Center for Mental Health Implementation Support

Implementation Project Profile: From Priorities to Practical Action

How CMHIS and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services helped coordinated specialty care teams turn implementation challenges into practical next steps.

Background



On Aug. 11, 2026, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) and the Midwest Hub of the Center for Mental Health Implementation Support (CMHIS) brought together 24 participants from six organizations for a one-day **Wisconsin Coordinated Specialty Care Learning Collaborative**.

Coordinated specialty care (CSC) is a team-based treatment model for early intervention and support for individuals experiencing first-episode psychosis. Participants represented programs at different stages of implementation, from exploring or beginning to already delivering services. It connected providers across experience levels, organizational settings, and resources.

What We Did

CMHIS facilitators **Mat Roosa, LCSW-R**, **Scott Gatzke**, and **Sherrie Nichols, MS, LMFT**, worked with Wisconsin DHS to shape the event around participating organizations' needs.

Before attending, teams completed the **Drivers Best Practices Assessment** and either a CSC readiness tool or the **First Episode Psychosis Services Fidelity Scale**. They identified one to three priorities to bring to the collaborative, including **staff training**, **community outreach**, **data use**, and **funding**.

During the morning, teams narrowed their priorities to one area where improvement seemed meaningful and achievable. A panel of experienced providers shared lessons from implementing CSC, including what they wished they had addressed earlier. Teams then used fishbone diagrams to examine the underlying causes of their chosen challenges.

In the afternoon, a World Café organized around five challenge areas invited participants to rotate among tables and contribute possible strategies. Two organizations worked as one team because they served the same area, collaborated frequently, and shared a priority.

After the event, the Midwest Hub compiled and returned documentation of the teams' work. Individual and team coaching was available for those seeking additional support.

> **"Facilitators were friendly and informative. The energy was productive and collaborative. This was a very valuable and relevant workshop for us. I know this experience will strengthen us and our organization."** — participant

Insights & Turning Points

Assessments gave teams a place to start. The pre-event assessments helped participants connect broad implementation goals to specific organizational needs. One organization, for example, identified integrating CSC into its mission and practices as a priority. Another identified responsibility for staff recruitment and training, along with data systems to support improvement.

Root-cause analysis provided a structure for examining those challenges before choosing a response. One participant identified the most useful part of the event as: "Breaking down the problem and figuring out the root cause."

Peer experience expanded the possibilities. The collaborative brought together expertise from emerging programs, established providers, and an organization exploring how to restart regional CSC services. Participants could learn from both the challenges others faced and the approaches they were considering. The World Café gave that exchange a practical purpose: teams contributed ideas to one another's implementation challenges.

Pacing supported the next step. Facilitators intentionally limited how much of the improvement process teams were expected to complete in one day. Participants left with ideas to develop further, rather than completed implementation plans.

The aim was to provide enough structure and practice for teams to continue the work independently or seek coaching.

Developed by the Center for Mental Health Implementation Support, Midwest Hub, 2026.

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Core Topics Featured

- [ ] Engaging the community and assessing their mental health needs
- [x] Identifying factors that influence implementation
- [x] Deciding what support is needed to implement a new practice
- [ ] Using clinical progress to guide treatment
- [ ] Marketing programs and services
- [x] Using data to improve service delivery
- [ ] Evaluating program outcomes
- [x] Sustaining service delivery

Impact & What Endured

The collaborative gave teams dedicated time to examine their priorities, explore underlying causes, and gather ideas from peers. Participants left with documentation of their work, including root-cause analyses, and potential strategies they could revisit with colleagues. These materials provided a starting point for choosing what to test next.

Post-event feedback showed that participants valued both the practical tools and the opportunity to learn across organizations. One participant highlighted “Getting ideas from the other agencies. Just hearing how other agencies have navigated challenges.” Another pointed to “Networking, both within our own team and with others.”

Together, these responses suggest that working through challenges with peers helped participants see possibilities beyond their own organizational experience.

The broader goal was to build capacity for continued improvement. Facilitators selected accessible tools that frontline staff and managers could apply to CSC and other implementation challenges without depending on ongoing consultation. By practicing those tools on priorities they already cared about, teams had an opportunity to connect new methods with their everyday work.

Lessons From the Field

Bring teams together. Working alongside colleagues allows participants to apply tools to shared challenges and build a common understanding of next steps.

Start with local priorities. Assessments help teams focus improvement efforts on needs that matter in their own settings.

Make peer expertise part of the process. Structured exchanges give participants opportunities to contribute useful ideas across organizations.

Plan closely with the sponsor. Wisconsin DHS and the Midwest Hub refined the agenda together, aligning the activities with the intended learning and practical outcomes.

Allow time for application. Manageable pacing, agency-specific work time and accessible follow-up support help teams continue beyond the event.

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