Co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders: Variables and stages of implementation and sustainability

Jennifer Harrison
Western Michigan University, USA

Individuals with co-occurring illnesses are at risk for poor outcomes related to criminal justice, hospitalization, housing and employment. Integrated Dual Disorder Treatment (IDDT) is an example of a complex evidence-based practice implemented with a multi-disciplinary team including physicians, nurses, social workers and peers which is associated with significant improvements in those outcomes. Evidence-based practices are not simple to implement and sustain however, and a research to practice gap translates to barriers to timely implementation and sustainability of best practices. Barriers include time, resources and readiness to implement and sustain best practices. The practice to research gap can also be wide, with discoveries in clinical practice taking many years to be researched well so practices can evolve. A secondary data analysis of the implementation, sustainability, and alteration of IDDT in an entire state in the United States was used to highlight these barriers and the ways to overcome them are analyzed. In this large sample, IDDT took time to implement to a level of high fidelity, and was sustained even with practice alteration of adding peers. Recommendations for staffing, funding, and policy are made in this study. Generalizability to other best practice implementation in central nervous system disorders, and impact multi-disciplinary team readiness and access are discussed.

Biography

Jennifer Harrison, PhD, LMSW, CAADC, is a Social Work Faculty Member in the College of Health and Human Services at Western Michigan University. She has been in clinical and administrative practice for over 20 years, and has teaching expertise in direct practice, field education and social policy. She has designed interprofessional courses and presented internationally on advanced quantitative analysis of mental health implementation. Her clinical work is focused on integrated medical and behavioral health using evidence-based methods. Her research interests include social and economic justice, co-occurring mental health, substance abuse, and medical needs among adults, peer services and food insecurity/sovereignty.

jennifer.harrison@wmich.edu