

A Qualitative Research Approach to Evidence Informed Decision Making in Mental Health and Addictions Services

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The Strategy

- March 2010 – Strategy announced
- Strategy was to be:
 - Responsive to stakeholders needs
 - A way to follow through on proposed changes
 - Responsive to Auditor General recommendations
- Advisory committee appointed
- NSHRF asked to assist in evidence gathering and generation

The Process: A qualitative approach

- A variety of evidence and data collection **methods**:
 - Three formal reviews were solicited:
 - Epidemiological analysis and synthesis of current services
 - National and international jurisdictional review of service delivery models
 - Review and synthesis of mental health and addictions strategies implemented across Canada
 - Expert advice
 - Document review and literature scan
 - Consultation

The Process: A qualitative approach

- NSHRF's four stage consultation process:
 - Stage 1: Background information gathering
 - Stage 2: Consultation
 - Stage 3: Analysis and synthesis
 - Stage 4: Implementation & evaluation

Translating to policy

- Committee recommendations were submitted to DHW Fall 2011
 - NSHRF submitted an evidence document that linked supporting evidence to each recommendation
- Recommendations informed the development of the final strategy
 - NSHRF's role was to provide clarity on the evidence gathered

Lessons Learned: Relationships and communication

- Relationships were built between NSHRF and the department in the process
 - Increased trust & understanding
- Highly complex process – when things change there will be impacts for both partners
- A primary point of contact within the department and within the foundation is critical for:
 - Managing change
 - Communications
 - Shifting mandates

Lessons Learned: Planning and roles

- The planning stage is key and deserves attention
- A detailed MOU will provide clarity and help to manage expectations
- Role clarity is key; need to define roles of:
 - committee members
 - both partners (NSHRF and DHW)
- Committee selection is important and should be considered carefully
 - Link between the members and the mandate

Lessons Learned: The process

- The consultation process was useful for summarizing a great deal of complex information efficiently and effectively
 - Relatively short time line
 - Methodological process allows for confidence in the evidence
 - Inclusive and allowed for stakeholder participation
 - Practical for political decision making
- Qualitative analysis software is useful

Lessons Learned: The process (continued)

- Critical nature of stakeholder feedback
- Capacity built for understanding the role and limitations of evidence
- A two-step process is desirable
 - **Step 1:** Evidence is gathered and assessed by an advisory committee EXTERNAL to the Department
 - **Step 2:** Recommendations of the Advisory Committee are used to inform the final strategy by an INTERNAL Departmental team