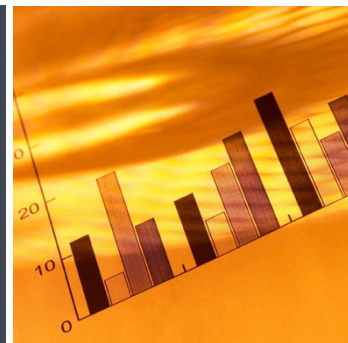


RESEARCH SUMMARY

Collaborative Risk-Driven Intervention

A Study of Samson Cree Nation's Application of the HUB Model



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BUILDING A SAFE AND RESILIENT CANADA

The HUB Model is a promising alternative to status quo criminal-justice approaches in First Nation communities

BACKGROUND

In 2012, Alberta's Samson Cree Nation, in partnership with the Maskwacis RCMP Detachment, began their journey with the Hub model of collaborative risk-driven intervention. The Hub model was implemented to provide solutions to ongoing crime, violence, arson, addictions and truancy in the community.

The Samson Cree Hub entails a partnership between agencies in the policing, community wellness, education, probation, corrections, income support, social services, ambulance, and youth sectors.

Several communities across Canada have also adopted the Hub model to improve community safety and wellness outcomes. However, the Samson Cree Nation remains the only First Nation to have fully applied the model over a relatively extended period of time.

The objectives of the study were to identify why the model was adapted in the Samson Cree Nation, whether it is consistent with evidence-based practices, how compliant the Samson Cree Nation is with established practices of the model, what lessons have been learned, and what benefits and challenges have been observed.

THE HUB MODEL

One approach to collaborative risk-driven intervention becoming increasingly popular across Canada is the Hub Model. In its simplest form, the Hub model is a venue for human service providers from various sectors (e.g. police, probation, education, addictions, social work, mental health, outreach, and harm reduction) to meet one or more times a week to share limited information about their clients whose current situation meets a defined threshold of acutely-elevated risk. During these 'Hub discussions,' participants from the various agencies comply with a fairly-disciplined discussion protocol designed to balance the interests of

individual privacy with a due diligence to protect individual safety. The intent of these discussions is to formulate a plan of intervention that involves multiple sectors collaborating to mobilize the appropriate services and supports around the composite needs of individuals or families. The goal of the Hub is to connect individuals-in-need to services within 24 to 48 hours—as to mitigate risk before harm occurs.

METHOD

The primary means of data collection included interviews with various health and human service providers, police officers, band leaders and community stakeholders. In total, 18 different individuals were interviewed. An additional source of data for this study was the researcher's own observations of the Samson Cree Hub made during a visit in June 2015.

FINDINGS

Collaborative risk-driven intervention, as the results of this study suggest, is an innovative and value-added approach for on-reserve First Nation human service providers and their provincial partners to use in mitigating the complex needs of individuals and families. Interview results demonstrate considerable support for the model, and advocates suggest that the Hub model is both a conducive and promising alternative to the status quo in First Nation communities.

The Samson Cree Hub was formed out of the community's desire to do better. Crime and violence was overtaking the community following the dawn of the new millennia, and both police leaders and Chief and Council felt that the Hub model was a means to a much desired end. Observations of the flagship Hub model in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, followed by a second dosage of support from the Government of Saskatchewan, helped the Samson Cree Hub develop a



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disciplined practice of identifying situations of acutely-elevated risk; sharing limited but necessary information; and planning collaborative interventions to help meet the complex needs of individuals and families. Home outreach and intervention circles involving family, Elders and human service professionals are the two main methods through which the Samson Cree Hub has provided additional support to clients.

The strength of the Hub comes from the weekly interactions of different human service providers, each who comes with an open-minded, non-judgemental, problem-solving perspective of the client situation. Learning from one another, and about one another, has helped the different participating agencies gain a better understanding of risk, client needs, and opportunities to help individuals and families avert crisis.

The impact of collaborative risk-driven intervention on clients brought forth to the Hub include the early identification of risk; being connected to services sooner; receiving assistance with complex problems; being held more accountable; avoiding crisis; and receiving multi-agency support.

The impact of the Hub on agencies include: increased collaboration; a chance to learn perspectives of other agencies; the acquisition of more tools to help clients; more effective and efficient service provisions; access to more information; an opportunity to be proactive; build better relations with clients; and for some agencies, see a reduction in repeat calls for service. Finally, the impact of Hub on police includes a diversion of complex clients to more appropriate services; reduced calls for service; improved community relations; improved cooperation with other agencies; an opportunity to become proactive; and an improved perspective of the client and their needs.

With respect to the overall fit of the model to what was originally intended, considering no formal training or evaluation has been provided to the Samson Cree Hub, organizers are sticking fairly close to the original model. Some ongoing training and relationship-building opportunities would help strengthen the cohesion of the Samson Cree Hub team, and easily align the model to leading Hub practices across the country.

Despite some early wins for the Samson Cree Hub, there are minor challenges that Hub discussants and stakeholders in Samson would like to overcome. These include client refusal of service; systemic issues beyond the scope of Hub; geographical exclusiveness of the model to Samson Cree Nation; inconsistent attendance and turnover of partner agency representatives; and internal barriers to full participation in collaborative intervention and information sharing among some agencies.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study also show that the Hub model aligns very well with First Nation culture and traditions in addressing complex social issues. While no concrete outcome measures on the Samson Cree Hub are available at this point, the results of this study are promising. Indeed, further exploration of the Hub model in practice and through evaluation, will be beneficial to all concerned, including: First Nation leaders, police administrators and the host of human services agencies that come together to form Hubs.

SOURCE

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