

SYNC Memorandum of Understanding



Memorandum of Understanding

SYNC embraces the premise that families not systems should raise children. SYNC seeks to address the underlying trauma and family challenges that led to system involvement and provide the youth and family with supports to stabilize the family unit. SYNC embraces the idea that the earliest intervention with the most appropriate services can reduce system involvement. SYNC will focus on the youth and families strengths as an opportunity for success.

Vision

The lives of children, youth and families in Newton County are positively enhanced by an integrated system that provides services and supports to those with multiple needs.

Mission

To improve the coordination of services, policies and practices in the youth-serving systems in Newton County and to strive towards greater efficiency, appropriateness, family/youth engagement and effectiveness.

Purpose

To confirm our commitment to enhanced coordination, integration and cooperation at the administrative and service delivery levels in an effort to improve outcomes for dually-involved youth.

Governance Structure

The Executive Steering Committee, which is comprised of leaders from the key juvenile justice and youth-serving agencies in Newton County, is actively involved in directing the work on behalf of dually-involved youth. It develops work plans, guides the composition of subcommittees, sets expectations and goals, and closely monitors progress. Subcommittees report to the Executive Steering Committee for final review and decision making.

Subcommittees gather information, analyze data, make recommendations, and develop action strategies that support the goal of better serving dually-involved youth. Each of the participating agencies provides staff representation and expertise.

The Executive Steering Committee will form and direct the work of three sub-committees: Data, Legal and Policy and Screening and Resource Inventory. Each sub-committee will be charged with the following responsibilities:

Data:

Develop a data collection system that meets the needs of SYNC. Review national, state and local data sources of data regarding dually-involved youth. Identify questions to be answered about dually involved youth; identify data sets and data points that must be collected, aggregated and shared across system and ensure that this data is regularly analyzed to inform practice. Identify gaps in data that need to be filled so that systems are better able to serve youth and families.

Legal & Policy:

Evaluate the current processes for handling dually-involved youth, including court processes, and consider alternative processes; develop proposals for new interventions. Review and consider legal mandates for dually involved youth across systems. Analyze legal, policy, and practice barriers to information sharing in an effort to improve information sharing while protecting the privacy of youth and families. Provide oversight and review for the Local Interagency Planning Team (LIPT) to ensure fidelity to the process and practice. The Legal subcommittee is responsible for monitoring the information sharing agreement and Memorandum of Understanding and effecting any revisions or amendments as needed.

Screening & Resource Inventory:

Identify and compare organizational missions, mandates and policies. Identify common and dissimilar components of case processing and management. Inventory assessment tools used across systems in an effort to evaluate the most effective way to conduct joint assessment processes and joint case planning. Inventory local resources and analyze whether there are gaps and or overlaps. Consider opportunities to share resources or blend funding. Identify best local, state and national practices. Develop thorough, ongoing staff training.

The specific desired outcomes are as follows:

Reduce Juvenile Justice Involvement:

- Lower Recidivism – Recidivism is defined as
- Prevent deeper delinquency involvement through the use of diversion

Reduce Child Welfare Involvement:

- Improve family function which is measured by fewer new DFCS referrals
- Decrease out-of-home placements
- Increase placement stability by decreasing number of changes in placement
- Fewer days in foster care

Improve School Outcomes:

- Fewer absences
- Fewer discipline referrals and suspensions
- Improve progress toward graduation and GED

Reduce Detention:

- Fewer youth detained
- Fewer days in detention

Increase Youth Competency & Enhance Connection to Community:

Participation in sports or recreation activities

Participation in mentoring programs

Support education goals with school engagement and tutoring

Utilize community service through volunteerism

1. Goals

1.1. Data-driven decision-making: Improve outcomes for dually-involved children, youth and families through in-system and cross-system data collection and analysis directed towards system reforms.

1.2. Cross-Training and Information Sharing: Identify and create opportunities for professionals in the youth-serving systems to work together effectively and communicate across systems.

1.3. Diversity and Youth/Family Engagement: Embrace and value the inclusion of the diverse youth, families and agencies in our comprehensive strategy, planning and projects.

1.4. Promoting Healthy Communities: Promote the ability of systems to engage and improve youth's education, health, welfare and futures.

1.5. Disproportionate Minority Contact: Continue to evaluate and analyze disproportionate minority contact in the juvenile justice system.

2. Scope of Work. Each member agency and organization agrees to work collaboratively with the Executive Steering Committee to:

2.1. Refine the inventory of resources in local child serving systems, including: programs and services; identify best local, state and national practices; determine the appropriate use of assessment instruments; review and analyze the funding to support the services and programs; and create training for personnel in both systems.

2.2. Identify data sets and data points that must be gathered, aggregated, and shared across agencies/organizations and ensure that this information contributes to improved analysis of current trends. Institutionalize the process by which this data can be regularly developed and utilized. This effort will lead to enhanced decision-making.

2.3. Contribute agency representation to participate in designated subcommittees for the ongoing examination and analysis of issues related to the implementation of the Executive Committee's recommendations and action strategies. Each representative shall serve until he or she resigns or a replacement is appointed. The Committee may add additional members at any time.

2.4. Utilize the best available information, research, and practices to guide the

process.

- 2.5. Maintain confidentiality of their client information and compliance with federal, state and local laws regarding the confidentiality of client data.
 - 2.6. Assist in the development of a means to track and evaluate the Program's success.
 - 2.7. Jointly compile subcommittee/taskforce reports to produce findings and recommendations for action strategies resulting in youth serving system coordination and integration.
 - 2.8. Continue to assess and refine the implementation process to ensure that the goals of the initiative are accomplished.
3. General Terms: The undersigned agencies and organizations commit to ongoing collaboration, integration, and coordination with the goal of improving outcomes for dually-involved youth.
- 3.1. Term. This agreement will be effective June 17, 2013 through June 16, 2018.
 - 3.2. Termination. Member Agencies and Organizations can withdraw from this agreement at any time by making said request in writing with the effective date and reason for withdrawal.
 - 3.3. Renewal. This Agreement may be renewed by the parties' mutual agreement for additional five year terms.
 - 3.4. Liability. Each party is responsible for its own acts and omissions and those of its officers, employees, and agents. No party is responsible for the acts of third parties.
4. Participation. Member Agencies and Organizations shall make a commitment to attend all SYNC events.

Signatories:

By: _____
Name: Avery D. Niles
Position: DJJ Commissioner

By: _____
Name: Tora Pierce
Position: DJJ JPM

By: _____
Name: Ron Scroggy
Position: DFCS Director

By: _____
Name: Rachel Rogers
Position: Newton DFCS Director

By: _____
Name: Sheri C. Roberts
Position: NCJC Judge

By: _____
Name: Dr. Samantha Fuhrey
Position: Superintendent

By: _____
Name: Laura Bertram
Position: NCCP Executive Director

By: _____
Name: Dr. Priscilla Falkner
Position: Psychologist

By: _____
Name: Frank Berry
Position: DBHDD Commissioner

By: _____
Name: Jennifer Wilds
Position: Viewpoint Health

By: _____
Name: Ezell Brown
Position: Newton County Sheriff

By: _____
Name: Keith Ellis
Position: NCBOC Chairman