



The Integrated Behavioral Health Continuum: Theory and Practice

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Until recently, behavioral health was defined within the strict dichotomy of inpatient and outpatient care -- a dichotomy that failed to mirror the range and complexity of human experience and clinical needs. Today's integrated system renders this dichotomy obsolete. Instead, service delivery integration processes offer an organized system of care rooted in a common vision and defined by processes intended to promote continuity and quality of care, coordination of efforts, efficiencies of operation, and seamless patient movement through an otherwise bewildering array of health care services. Unique in the literature, this volume brings together distinguished clinicians and policymakers who focus on the operational aspects of developing state-of-the-art integrated delivery systems. * History and concept -- Why we need integrated health care delivery systems, including a model of service delivery integration that incorporates current barriers (e.g., ambiguous roles and responsibilities and lack of strategic alignment; how to design integrated delivery systems improving clinical outcomes, achieving fiscal and operating efficiencies, and aligning clinical and fiscal incentives) * Structural foundations -- Access to the system of care for patients, payors, and employers; how to design level-of-care criteria; eight strategies that help clients move along the continuum; how to define level of care in today's managed care world; and the process of following therapeutic processes (i. e., philosophies, procedures, and practices used to create or support recovery and wellness) across the continuum * Administrative and management processes -- How to reorient staff toward minimizing barriers and making the patient central to the system; documentation/information management and reimbursement (rates and rate structures, risk assumption); current research and its enormous potential to improve every aspect of care; quality assessments based on examining the driving forces behind the needs for monitoring and evaluating quality and outcomes; and the relation of behavioral health care systems, which seek to fully integrate clients and families into the fabric of their community and culture, to other systems A case vignette that highlights -- from the consumer's viewpoint -- the vital role of self-help during an episode of hospitalization and a discussion of future directions in integrated behavioral health care round out this remarkable volume. With its wealth of strategic and "nuts and bolts" information -- useful for alliances and single entities alike -- on how to harness operational forces in establishing an effective integrated behavioral health continuum, this volume will be welcomed by those who deliver direct services (psychiatric professionals) and those who administer and manage the integrated financing and delivery of quality care from public (U.S. government agencies) and private (managed care and insurance providers) sectors alike.

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