



White Pine Consulting Service, Inc.

N3000 Rusch Road

Waupaca, WI 54981

(715) 258-5430

Email: whitepine@mwwb.net

Website: www.wicollaborative.org

Statewide Evaluation of White Pine Consulting's Services A Summary of Responses and Recommendations May 2010

Statewide Evaluation of White Pine Consulting's Services Conducted February & March, 2010

Overview

In our continuing effort to provide the best services possible, White Pine Consulting Service conducted a survey to find out how we are doing in our efforts to support the development of collaborative systems of care across the state and what could be done to improve our efforts.

We surveyed the following groups:

- The counties and tribes we have been or are currently working with as part of the Coordinated Services Team (CST) Initiative, Regional Partnership Grant (RPG), and Honoring Our Children
- Department of Health Services Regional Office Staff, the State CST Staff Group, and Child Welfare Training Partnership Staff

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This report includes summaries of responses. A report containing respondents' full comments is can be viewed at our website: www.wicollaborative.org. For questions or more information, please call (715) 258-5430 or email: whitepine@mwwb.net.

White Pine Consulting Service Evaluation
Responses from
Coordinated Services Team (CST) Initiative, Regional Partnership Grant (RPG),
and Honoring Our Children (HOC) Sites
Conducted February & March, 2010

Below is a summary of responses from 27 of 60 sites who responded (45% response rate).

Question 1: What do you like about the services provided by White Pine?

Respondents cited several aspects they liked/appreciated, including but not limited to: on-site training and technical assistance provided by consultants; timely, friendly and helpful service; the experience and professionalism of staff; flexible and creative solutions; open communication; assistance given in the development of CST; and the helpfulness of the website.

Selected quote:

"This organization is always there when you need them. From the very first time I was involved with White Pine Consulting, I could always count on them for assistance. At times this was in an evening or weekends. White Pine Consulting treats all the county players equitably and makes exceptions for our unique differences. All their staff have the ability to work with a wide variety of different personalities. When we are in a situation and have no answers, they are a great organization to bounce ideas off of and offer assistance in coming up with creative solutions."

Question 2: What aspects don't you like/what aspects do you feel could be improved?

15 sites responded that there wasn't anything they didn't like or felt could be improved.

Suggestions for aspects that could be improved included: continued funding; further defining the process/more hard and fast rules; having a schedule of support (instead of as needed/requested); improvements to forms and evaluation procedures; shortening the travel distance to statewide project director meetings.

Selected quotes:

"It would be helpful to have more of a schedule of support. It can be difficult to slow down and ask for consultation when everything is up and running."

"We are pleased with the service. When questions are asked, responses are given. Guidance is provided when needed, so the service provided is appropriate."

Question 3: Do you receive timely and helpful communication from us?

26 of the 27 sites responded positively to this question. Below is a sample quote:

"Anytime we had questions, required assistance or feedback, it was done in a very timely manner. If a response couldn't take place the day of the request, there was usually a message stating that and when to expect some follow up. If at any time, a question was asked or information was sought and White Pine staff did not know the answer, they would take the time to find the answer from another source and would communicate that to us."

1 site shared constructive criticism (see quote below):

"In the confusion of changing program coordinators in our county several times, there has been a lack of email contact to the right people with regard to surveys/reports that are due. I also feel uncertain about the exact schedule of state reporting/feedback that is required."

Question 4: Are you receiving quality and useful technical assistance and information/resources to help in your efforts?

All sites responded positively. Some suggestions given include: onsite assistance with the state reporting database; expanded training for experienced sites; and assistance coordinating multiple funding sources and programs such as Children’s Long Term Support Waiver, Comprehensive Community Services, and Targeted Case Management.

Selected quote:

“Now that our grant period has developed and our project is more fully developed, the amount of technical assistance required has lessened. Most of the technical assistance, training, etc. that is provided is more geared toward counties more in the developmental or beginning stages of implementing their project. It would be nice to see some expanded training, or additional technical assistance or resources for counties that are more fully developed.”

Question 5: Do you feel we provide adequate training & technical assistance? If not what can we do to improve our efforts?

Suggestions include: offering more training by audio-visual communication; training in the areas of trauma and other family issues that are barriers to a family’s success; additional opportunities for cross-county/tribe roundtables; additional training regarding the state reporting database; additional in-depth training on developing plans of care and crisis response plans; and support coordinating multiple funding sources/programs.

Selected quotes:

“The training and technical assistance has been excellent. We have benefitted from training in service facilitation, CST Coordinating committee mentoring, ethic/boundaries. We have used White Pine as a sounding board for grant ideas/applications as well as supportive listening. We have been provided with constructive suggestions on how to continue to move forward with coordinated services. The website is shared as a resource with community members and utilized internally numerous times.”

“It might be helpful to have more contact facilitated between programs in different counties. The roundtables provide a good opportunity to network and hear how others are doing things, but they almost feel too infrequent. CST feels like very isolated work in some ways.”

Question 6: Do you have any other thoughts/recommendations?

Suggestions include: continuing regional meeting opportunities; expanding opportunities for networking; opportunities for counties to apply regionally for the grant; developing a virtual network for sharing of information; improve access to website; streamline paperwork; concern regarding compliance with Medical Assistance billing requirements.

Selected quotes:

“It might be helpful to get neighboring project staff together in addition to the regional meetings for networking and even training.”

“Keep up the good work! The ongoing collaboration, support and encouragement is always appreciated. Even though our grant period has ended, we still appreciate the periodic “check ins” and communication.”

White Pine Consulting Service Evaluation

Summary of Responses from Department of Health Services Regional Office Staff, State CST Staff Group, and Child Welfare Training Partnership Staff

Conducted February & March, 2010

Below is a summary of responses from 7 of 34 staff who responded (21% response rate).

Question 1: What do you like about the services provided by White Pine?

Respondents noted appreciation for: the dedication, knowledge, responsiveness, and experience of White Pine staff; attention paid to the interaction of CST with other programs; open and ongoing communication; conscientious and competent coordination of the CST initiative.

Selected quotes:

"Staff are knowledgeable. They have well-rounded, real-world experience in county human services. They are flexible and willing to adapt their approach to various county and community systems. The training and education materials that they produce are excellent. As a member of Area Administration, I have found them to be tremendous partners in working with counties and tribes."

"White Pine works closely with DHS staff and programs. The WP staff have broad knowledge of areas they are assigned to work in. They therefore can tie the specific project focus to the broader knowledge. White Pine appears to be interested in their customer whether the project is large or small rather than just the growth of the company."

Question 2: What aspects don't you like/what aspects do you feel could be improved?

Two people shared suggestions regarding continuing to explore how the CST process fits into the big picture of "teaming" across the state.

Selected quotes:

"Until recently, I felt that sometime the CST/ISP "way" was viewed as the only "way". I think this has been tempered of late, and collaboration/integration of and with other systems has become more prominent. I view this as very positive and think staff bring a lot to the table in this regard. It will be important to maintain this broader perspective if hoping to make an impact on multiple systems."

"As we continue to struggle as a statewide system to break down barriers between programs and target groups, I think White Pine consultants will be challenged to continue to broaden their perspective. There are multiple models of teaming out there now. WE need to bring them all together into one seamless, consistent set of concepts and practices."

Question 3: Do you receive timely and helpful communication from us?

Everyone responded positively to this question.

Selected quote:

"Always! If I email Dan and he can't answer, Lori does. If I leave a message I always get a call back. I am confident that White Pines Consultants follow through with any agency they are working with."

Question 4: Do you feel we provide quality and useful training & technical assistance? If not, what can we do to improve our efforts?

5 of 6 responses to the question were “Yes”. There was one suggestion (please see quote below).

“I don't think the training system has taken full advantage of what has been learned about successful teaming through your CST work. Perhaps you have ideas about how that might happen more.”

Question 5: Do you have any other thoughts/recommendations?

Selected quotes:

Especially since the training system has been focusing on teaming, there seems to have been some systemic confusion about how teaming is defined and how the CST initiative and CPS teaming “fits”. I don't think this is a White Pines issue...just a comment to keep in mind as we all move forward.

“It has been an extremely positive experience working with you and your staff...I appreciate the manner in which you have kept the regional office in the loop with your agency's ongoing activities; whether it is statewide, regionally, or with individual counties. I have never known your staff not to follow through with any communication, planning or follow-up with our office or with the counties...Your staff's knowledge of the county human services system goes a long way in achieving credibility with them, even with some of our more challenging agencies.

White Pine Consulting Service Evaluation Summary and Recommendations

Summary

Overall, results of the evaluation provide affirmation of the quality and usefulness of services currently provided by White Pine staff and consultants. Results also suggest that for the most part, the current CST training and technical assistance process and activities are seen as valuable and appropriate for sites. In addition, responses included constructive comments on areas that could be improved on. Below is a summary of our recommendations based on these comments.

Recommendations

- A. Continued training and technical assistance (T&TA) support for sites, including communication regarding funding opportunities.
 - Continue structured support to new and developing CST sites through on- and off-site assistance. Continue to develop resource material for new sites (current “Resource Handbook for New Sites” continues to be updated as needed). Continue support regarding statewide evaluation and data collection.
 - Continue and increase communication with sites not currently receiving CST implementation grants regarding T&TA support opportunities. Possible forums include: statewide and regional project director meetings; website; message board (*possible future resource*).
 - Continue and increase communication with all sites regarding funding opportunities including grants that support collaborative efforts. Continue opportunity for support regarding financial sustainability including on- and off-site consultation and access to resources such as the “Guide to Financial Sustainability for Counties”. Note: we are currently developing a financial sustainability guide for Tribes.

- B. Increase peer-to-peer connection and support opportunities
 - Continue to support statewide and regional project director meetings and training days. Note: we recently added “Tribal CST Meetings”, a training and networking forum for Tribes who are supporting or developing collaborative systems of care.
 - Encourage cross-county and cross-tribe peer-to-peer support. Continue to help make connections in this area.
 - Explore additional/new technologies that can aid in the statewide and local peer-to-peer connection process such as a message board, teleconferencing, videoconferencing, and other web-based technologies.

- C. Continue efforts to consider CST in the context of the larger system of care in Wisconsin, including the interaction of CST with other programs/funding sources such as Comprehensive Community Services, Children’s Long Term Support Waiver, and Targeted Case Management.
 - Continue involvement in state workgroup currently addressing these issues
 - Continue efforts to streamline paperwork and processes