

System of Care Concept and Philosophy

DEFINITION

A system of care is: A spectrum of effective, community-based services and supports for children and youth with or at risk for mental health, substance use, child welfare, juvenile justice, medical, developmental, social or other challenges and their families, that is organized into a coordinated network, builds meaningful partnerships with families and youth, and addresses their cultural and linguistic needs, in order to help them to function better at home, in school, in the community, and throughout life.

CORE VALUES

Systems of care are:

1. Family driven and youth guided, with the strengths and needs of the child and family determining the types and mix of services and supports provided.
2. Community based, with the locus of services as well as system management resting within a supportive, adaptive infrastructure of structures, processes, and relationships at the community level.
3. Culturally and linguistically competent, with agencies, programs, and services that reflect the cultural, racial, ethnic, and linguistic differences of the populations they serve to facilitate access to and utilization of appropriate services and supports.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Systems of Care Are Designed To:

1. Comprehensive Array of Services and Supports	Ensure availability and access to a broad, flexible array of effective, high-quality treatment, services, and supports for young people and their families that address their emotional, social, educational, physical health, and mental health needs, including natural and informal supports.
2. Individualized, Strengths-Based Services and Supports	Provide individualized services and supports tailored to the unique strengths, preferences, and needs of each young person and family that are guided by a strengths-based planning process and an individualized service plan developed in partnership with young people and their families.
3. Evidence-Based Practices and Practice-Based Evidence	Ensure that services and supports include evidence-informed, emerging evidence-supported, and promising practices to ensure the effectiveness of services and improve outcomes for young people and their families, as well as interventions supported by practice-based evidence provided by diverse communities, professionals, families, and young people.
4. Trauma-Informed	Provide services that are trauma-informed, including evidence-supported trauma-specific treatments, and implement system-wide policies and practices that address trauma.
5. Least Restrictive Natural Environment	Deliver services and supports within the least restrictive, most natural environments that are appropriate to the needs of young people and their families, including homes, schools, primary care, outpatient, and other community settings.
6. Partnerships with Families and Youth	Ensure that family and youth leaders and family- and youth-run organizations are full partners at the system level in policy, governance, system design and implementation, evaluation, and quality assurance in their communities, states, tribes, territories, and nation.
7. Interagency Collaboration	Ensure that services are coordinated at the system level, with linkages among youth-serving systems and agencies across administrative and funding boundaries (e.g., education, child welfare, juvenile justice, substance use, primary care) and with mechanisms for collaboration, system-level management, and addressing cross-system barriers to coordinated care.
8. Care Coordination	Provide care coordination at the service delivery level that is tailored to the intensity of need of young people and their families to ensure that multiple services and supports are delivered in a coordinated and therapeutic manner and that they can move throughout the system of services and supports in accordance with their changing needs and preferences.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Systems of Care Are Designed To:

9. Developmentally Appropriate Services and Supports	Provide developmentally appropriate services and supports, including services that promote optimal social-emotional outcomes for young children and their families and services and supports for youth and young adults to facilitate their transition to adulthood and to adult service systems as needed.
10. Public Health Approach	Incorporate a public health approach including mental health promotion, prevention, early identification, and early intervention in addition to treatment in order to improve long-term outcomes, including mechanisms in schools and other settings to identify problems as early as possible and implement mental health promotion and prevention activities directed at all children, youth, and young adults and their families.
11. Mental Health Equity	Provide equitable services and supports that are accessible to young people and families irrespective of race, religion, national origin, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical disability, socioeconomic status, geography, language, immigration status, or other characteristics; eliminate disparities in access and quality of services; and ensure that services are sensitive and responsive to all individuals.
12. Data Driven and Accountability	Incorporate mechanisms to ensure that systems and services are data-driven, with continuous accountability and quality improvement mechanisms to track, monitor, and manage the achievement of goals; fidelity to SOC values and principles; the utilization and quality of clinical services and supports; equity and disparities in service delivery; and outcomes and costs at the child and family and system levels.
13. Rights Protection and Advocacy	Protect the rights of young people and families through policies and procedures and promote effective advocacy efforts in concert with advocacy and peer-led organizations.

Infrastructure Elements

- Point of accountability structures for SOC policy and for system management and oversight
- Financing for SOC infrastructure, services, and supports
- Structure and/or process to manage care and costs for high-need populations (e.g., care management entity, health home)
- Structure and/or process for interagency partnerships/agreements
- Structure and/or process for accountability and quality improvement, including measuring and monitoring service utilization, quality, outcomes, equity, and cost, including utilization of psychotropic medications
- Structure and/or process for partnerships with family organizations and/or family leaders
- Structure and/or process for partnerships with youth organizations and/or youth leaders
- Defined access/entry points to care
- Structure and/or process for outreach, information, and referral
- Extensive provider network for comprehensive service array
- Structure and/or process for implementing and monitoring evidence-informed and promising interventions
- Structure and/or process for training, technical assistance, coaching, and workforce development
- Structure and/or process for achieving mental health equity and eliminating disparities in access, quality of services, and outcomes for diverse populations
- Structure and/or process for integrating primary health and mental health care
- Structure and/or process for strategic communications
- Structure and/or process for strategic planning and identifying and resolving barriers

Array of Services and Supports

Home and Community-Based Treatment and Support Services

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening • Tiered Care Coordination • Outpatient Therapy – Individual, Family and Group • Intensive In-Home Mental Health Treatment • Mobile Crisis Response and Stabilization • Youth Peer Support • Intensive Outpatient and Day Treatment • Respite Services (Including Crisis Respite) • Medication Assisted Substance Use Treatment • Therapeutic Behavioral Aide Services • Crisis Response Services – Non-Mobile (24 Hours, 7 Days) • Therapeutic Mentoring • Adjunctive and Wellness Therapies (e.g., Creative Arts Therapies, Meditation) • Flex Funds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment and Diagnosis • Medication Therapies • Intensive Care Coordination (e.g., Using Wraparound) • Youth and Family Education • Parent Peer Support • Trauma-Specific Treatments • School-Based Mental Health Services • Outpatient Substance Use Disorder Services • Transportation • Behavior Management Skills Training • Mental Health Consultation (e.g., to Primary Care, Education) • Telehealth (Video and Audio) • Social and Recreational Services (e.g., After School Programs, Camps, Drop-In Centers) • Integrated Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment |
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Residential Interventions

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment Family Homes • Residential Treatment Services • Residential Crisis and Stabilization Services • Residential Substance Use Interventions (Including Residential Services for Parents with Children) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapeutic Group Homes • Inpatient Hospital Services • Inpatient Medical Detoxification |
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Promotion, Prevention, and Early Intervention

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health Promotion Interventions • Screening for Mental Health and Substance Use Conditions • School-Based Promotion, Prevention, and Early Intervention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention Interventions • Early Intervention |
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Specialized Services for Youth and Young Adults of Transition Age

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported Education and Employment • Wellness Services (e.g., Exercise, Meditation, Social Interaction) • Youth and Young Adult Peer Support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported Housing • Specialized Care Coordination (Including Focus on Life and Self-Determination Skills) |
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Specialized Services for Young Children and Their Families

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood Screening, Assessment, and Diagnosis • Family Navigation • Parent-Child Therapies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation • Home Visiting • Parenting Groups |
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