QUALITY STANDARDS IN THE FIELD OF TARGETED PREVENTION: THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

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The context

• Project financed from the structural funds, aiming at developing social services
• Strong pillar on drug problems related services
  – Needs assessment
  – Service planning
  – Piloting and evaluating
  – Quality improvements in particular fields
The current state of affairs regarding quality standards, professional guidelines, protocols in Hungary - general issues

• Different type professional guidance – the legal power of the different documents
  – Methodological letters – suggestions, focussing on the content – best practices, empirical studies – not high level evidence
  – Professional guidelines – strong suggestions, high level evidence base
  – Protocols – based on professional guidelines, focussing on the content and on procedures – very strong expectations – (e.g.: treatment of HER2+ mamma carcinoma)
  – Minimum standards – set the conditions of being operational – what kind of institution is considered to be a primary school
The current state of affairs regarding quality standards, professional guidelines, protocols in Hungary

- Drugs related issues under different sectors
- Prevention programmes – education, health, work, justice
- Drugs related teacher training programmes are accredited
- Other prevention programmes not yet – the project was dealing with targeted prevention:
  - Programmes in shopping malls
  - Programmes in risky neighbourhoods
  - Programmes in entertainment venues
- Indicated prevention – diversion scheme
- Treatment and care – health, social
- Harm reduction – health, social
  - Syringe exchange programmes
The development process

- Identification of the key areas and detailed arguments explaining the choice
- Identification of the expert groups for each intervention type (3-5 persons for each)
- Critical review of the available literature on quality issues, quality standards, professional guidelines
- Summarising the findings, proposals for the structure of the material developed - publication
- Decision – what kind of guidance will be formulated – methodological letters, BUT closer to professional guidelines
- Consultations with experts from the field on
  - The content
  - The structure
  - The legal force
  - The first draft of the documents
- Group of key experts re-convened
- Draft version of the documents
- Development of indicators related to the regulatory measures
- Consultations with
  - experts from the field
  - other key experts
  - decision makers
- Final version

The whole process took 13-14 months
The structure of the 4 methodological letters

- Introduction –
- Definitions –
- Needs assessment –
- The target population –
- Aims and objectives of the intervention –
- The content of the interventions:
  - Physical circumstances –
  - Possible services/interventions –
  - Requirements related to the personnel –
  - Collaboration with other institutions/services – the referral system –
  - Documentation –
  - Ethical perspectives –
  - Rules and regulations related to the day-to-day service provision –
  - How to collaborate with the owners of the venues? –
- Monitoring and evaluation – performance indicators –
- Legal circumstances
How do they look like?
Additional tools developed to help the implementation of the methodological letters

- List of indicators related to the different stages of the intervention cycle
- They can be used for
  - Evaluation (internal – external)
  - Self reflection
  - Documentation
  - Accreditation
  - On site examination
- Suggestions for measuring their realisation
- Outlines of the functioning of the accreditation system – including financial estimates
Overview of the relationships among professional guidance, evaluation, research and accreditation

- running programmes
- new developments
- basic research related to the problem
- regular monitoring of the problem
- needs assessment, situation analysis related to the planned

Onsite monitoring of accredited programmes: implementation fidelity
- set of criteria
- well prepared assessors

Accreditation of an institution and/or a programme
- request for being accredited
- programme description according to the pre-negotiated criteria
- other documentation
- well prepared assessors
- accreditation committee

Criteria related to the accreditation, which reflect to the content and indicators nominated in the professional guidance

Professional guidance:
- methodological letters
- guidelines
- protocols

Source: Sebestyén, 2011
What might be the benefits of having these methodological letters

• Important step towards developing an accreditation system
• Input for service providers to improve the quality of their work
• Work force development
• Contribution to strengthening the evaluation culture – self reflection
• Tools for doing regular monitoring – documentation of activities
What is the reality of implementing them?

The issues

- It is a policy issue
- The methodological letters should be disseminated in a broad circle of professionals
- Training courses should be organised
- Financing and quality criteria should communicate with and reflect to each other
- Legal instruments should be developed/identified

The likelihood of being done

- High - National drug prevention bureau is planning to organise dissemination events and training courses
- Low - there is no communication related to this issue on high levels of decision making, professional developments and financial decisions are following divergent paths
- No information about it - legal instruments are very popular at the moment in Hungary
Thank you for your attention!

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