
**National Systems of Care
Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center**

Infrastructure Document Site Example Template

1. Site:
North Carolina

2. Area of Infrastructure Addressed:
Communication

3. Strategy/Approach

The NC State Collaborative for Children and Families was established during the time when the NC mental health system was the recipient of several systems of care grants. It is a voluntary entity that includes representatives from public and private child serving agencies at the state and local levels, family members, advocates, and nonprofit agencies. One purpose of the State Collaborative was to provide support to the local mental health collaboratives that were established during the mental health SOC grant period. It continues to serve as a support to the local collaboratives (which are now seen as community collaboratives with a broader focus than just serving children with serious emotional disturbances) as well as provide a forum at the state level for the discussion of issues related to how agencies and families can work together better and develop recommendations regarding the coordination of services, funding, and training across agencies.

The link to communication and exchange of information from the State Collaborative to the local collaboratives has certainly diminished over time. With the implementation of the Improving Child Welfare through Systems of Care grant, the State Collaborative made a renewed commitment to supporting state and local SOC efforts by all agencies in a more structured and consistent way. One goal of the Improving Child Welfare through Systems of Care grant in North Carolina is to support system of care implementation and expansion across NC both in areas where systems of care have not existed and provide TA support, training and assistance to areas that are struggling to maintain local system of care efforts through local collaboratives. A way to communicate with these collaborative groups across the state on an ongoing basis was needed to understand their information and TA needs and develop ways to address them through the State Collaborative.

From the identification of this need through a needs assessment given by mental health to the local collaborative groups and direct communication with various local collaborative groups, a Local Collaborative Communication Committee was established. This committee is staffed by the Improving Child Welfare through Systems of Care state and local grant site coordinators, co-chaired by a grant evaluation staff person and has membership from other agencies represented at the

State Collaborative. These members include persons from the state and county levels of the Governor's Youth Advocacy Office, NCDSS, NCMH/DD/SAS, DJJDP, NC Families United, DPI, local community collaborative groups, and is supported by the entire membership of the State Collaborative. This committee has been active for about 14 months. During this time, the committee planned a statewide SOC conference that was cancelled due to a hurricane and travel restrictions. As an alternative, the group plans 5 regional SOC trainings for the fall of 2006 to give and receive information from local collaborative groups. A NC State Collaborative website is planned and has been funded so that local collaboratives, families and communities will be able to access and share information. A list of North Carolina conferences representative of state, local and family organizations both public and private has been developed and this committee sends representatives across NC to make presentations about system of care principles and implementation. A brochure that outlines the definition, principles, and SOC in NC has been developed and is included in information packets at conferences where presentation cannot be made. The group is planning many other ways to grow connections between the State Collaborative and local collaborative groups.

4. Goal

To develop ongoing communication opportunities between new, existing, or developing community collaborative groups and the NC State Collaborative for Children and Families for the purpose of identifying areas of need, providing information, technical assistance, training and support to further the implementation of system of care principles and practices across NC. This committee will communicate identified needs to the larger State Collaborative and plan ways to address local needs.

5. Describe how the system of care principles guided the development and implementation of this strategy/approach.

Development of this committee demonstrates the NC State Collaborative's commitment to modeling SOC principles, especially interagency collaboration and the need for ongoing support of community based collaboratives to implement SOC across NC.

6. Lessons Learned

- People enthusiastically offer ideas but often intend for others to actually implement them. Solution: Thank the person for the idea and then have them talk about how they can contribute to implementing the idea or ask them to lead the implementation of the idea.
- Keep reminding everyone at the table that SOC should be everyone's focus not just the 'agency with the grant'.
- Working across systems is sometimes difficult so it is important to keep the common goals/outcomes in the forefront.