



Reorientation of Services Toward Early Intervention in Mental Health: Brief Report

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ABSTRACT

Aim

A three and a half year follow up evaluation was conducted of eight government and non government agencies who received seed funding from Auseinet to reorient an aspect of their service to an early intervention approach in mental health. The aim of the research was to determine key elements in sustainability of seed funded projects.

Methods

Face to face interviews were conducted with members of each agency involved in the reorientation project. This evaluation was situated in the theoretical base of capacity building and sustainability and focused on identifying barriers and opportunities that agencies faced in reorienting their services to an early intervention approach at agency and community levels.

Findings

Agencies had varied success in reorienting to an early intervention approach. This ranged from conceptual shifts in early intervention thinking to the expansion of early intervention services. Success was dependent on agency and community characteristics.

Conclusions

The findings confirm the Australian literature on capacity building which suggests several crucial predictors of success in changing the ways agencies run. These include the development of interagency links, management support and problem-solving abilities. This brief report is useful in identifying factors at a community level which impact on early intervention activity in mental health.