addictions Needs

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Abstract : Ontario's 10 Year Mental Health and Addictions Strategy has included the establishment of 18 Service Collaborative across the province; cross-sector tables in a specific region coming together to explore mental health and addiction system needs and adopting an intervention to address that need. The process is community led and supported by implementation teams from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), using the framework of implementation science (IS) to enable evidence-based and sustained change. These justice initiatives are focused on the intersection of the justice system and the mental health and addiction systems. In this presentation, we will share the learnings, achievements and challenges of implementing innovative practices to the mental health and addictions needs of Ontarians within the justice system. Specifically, we will focus on the key points across the justice system - from early intervention and trauma-informed, culturally appropriate services to post-sentence support and community reintegration. Our approach to this work involves external implementation support from the CAMH team including coaching, knowledge exchange, evaluation, Aboriginal engagement and health equity expertise. Agencies supported the implementation of tools and processes which changed practice at the local level. These practices are being scaled up across Ontario and community agencies have come together in an unprecedented collaboration and there is a shared vision of the issues overlapping between the mental health, addictions and justice systems. Working with ministry partners has allowed space for innovation and created an environment where better approaches can be nurtured and spread.

Keywords : implementation, innovation, early identification, mental health and addictions, prevention, systems

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