

Evaluation Summit Notes Community Mediation

GOAL: Design a yearlong process for collaborating on the development and implementation of a uniform evaluation system for Maryland.

Major goal of community mediation: Increase capacity of community to handle their own disputes and empower community members.

Should we change the questions that our stakeholders currently ask? (YES!) What do we want “them” to ask in the future? Can we measure the “happy byproducts” of mediation?

Task 1 & Task 2

Possible Process Steps

- Identify stakeholders
- Develop brief survey for stakeholders to identify what they want/need to know about CMP's.
- Administer/analyze survey
- Results into a priority order
- Develop conduct internal state survey of whether CMP's are collecting priority data and through what mechanisms
- Identify mechanisms in common
- Develop/conduct external national pilot survey of evaluation info, how they use it and what they would do differently.
- Expand/strengthen/augment current data collection instruments for uniform administration.
- Develop process for data control and assessment analysis and dissemination.
- Work with CMP's to establish cost estimates for new evaluation system and brainstorm mechanisms to support it.
- Create incentives for evaluation system
- Develop implementation timeframe and monitoring cycles.

Task 3

In an attempt to generate a list of evaluation measures of community mediation, we brainstormed stakeholders, their roles and the data each requires.

Different stakeholders require different data. This chart helped us analyze the similarities and realize the data identified for collection should cover the needs of many different audiences. 4 categories of stakeholder use were identified:

- Funders

- Referrers
- Participants/users
- Providers

Stakeholders	Category	What do they need to know?
MACRO	Funder	To be done by Group B!
Faith/Religious	Referral /user	
Community Mediation Programs	Providers/users	
Schools	All	
Participants in mediation	Users/referral	
Judicial system	Refer/fund	
Law enforcement	Refer/use	
Potential participants	Users	
Service agencies	Refer/use/fund	
General public	All	

This approach (beginning by identifying the stakeholders needs and roles) did not work!

We regrouped and generated the following:

**Evaluation Measures (qualitative and quantitative) of Community Mediation:
Suggested Typology**

- Efficiency
- Effectiveness
- Process
- Mediator
- General/administration

Preference KEY: (1) Must Have (2) Might be nice to have (3) Don't need (4) Could/should be a study/would be nice to know

Efficiency

- Time between opening and closing case (1)
- Time between referral and closing (1)
- System cost savings, police savings (4)
- Escalation staircase (4)
- Holistic/collaborative/integrated nature of process (3)

- Discrete disputes “gray area” social network (3)
- Accessibility (1)
- Staff time spent/case (2)
- Time spent in mediation (1)
- # Of sessions (1)
- Optimal productivity

Effectiveness

- Future conflict Mat Choices (4)
- Agreement rates (1)
- Increase in use of mediation (1)
- Client satisfaction (1)
- Durability (1)
- Compliance (1)
- Empowerment (control, respect, and responsibility) (4)
- Strengthening Communities:
 - Nature/quality of relationships (1)
 - Increase in public discourse
 - Decrease in school problems, crime
 - Opportunity to describe personal situation
 - “Impact makes a difference” (4)

Process

- Opportunity to describe personal situation
- Feeling understood (1)
- Appropriateness of forum (1)
- Procedural Justice
- Respectful treatment
- Control over outcomes
- Pre-mediation prep
- Intake
- Increase understanding of all participants’ stories (1)
- Fair rules, fair play, fair outcomes
- Clear explanation of process (1)
- Accomplishment of expected outcomes (1)

Mediator/Mediator Competency

Two types:

- Evaluation by program
- Evaluation by participant
- Creation of Buy-In (How to measure?)
- Command of subject matter
- Impartiality
- Quality, nature and extent of training experience (1)
- Staff diversity-move to adm/gen
- Skills, attitudes, “heart,” motivation (1)
- # Cases
- # Cases mediated
- Involvement in grievances (1)

General/Administrative

- Recognition of CM as valuable resource
- Reduction of violence/tangible conflict
- Increase of *social capital*
- Community education, awareness and skills (4)
- Causes of case attrition

Question that continually came up: These are possible measures, but compared to what?

Community Mediation Program Info Collected Now

- Person hours outreach
- # Intakes
- # Mediation sessions
- # Completed agreements
- Total completed mediations
- Referrals, intakes, inquiries
- Referral sources, by %
- Times spent in sessions
- “Conciliated” cases
- # Outreach Mediations-fee and free-repeat mediations
- Volunteer hours
- Exit survey/client satisfaction
- Follow-up: 6month/1 year-call or card
- Mediator demographic data
- Where mediation occurs/sites
- Mediator evaluation

- Demographic data
- Internal QA
- Referrals out
- Type of dispute
- Participants
- Relationships between parties

Mediation Program Info Wish List

- Source of referral related to nature of outcome
- Awareness of mediation prior to conflict
- Timing of intervention: 1) length of conflict 2) escalation
- Other interventions attempted
- Extent/nature of community partnerships

Task 5

Group B Must Consider:

- Who is going to be asked to provide info? What info?
- How/when will data be collected?
- Method to standardize definitions (intake? Pre-mediation process etc.)
- What effect does it have?
- Literacy levels
- 2nd language users
- What about non-users as stakeholders?
- Can we/should we look at attrition?
- Including “Core” data collection as well as guidelines for non-standardized data collection
- Therefore some TOOLS used may have to vary depending on center
- How do CM centers create and sustain evaluation systems/programs?
- Hiring someone to conduct a study can assist in setting up the coordination we are looking for.
- NAFCM Evaluation research review
- George Mason study for possible review

Other Possible Problems

- Variability in software and hardware (must be consistent)
- Staff turnover
- Timing of Data Collection/Aggregation of data

Suggested Collection Mechanisms

- Annual grant applications/first year apps
- Professional mediation software programs (Mad track, Mediation Manager, DRC, Combo of manual and software)
- Geomapping (locations, referrals)
- Intake data
- Progress report