Adapting County Data Systems – Planning for Change

CalMHSA PEI TTACB Work Group
March 5, 2014

Facilitated by RAND and SRI

Adaptability of Data Systems

Data systems may need to adapt to enhanced or changed requirements including:

- New or modified ways of describing clients

- De-duplication across programs and systems

- More detail on program participation

- New or modified outcome measures for programs

- Additional programs covered

- Linkages with other data systems

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Adaptations Ripple Through Systems

- **How program provider contracts are written to require data collection and reporting**

- **Forms and procedures for data capture from programs and clients**

- **Additional data requirements from clients – amount and frequency of data requests**

- **Security – who has access and at what level**

- **Data processing and analysis**

- **Reporting structures, formats and frequencies**

Constraints on Adaptability

- Data requirements for different purposes may be in conflict with each other

- Software systems may be "hardwired" for particular data fields or formats and difficult to update

- Changes in activities for program staff require integration with existing tasks, training, and sometimes compensation

- Clients may have concerns with burden and privacy

- Reporting structures may be difficult to adapt

- Changes require time and testing

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Embracing Adaptability

- **The only constant is change – expect it!**

- **Build the expectation of change in at all levels:**
  - **Program provider contracts**
  - **Data and reporting systems design**
  - **Staff orientation and training**
  - **Client expectations**

- **Budget funds and allow time for changes to be integrated**

- **Provide as much advance warning about upcoming changes as possible**