

COBRA Quality Improvement Committee
Summary of Meeting
August 1, 2007
10:30 am – 1:00 pm, 90 Church St., NYC

Attending: Thirty individuals from 28 COBRA agencies attended the QIC on August 1.

The theme of this meeting was Supervisory Review, a topic selected by QIC members responding after our last meeting in May. Supervisory review is a universal requirement of all COBRA case management programs. Many COBRA programs have had years of experience and opportunities to refine this process. Several find aspects of implementing regular quality Supervisory Review challenging. This meeting was introduced as an “exploratory” meeting, not a series of finished presentations, with the hope that all participants would contribute information and discuss issues that concern them.

The goals of the meeting were to determine:

- 1) Are there common practices, viewpoints, and tips that form a body of knowledge that could be compiled as best practices, to be shared with all COBRA providers?
- 2) Are there common challenges remaining that we might address in a project using a QI process, or a workgroup approach?

Some of the best practices and challenges discussed during this meeting (and in preparatory interviews) are summarized in a set of preliminary slides attached to this report.

The meeting agenda was divided into three main sections: 1) presentations from the field by 2 individuals well-experienced in supervisory review: Lynn Reno (Quality Improvement Manager, AIDS Related Community Services) and Rosemary Cabrera MSW (COBRA Deputy Director, Community Healthcare Network) followed by questions and discussion; 2) discussion of tools and what features make them good (including event tracking and chart review tools), and 3) brief presentation on peer review by Sandra Houston, Management Consultant.

The following list of questions was developed to help presenters frame their experiences:

1. The QA chart review process is done for many reasons. In addition to adhering to AI standards, what are your goals when conducting chart review?
2. What is your chart review process? How do you go about it (who, how often)?
3. How do you inform staff of results? Do you convey results to supervisors, to staff, or both? Individually, at team meetings, at staff meetings?
4. How does staff accept supervisory observations/recommendations? Is there anything you've done that's helped staff to accept and implement findings?

5. Do you use the chart during individual supervisory sessions?
6. Is there a peer review process in your program? How does it work?
7. What are your biggest challenges regarding supervisory review?

Preparation for this meeting involved AI staff interviews of several individuals experienced in Supervisory Review, including three external consultants who regularly review COBRA client charts for a variety of NYC agencies, interview of an Upstate COBRA supervisor and a QA staff person. Their feedback, plus information presented and discussed at the QIC meeting were included in the attached slides “COBRA Supervisory Review: Issues, Recommendations, and Preliminary Conclusions” which is an attempt to consolidate the information learned through this meeting.

Presentations from the Field

Lynn Reno presented a set of slides outlining the process she uses for Supervisory Review at AIDS Related Community Services (ARCS), which has 7 sites throughout the Hudson Valley (see her attached slides). Lynn looks for clarity and thoroughness first, and whether it’s clear what the team will be working on with the client. She finds that case managers will often carry the same mistakes from chart to chart, and that some errors are site specific. Her overall approach is to keep things positive and objective, assume all staff are conscientious competent professionals, and emphasize that QA is routine (“like going to the dentist”).

Rosemary Cabrera presented her approach to Supervisory Review at the nine sites of Community Healthcare Network. She works to identify through the review process the strengths of particular staff and recognize them for these strengths. She also looks for issues case managers are not addressing, and whether there are trends that the agency should address through coaching or training. She reads the supervisors’ reviews to note their areas of strength and weakness, i.e. are they giving good directions? Do they understand what to look for? Rosemary meets with supervisory staff first to advise them of trends, areas for improvement, and training needs. She then meets with direct staff. Follow through of recommendations is one of the biggest challenges, and a good working relationship between all supervisory staff, and staff willingness to accept findings helps in implementation of changes.

Discussion

A question was posed to the group: **What challenges do you need help with to make the supervisory review process work better?**

- Competent staff, particularly staff with analytical thinking and ability to see the bigger picture (“macro thinking”). People discussed how much easier it is to teach the mechanics and quantitative pieces of case management if you are working with a staff person who can grasp broader more complex concepts (i.e., the connections between lab values and substance use).

- Culturally competent CMs, CMTs, and supervisors
- Salary level to attract staff with education and retain them
- Training that is specific to the situations COBRA case managers are facing now—especially new, relevant skill-training such as motivational interviewing, applied harm reduction, analytical thinking.
- Evidence based research on supervisory review that can be adapted to the day-to-day practice.

Tools

The key features of a variety of sample review tools in people's handout packets were pointed out. Susan Steinhardt of Options reported on her use of Microsoft Access to develop a tracking tool that reminds each case manager of reassessment due dates for individual clients on their caseload. Susan also mentioned she uses Form Doc to create customized electronic forms that can be easily filled in by staff.

Peer Review

To many supervisors, peer review consists of some form of case presentation. Referring to the principles of adult learning, Sandra Houston raised the possibilities of using peers to review each other's work, and to teach each other. Her slides are attached.

A participant asked whether training could be made available on how to facilitate peer review.

Attachments

Lynn Reno Slides

Sandra Houston Slides

Preliminary Summary Slides

NEXT QIC MEETING

Monday October 15

10:30-1:00 pm