Meaningful Family and Youth Engagement during Residential Interventions: Early Findings from the Quality Collaborative on Improving the Use of Psychotropic Medications for Youth in Residential Treatment Facilities

Christopher Bellonci,
Katie Rushlo,
Millie Sweeney,
Susan Soldivera-Kiesling
The National Technical Assistance Network for Children’s Behavioral Health (TA Network), funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) launched a three year Quality Collaborative on Improving the Use of Psychotropic Medications in Residential Treatment Facilities in October 2016.

This initiative will collaboratively review current practices and develop and implement strategies to improve psychotropic medications prescribing for children and youth in care.
Nine RTFs from across the nation were selected to participate and are supported through a learning collaborative model and use of a CQI tool, to identify objectives and strategies, and track process and outcome indicators using a continuous quality improvement structure.

We are in the middle of the three year collaborative and the nine sites are making great progress in developing and implementing best practices for the use of psychotropic medications for youth during residential interventions.
This presentation will focus on the importance of Family and Youth Engagement during residential interventions, both as that applies to the use of psychotropic medications and more broadly in terms of the experience of youth and families during residential interventions.

These values and approaches have relevance to the use of psychotropic medications as they often can identify alternatives to the need for psychotropic medications and when indicated, ensure that they are being used appropriately and with the full consent of parents and guardians and assent of youth.
Stay tuned for more resources coming from the collaborative as we learn which approaches and interventions correlate with the most positive outcomes for children, youth and families.

The goal is not to limit access to appropriately prescribed medications, but to ensure they are a part of a comprehensive treatment approach and not a substitute for effective and evidence-based or informed clinical interventions.