California Women’s Mental Health Policy Council

Position Statement: Integrated Services

Integrated services and integrated systems are defined from the perspective of the consumer. Services should be offered in a manner that appears seamless to the consumer.

Some tests of “seamlessness” are:

- Does the consumer tell her story once to helping professionals and team members or does she have to tell her story multiple times to obtain needed services?
- Does the consumer feel that the services she is offered make sense and are coordinated, a part of a single plan or does she find that many services and options are given to her in a way that makes it hard to sort out or choose what she can and should do? Or even worse that services conflict with each other?
- Does the consumer have the chance to define and describe her goals and needs for services or do goals and objectives from different agencies or services present conflicts for her?
- Does the consumer have to go one or two locations to get needed services or is she required to go to many locations?
- Are forms streamlined, easy to complete and efficient in facilitating the services she needs or does she have to fill out many forms for service?

It is strategy not structure that determines integrated services

The Women’s Mental Health Policy Council recognizes and supports different approaches to integration. Services can be integrated in a number of ways:

- They can be delivered by a single agency offering multiple services or
- They can be coordinated through interagency agreements, planning and services and collocation of services.

Effective integrated services occur when all providers work with the client to help her determine her goals for treatment and services, and all services are a part of a single, seamless coordinated plan. This plan should support the client and at no time should it lead to confusion, fragmentation and further stress.