



La Plata County
Colorado



Coaching on Wheels

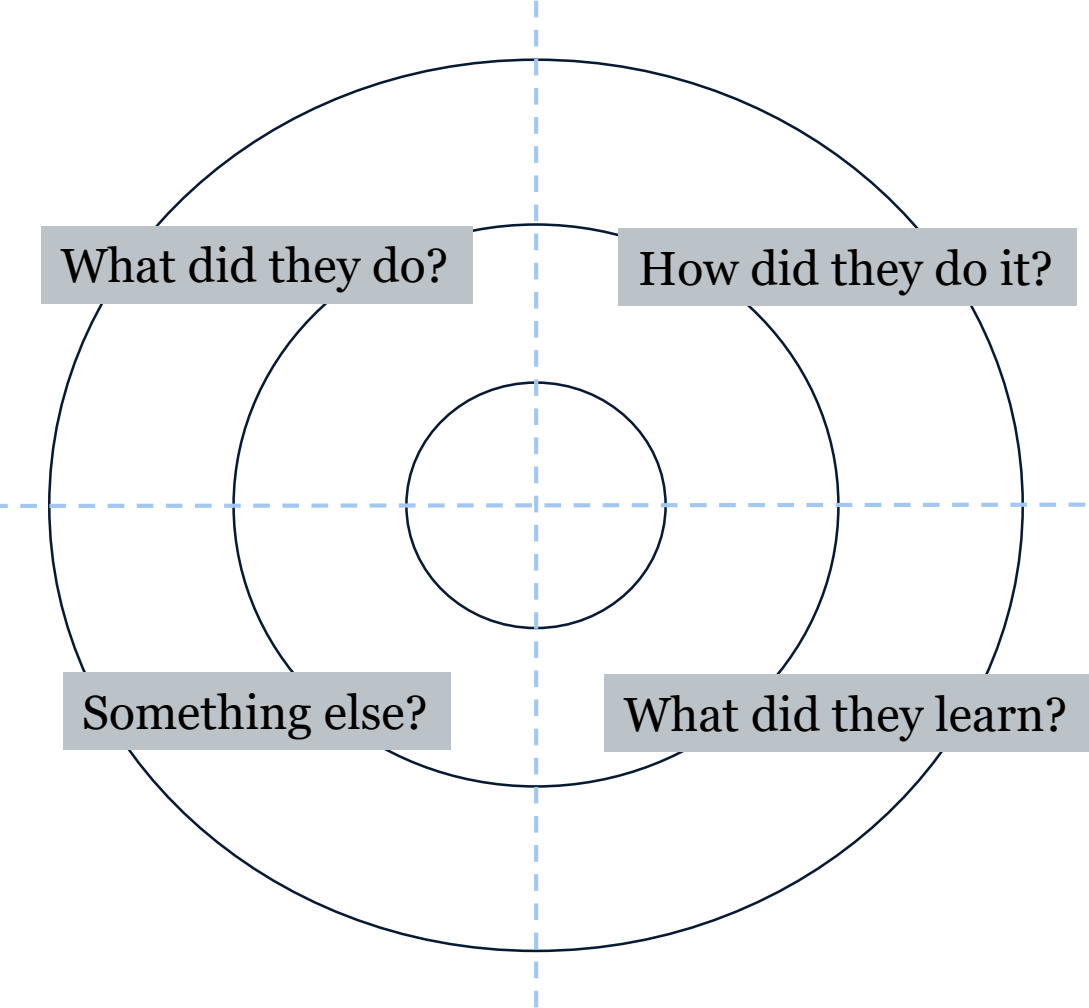
How a TANF program took case management to clients

57th Workshop of the National Association for Welfare Research and Statistics

Monday, July 29, 2019

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Before we get started: **What's on your radar?**



The context and motivation for change

Rural, geographically dispersed county in SW Colorado

Approximately 125 TANF cases (point-in-time)

3 case managers

Very limited access to public transportation

Significant obstacle to program participation and follow-through on service referrals in the community

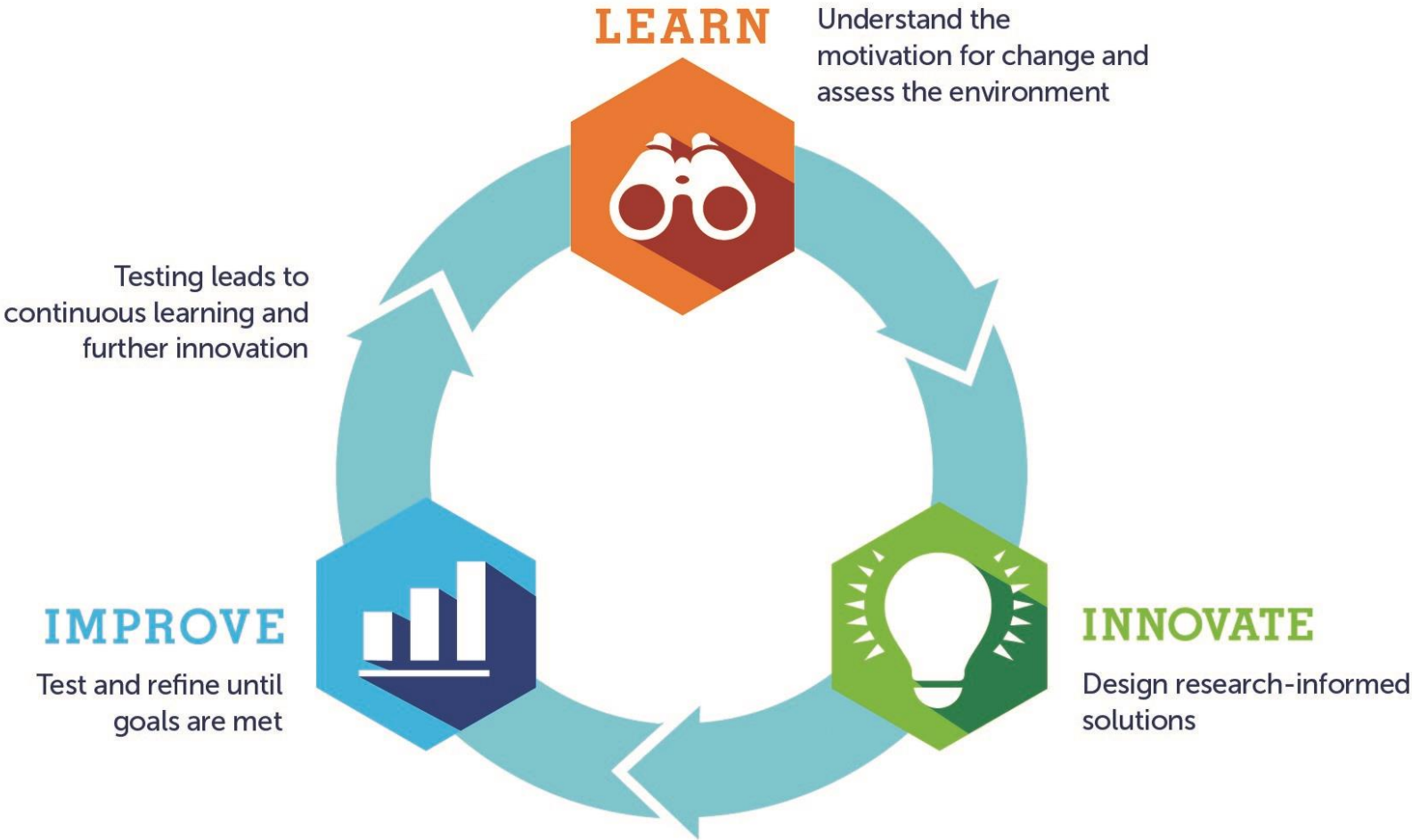
No viable way for program staff to solve this challenge for families

An invitation to innovate

Colorado Works Innovation Initiative



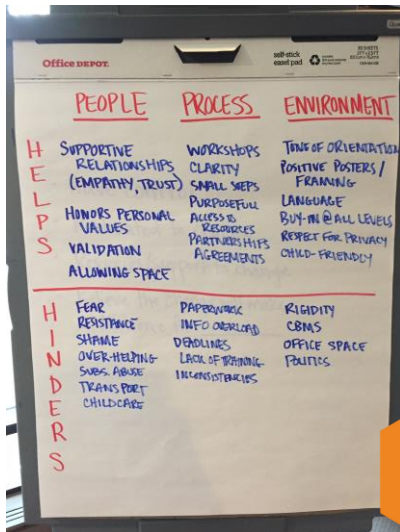
A framework for change



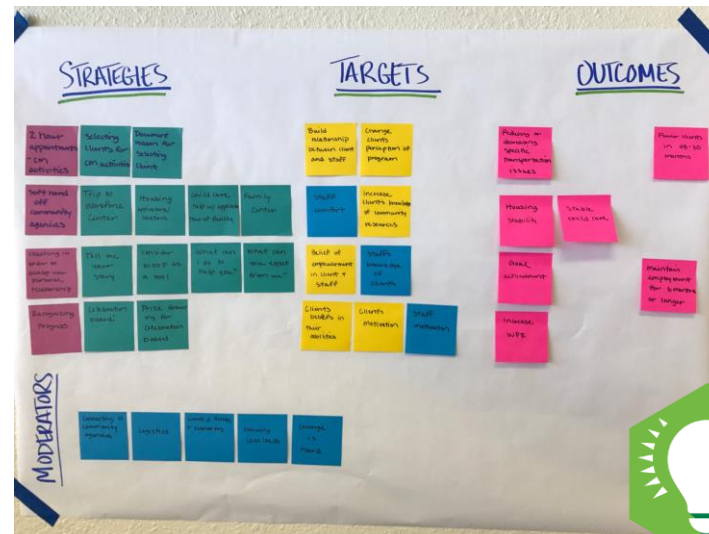
Round 1: Learn, Innovate, Improve

The La Plata County team took part in the CDHS-sponsored Colorado Works Innovation Initiative

9-month county-led projects to creatively explore solutions to low program engagement



LEARN



INNOVATE



IMPROVE

Empowerment + coaching = self-sufficiency

Initial concept

Intensive case management support in the form of a 2-hour “power session”

“Warm hand-off” to community agencies (workforce center, housing, child care, etc.)

Coaching approach

“Tell me your story”

“What is your goal today?”

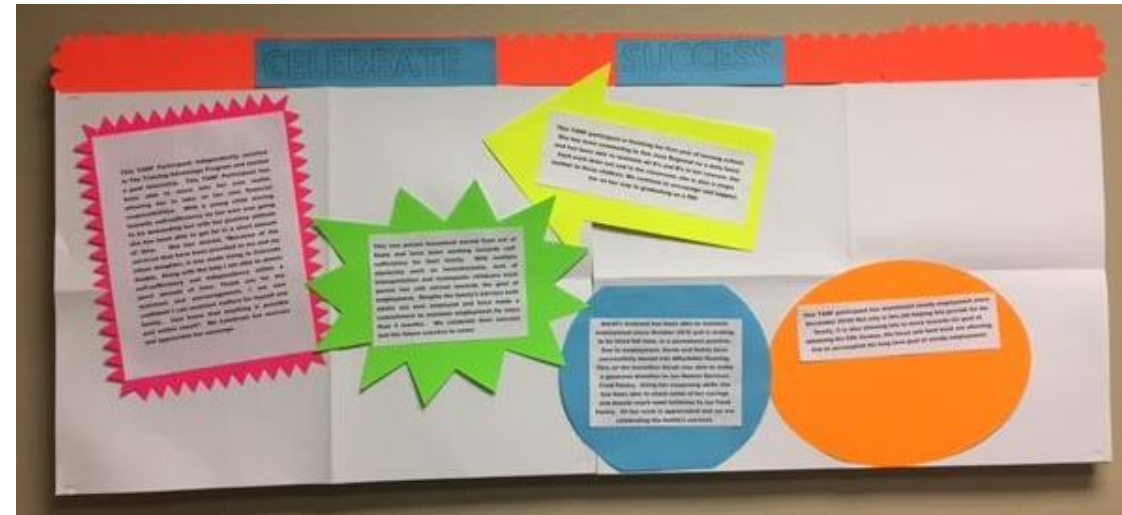
“What can I do to help you?”

“What can you expect from me?”

Recognize and celebrate successes

Telling clients’ stories

Prize drawing for featured clients



What did we learn from round 1?

Worked well when strategically used with clients experiencing difficulty getting to/from community service providers

Particularly for clients who had already tried, but not succeeded in, connecting with a provider

Required a considerable amount of staff time to implement

Not a catch-all, broad-based strategy to solve transportation challenges

Round 2: Learn, Innovate, Improve (again)

Support from ACF/OPRE to further refine and test this approach

January 2018 workshop

STRATEGIES

- Conversation in an informal setting about goals/obstacles - goal-oriented, strengths-based
- Transportation to help client complete a task (achieve a goal) - Resource or get car out? Contact info prep, car, water
- Warm-handoff to provider - set a goal, follow-up on goal
- Complete any necessary paperwork -> Data entry in CBMS plan B

TARGETS ("What we will change")

CLIENTS

- Increased knowledge of services & how to get them
- Overcome fear/ambivalence
- More comfortable sharing/relating w/ CM
- ↑ belief in themselves (efficacy)
- More comfortable asking for help
- Learn executive skills for completing tasks

STAFF

- CMs understand clients' needs/obstacles
- Able to build stronger rapport
- Breaks up the usual routine
- Using strategy as a skill-building opportunity

OUTCOMES ("What success will look like")

CLIENTS

- Fewer months on TANF, ↓ recidivism
- Short-term "successes" (incremental progress) -> Contact w/ WIC, WF, etc. -> Task initiation w/out support -> Fire/Peace CB
- Improved service take-up/completion
- Increase in engagement hours

STAFF PROGRAM

- Lower caseloads
- Improved linkages w/ service providers -> Awareness ↑ -> Relationships ↑ -> Referrals ↑

LEARNING QUESTIONS

- How does mobile coaching help clients connect w/ and use community services? - Track client barrier + activity codes, date(s) of mobile coaching - Short SurveyMonkey for clients (pre/post)
- How does mobile coaching help CMs tailor plans + services to clients' strengths + needs? - Monthly staff meetings: ~5 questions
- How does mobile coaching help clients take initiative w/ respect to engaging in the community? - Specific questions on post-client survey - Focus group (i)?
- How does mobile coaching affect community partners' perceptions of TANF clients and the program in general? - Short survey monkey sent via email or handed link
- Is mobile coaching a sustainable service and at what scale? - Focus group facilitated by Jon

DATA SOURCES

A two-pronged strategy

Client-oriented

Facilitate hand-off to community provider
Conduct case management meeting “on the road”

Program-oriented

Connect with community providers to forge better working relationships
Better understand community providers’ processes

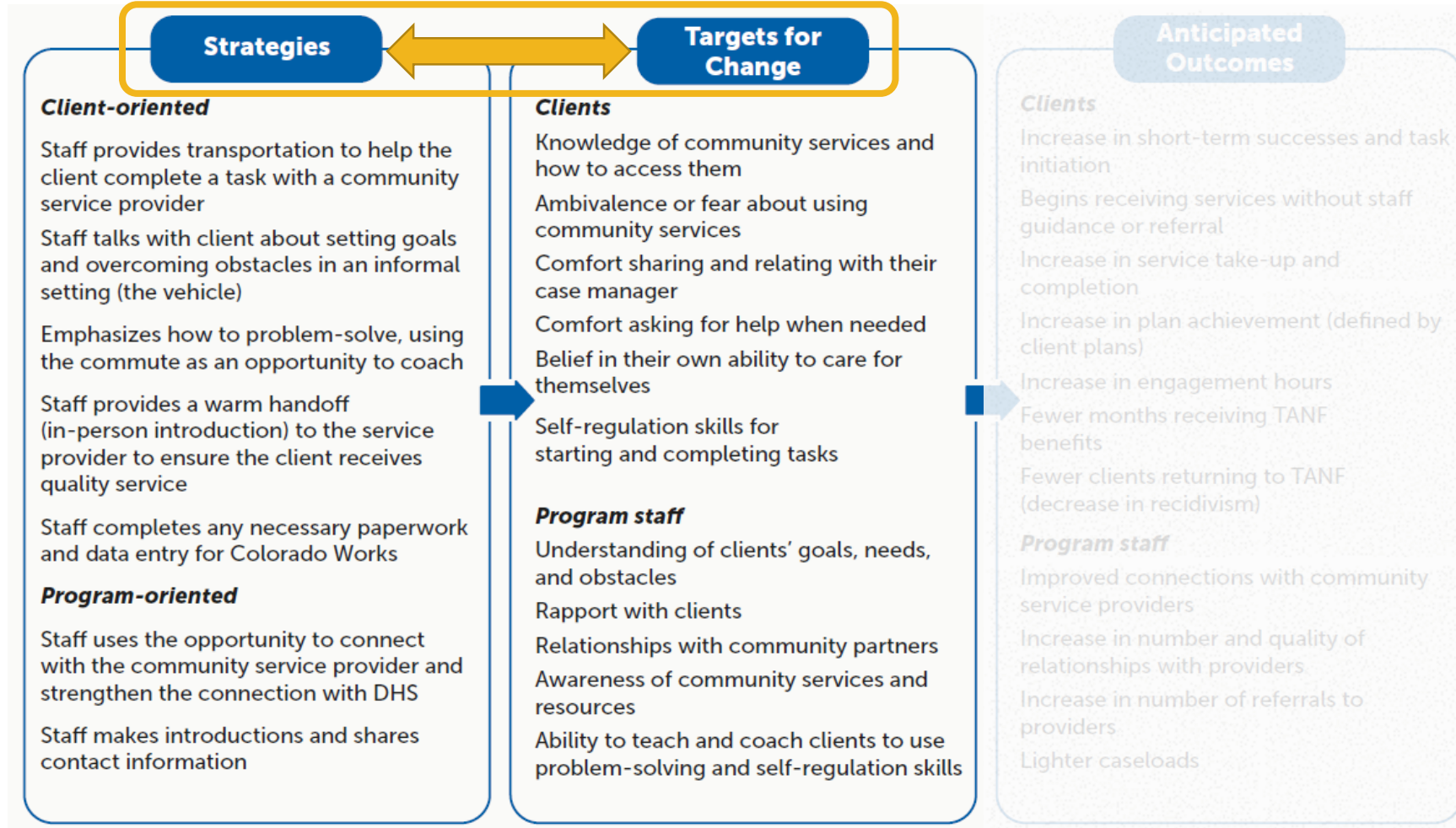
On the way

- Discuss appointment, expectations and fears/obstacles or questions
- Discuss a goal for the appointment

After visit

- Review how the appointment went
- Set a goal that resulted from the appointment

A road map for change



Road testing



Learning objective	Source of information	Info-gathering method
<i>How does Mobile Coaching (MC)...</i>		
...help clients connect with and use community services?	Clients' perceptions of how MC helps them connect with/use services	Pre/post survey
...help case managers tailor plans and services to the strengths and needs of clients?	Case managers' perceptions of the "goodness of fit" of the plans they create with MC clients	Staff focus group
...help clients take the initiative to engage with community services?	Clients' perceptions of their ability and confidence to connect with/use community services on their own	Post survey
...affect community partners' perceptions of the La Plata County Colorado Works program and its clients?	Community providers' perceptions of the Colorado Works program and its clients	Web-based survey after the provider interacted with a case manager

What did we learn from round 2?

Case managers' insights

- Stronger rapport with clients, centered on goals and dreams
- Potential for a momentum shift with the completion of a task
- Ability to deliver a Mobile Coaching session was often slower than desired by the client
- Learning, Innovating, and Improving together enhanced our team



Clients' experiences

- A shift in views of staff, for the better
- Anecdotal evidence of how Mobile Coaching was transformative for some clients
- Anecdotal evidence of how Mobile Coaching improved clients' understanding of community services and their abilities/skills to access them

“Staff aren’t just sitting here behind a computer giving and taking away benefits.”

What now? What's next?

Status of Mobile Coaching today

What can others learn from La Plata County's example?

Even the “smallest” of programs can take an analytic approach to change

There is value in continuous quality improvement, if nothing more than for the team





Questions?