Opioid Use Disorder, Treatment, and Barriers to Employment Among TANF Recipients

Kentucky’s Targeted Assessment Program

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Kentucky’s Targeted Assessment Program (TAP)

• Implemented through partnership with the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Department for Community-Based Services

• Supported with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funds to assist parents involved in Kentucky’s public assistance and child welfare systems within federally mandated timeframes
Purpose of TAP

• To identify & address barriers to self-sufficiency, family stability, & safety:
  • Substance Use (SU)
  • Mental Health (MH)
  • Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)
  • Learning Problems (LP)
  • Basic Needs
TAP participant story

“Sandy”
Barriers to employment

• Estimates of drug & alcohol use disorders are almost double those for individuals who receive TANF

• Women receiving TANF with substance use disorders report co-occurring depression, anxiety, and high levels of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

• Studies have shown intimate partner violence to be higher among women receiving TANF than other low-income women not receiving TANF

• Mental health problems have been found to be more prevalent in this population, as have Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) and adult trauma
Barriers to employment

- Surveys of TANF caseloads in three states estimated that 20-50% of women have some type of learning problem and 20-25% have IQs of less than 80.
- Unmet basic needs have been strongly correlated with mental health and intimate partner violence.
- The presence of multiple barriers continues to be the strongest predictor of non-participation in work activities and continues to be linked to poor employment among low-income parents.
Percent of TAP participants assessed with mental health, substance use, intimate partner violence, learning problems barriers in FY 2017 (n=2,237)
Percent of TAP participants reporting unmet basic needs in FY 2017 (n=2,237)
Percent of TAP participants (n=12,191) self-reporting opioid use at baseline assessment in lifetime (FY 2012 through FY 2016)
Targeted Assessment Program (TAP)

• 58 Targeted Assessment Specialists co-located in Department of Community-Based Services (DCBS) offices in 35 Kentucky counties
• Referrals from child welfare and public assistance agencies
Key Practices

• Co-location of TAP staff with DCBS staff
• Holistic assessment of barriers & strengths
• Strengths-based engagement, pre-treatment, & case management
• Customized service plan created with the participant in consultation with the DCBS referring worker
Key Practices

- Motivational interviewing & pretreatment to increase treatment effectiveness
- Assistance with basic needs barriers
- Ongoing follow-up with participants, referral source, and community partners (including job readiness programs, community services sites, employers)
- Consultation & training
- Advocacy
- Multi-agency participation and collaboration at local, regional, & state level
TAP Outcomes
FY 2017 “countable” work activity by TAP participants

• Two-thirds (65%) of terminating assessed TAP participants enrolled in the Kentucky Works Program participated in a countable work activity within 6 months of TAP assessment

• The average amount of time to enrollment in a countable work activity was 7 weeks
TAP Outcomes

TAP Follow-up Study (Leukefeld et al., 2012)

- There were statistically significant decreases from baseline to 6-month follow-up (n=322) for:
  - Mental health symptoms
  - Substance use
  - IPV
  - Percentage of participants with an open child welfare case
  - Percentage of participants experiencing work difficulty
  - Reliance on TANF decreased while employment increased
At 6-month follow-up (n=322), the percent of participants with assessed barriers significantly decreased.
Participants also reported significant decreases in unmet basic needs at 6-month follow-up (n=322)
Participants reported significant changes in employment-related outcomes at 6-month follow-up (n=322)
Participants reported significant decreases in welfare receipt and child welfare involvement at 6-month follow-up (n=322)
Kentucky’s TAP Sites
References


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